

Create Media

Create • 30–40 minutes • Grades K–12 • Any subject

The practice: Students plan and create original content in a media genre, including slides, written scripts, animations, video, or graphic design.

Media artifact: A short mentor text in the genre students will create, plus simple tools: paper, slides, or a device camera.

Why it matters

This lesson demonstrates:

- **The value of learning by creating.** Making media asks students to apply what they know and decide how best to explain it.
- **How creating builds understanding of all media.** Choosing a purpose, audience, and format helps students see the choices other creators make.
- **How creative expression engages every learner.** Words, images, and sound give students many ways to show what they know.
- **How media creation fits every subject.** Experts rated it essential in science, math, the arts, CTE, digital literacy, and world languages.

Learning outcomes

Students will be able to:

1. Identify the **purpose** and **target audience** for their message.
2. Analyze the features of a **genre** using a mentor text.
3. Make deliberate **choices** of words, images, sound, and layout.
4. Create an **original** media product that explains or expresses an idea from the unit.
5. Reflect on how well their **choices** fit their purpose and audience.

Choosing a media artifact

A good mentor text models a genre students can make well in one class period. Check it against these criteria:

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| ☐ Short: 30 seconds to 2 minutes of video or audio, or one page, image, or slide | ☐ Clear model: the genre's features are easy to see and name |
| ☐ Connected: it relates to content you are teaching this week | ☐ Purposeful: it has an obvious audience and message |
| ☐ Doable: students can make something similar in 15 minutes with your tools | ☐ Relevant: connects to students' life experience |
| | ☐ Appropriate and accessible: suitable for the age group, with captions or a transcript |

 **PRO-TIP:** Keep the product small. A well-made poster or three-panel storyboard teaches more than an unfinished video.

Classroom process (35–40 minutes)

Step	Min.	What the teacher does	What students do
1. Set the purpose	3	Name the task and audience. Post the questions: <i>What am I authoring? Who is it for? What is my purpose?</i>	Restate the task in their own words

Step	Min.	What the teacher does	What students do
2. Study the mentor text	5	Show the mentor text. Ask: <i>“What makes this work for its audience?”</i>	List three features of the genre
3. Plan	7	Hand out a planning card: purpose, audience, key message, format choices	Fill in the card, alone or in pairs
4. Create	15	Circulate and ask about choices: <i>“Why this image? Why these words?”</i>	Draft the poster, slide, storyboard, or script
5. Share	5	Run a quick gallery walk or partner share	Tell a partner who the piece is for and which choice works best
6. Exit ticket	3	Hand out the exit prompt (see Assessment)	Answer individually

Teacher stance: the process matters more than polish. Ask about choices, not tools, and reward thoughtful decisions and original ideas.

Customizing for grade level and subject

By grade band

Grades	How to phrase the questions	Adjustments
K–2	Who is it for? What do I want them to know or feel?	Whole class co-creates, or each student draws a picture with a caption
3–5	Who is my audience? What is my message? What will grab attention?	Pairs; three-panel comic or storyboard; planning card with pictures
6–8	What is my purpose? Who is my audience? Does my format fit my message?	Slide, infographic, or 30-second script; peer feedback using the questions
9–12	Same as 6–8, plus: how will I know my message worked?	Students choose the genre and plan for a real audience

By subject

Subject	Example products	Subject	Example products
English language arts	Book trailer storyboard, character’s social media profile	Health	PSA poster or slide promoting a healthy habit
History & social science	News report script set at a historical moment	Arts	Album cover, storyboard, or sound collage plan
Science & engineering	Infographic explaining a process or cycle	World languages	Travel poster or ad in the target language
Mathematics	Poster showing a real-world use of a concept	Digital literacy & CS	App screen mockup or animated GIF plan

Assessment

Exit ticket: “My message is for _____. I wanted them to _____. The choice I’m proudest of is _____ because _____.” (K–2: tell a partner who your picture is for.)

Beginning	Developing	Proficient	Extending
Shows unit content, but purpose and audience are unclear	Purpose or audience is clear; some choices fit the message	Purpose and audience are clear, and most choices support the message	Explains why specific choices fit the audience and how they would revise

Next step (optional)

Digital Production for an Authentic Audience: students share the finished work with families, peers, or the community and gather responses.