

Media Literacy Key Questions and Suggested Discussion Questions

Below are the Five Key Questions used in Media Literacy and some questions you can use to start discussions around each question. In addition, there is a sixth question, what is omitted from the message, that can help students think critically about bias in the media they are examining. Feel free to adapt these questions to fit with age level, topics, and ability.

WHO IS THE AUTHOR?

Who created the message?

How many people did it take to create this message? What are their various jobs?

What genre of “text” is created?

How similar or different is it to others of the same genre?

Which technologies are used in its creation?

WHAT TECHNIQUES ARE USED TO ATTRACT AND HOLD YOUR ATTENTION?

What do you notice about

- Colors? Shapes? Size?
- Sounds? Words? Silence?
- Props? Sets? clothing?
- Movement?
- Composition? Lighting?

Where is the camera?

What is the viewpoint?

How is the story told visually?

What are people doing?

Are there any symbols?

Visual metaphors?

What’s the emotional appeal?

Persuasive devices used?

WHAT LIFESTYLES, VALUES, AND POINTS OF VIEW ARE REPRESENTED?

What kinds of behaviors / consequences are depicted?

What type of person is the reader / watcher / listener invited to identify with?

What questions come to mind as you watch / read / listen?

What ideas or values are being “sold” to us in this message?

What political ideas are communicated in the message? Economic ideas?

What judgments or statements are made about how we treat other people?

What is the overall worldview of the message?

HOW MIGHT DIFFERENT PEOPLE INTERPRET THE MESSAGE?

Have you ever experienced anything like this in your life?

How close is this portrayal to your experience?

What did you learn from this media text?

What did you learn about yourself from experiencing from experiencing the media text?

What did you learn from other people’s response? From their experience of life?

How many other interpretations could there be? How could we hear about them?
Are other viewpoints just as valid as mine?
How can you explain the different responses?

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE?

Who's in control of the creation and transmission of this message?
Why are they sending it?
How do you know?
Who are they sending it to?
How do you know?
What's being sold in this message?
Who profits from this message?
Who pays for it?
Who is served by or benefits from the message

- the public?
- private interests?
- individuals?
- institutions?

WHAT IS OMITTED FROM THE MESSAGE?

What ideas or perspectives are left out?
How would you find what's missing?
How does learning what is missing change the message?

FIVE KEY QUESTIONS FOR MEDIA PRODUCTION

In addition, if you are working with creating content, you can turn the five key questions into analysis for your drafting and revision, focusing on the five areas of media literacy.

AUTHORSHIP

What am I authoring?

FORMAT

Does my message reflect understanding in format, creativity and technology?

AUDIENCE

Is my message engaging and compelling to my target audience?

CONTENT

Have I clearly and consistently framed values, lifestyles, and points of view in my content?

PURPOSE

Have I communicated my purpose effectively?