

Guided Viewing/Reading/Listening

Analyze & Evaluate • 30–40 minutes • Grades K–12 • Any subject

The practice: With a teacher's support, students examine a media artifact to identify author, purpose, target audience, and point of view.

Media artifact: Any short text: video, image, ad, article, podcast, website, social media post, song.

Why it matters

This lesson demonstrates:

- **The value of critical reading for every kind of text.** Asking who made a message and why builds the inference-making skills literacy educators have long tied to strong comprehension.
- **How media literacy fits the content you already teach.** Any short text in your unit works; the practice adds a way of reading, not a new topic.
- **How students build understanding actively.** In line with constructivist learning theory, students construct meaning from evidence rather than receiving a single correct reading.
- **How to prepare students for the world they live in.** Most of what students read, watch, and hear is made by someone, for a purpose, aimed at an audience. Asking these questions becomes a habit they carry outside school.

Learning outcomes

Students will be able to:

1. Identify the **author** of a media artifact and describe what kind of person or organization made it.
2. Infer the **purpose** of the message (to inform, entertain, persuade, sell, or a mix).
3. Describe the **target audience** and point to specific choices aimed at them.
4. Name the **point of view**, including what is shown and what is left out.
5. Support each inference with **evidence** from the text itself.

Choosing a media artifact

A good artifact is short, connected to your unit, and open to more than one reading. Check it against these criteria:

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|---|---|
| ☐ Short: 30 seconds to 3 minutes of video or audio, or one page, image, or post | ☐ Purposeful: it is clearly trying to do something to its audience |
| ☐ Connected: it relates to content you are teaching this week | ☐ Relevant: connects to students' life experience |
| ☐ Traceable: students can find clues about who made it (logo, byline, channel, credits) | ☐ Debatable: people could interpret it differently |
| | ☐ Appropriate and accessible: suitable for the age group, with captions or a transcript |

 **PRO-TIP:** Preview video and audio artifacts and select appropriate places for pausing and discussion.

Classroom process (35–40 minutes)

Step	Min.	What the teacher does	What students do
1. Set the purpose	3	Connect the artifact to the unit. Post the four questions: <i>Who made this? Why? For whom? What point of view?</i>	Predict what kind of message they are about to see
2. First encounter	5	Play or show the artifact once, without stopping	Take it in; jot one word for their first reaction

Step	Min.	What the teacher does	What students do
3. Guided second pass	12	Replay, pausing at the marked moments. Ask one question at each pause, then: <i>“What makes you say that?”</i>	Answer aloud or on sticky notes, pointing to a specific detail as evidence
4. Small-group inference	8	Give each group one question (author, purpose, audience, point of view). Ask them to also note one thing left out	Agree on an answer and two pieces of evidence
5. Share and connect	5	Chart group answers; highlight places where groups disagree. Link back to the unit content	Compare readings; explain how evidence supports different interpretations
6. Exit ticket	3	Hand out the exit prompt (see Assessment)	Answer individually

Teacher stance: accept any reading backed by evidence. Reward careful reasoning and original interpretations.

Customizing for grade level and subject

By grade band

Grades	How to phrase the questions	Adjustments
K–2	Who made this? What do they want us to do or feel? Who is it for?	Whole-class only; use pictures, picture books, or a short commercial; students point and talk instead of writing
3–5	Who made this and why? Who is the audience? What is the message?	Pairs instead of groups; sentence starters such as “I think it was made to... because...”
6–8	Who is the author? What is the purpose? Who is the target audience? What point of view is shown, and what is missing?	Add a second artifact on the same topic for comparison
9–12	Same as 6–8, plus: who benefits, and how might different people read this differently?	Students choose the artifact; add research into the author’s funding or affiliations

By subject

Subject	Example artifacts	Subject	Example artifacts
English language arts	Book trailer, author interview, podcast episode, op-ed	Health	Food or beverage ad, wellness influencer post
History & social science	Political cartoon, campaign ad, newsreel, museum website	Arts	Music video, poster, album art, film trailer
Science & engineering	Science explainer video, product claim, public health message	World languages	Ad or news segment in the target language
Mathematics	Infographic or chart in a news story, data-driven ad	Digital literacy & CS	App store page, recommendation feed, AI-generated image

Assessment

Exit ticket: “This message was made by ____ to ____ for _____. I know because _____.” (K–2: draw and tell.)

Beginning	Developing	Proficient	Extending
Names what the artifact is about but not who made it or why	Identifies author, purpose, or audience, with general evidence	Identifies all four elements, each tied to a specific detail	Notes what is left out or how another audience might read it differently

Next step (optional)

Analyze Media Texts: give students a second artifact on the same topic and have them compare authorship, audience, content, format, and point of view across the two.