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UNIT 3: WHAT'S REAL AND WHAT'S REEL

Unit Overview

This unit explores the ways in which realism is constructed in media messages, in shows like “reality TV,” documentaries, news programs, game shows, and more.

The way we respond emotionally to a media message depends on our perception of its realism. We can laugh when someone hits someone else in a slapstick comedy, but the same act would be tension-filled or suspenseful in a drama or a “reality” TV program.

As viewers of film and television, we make reality judgments automatically, and this unit explores how even highly realistic messages are constructed by producers to accomplish specific purposes.

Using a game show format, students practice evaluating the realism of different kinds of media messages. They learn about techniques for making messages seem realistic, and create a promotional message for a school or community event.

The “essential questions” of this unit are:

- **What makes a media message seem “realistic” or “unrealistic?”**
- **Why do different viewers evaluate the realism of a media message differently?**
- **How does the structure of a story affect a reader or a viewer’s emotional response, interpretation, and enjoyment of a media message?**
- **How are actual historical facts used in the construction of fictional media messages?**
- **What techniques are effective in promoting a community or school event?**



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UNIT 3: WHAT'S REAL AND WHAT'S REEL

Explore what makes a media message seem “realistic” or “unrealistic” and learn how realism affects a reader or viewer’s emotional response.

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

3.1 What’s Real and What’s Reel?

Examine different production strategies that are used to suggest that a media message is real or fictional.

3.2 Reality Check

Evaluate short segments of video on a continuum from “realistic” to “unrealistic.”

3.3 TV Teasers

Determine how storytelling structure shapes viewer expectations by reading two different *Dateline* leads.

3.4 Blood ‘n’ Guts in the *ER*

Read how the TV show *ER* creates realism in a fictional hospital emergency room.

3.5 Rock ‘n’ Roll ‘n’ Racism in Baltimore

Determine what’s real and what’s constructed in this critical reading activity.

3.6 Listen Up!

Learn vocabulary words used in the media business.

PRODUCTION ACTIVITY

Create a Promo

Students create a promo or public service announcement for a community or school event.

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UNIT 3: WHAT'S REAL AND WHAT'S REEL

CONNECTIONS TO MARYLAND STATE CONTENT STANDARDS

The *Assignment: Media Literacy* curriculum has been designed to align with Maryland State Content Standards. Many of the activities and lessons are modeled upon the structure and format used in the MSPAP tests for language arts and social studies.

For each unit, the standards are listed for each subject area. The numbers at the end of each line refer to specific instructional goals identified in the Maryland Content Standards.

Use the chart below to identify the specific instructional objectives developed in each unit of the program.

MIDDLE SCHOOL LANGUAGE ARTS

| | |
|-------|--|
| 1.8.5 | Comprehension and Interpretation of Informational Text (all) |
| 1.8.6 | Evaluation of Informational Text (all) |
| 2.8.2 | Comprehension, Interpretation, and Analysis of Text (#3,4,5) |
| 2.8.4 | Evaluation of Literary Works (all) |
| 3.8.2 | Research (#1,3) |
| 3.8.3 | Revision and Evaluation of Writing (#3,4) |
| 3.8.7 | Persuasive Writing |
| 4.8.1 | Acquisition and Application of New Vocabulary (#2,3,5,6) |
| 4.8.2 | Comprehension and Application of Standard English Language Conventions (all) |
| 5.8.1 | Active Listening Strategies (all) |
| 5.8.2 | Comprehension and Analysis (all) |
| 6.8.1 | Organization and Delivery Strategies (all) |
| 6.8.2 | Oral Presentations (all) |

MIDDLE SCHOOL SOCIAL STUDIES

| | |
|--------|--|
| 1.8.7 | Identify and trace the development of an author's argument, viewpoint, or perspective in a historical account. |
| 1.8.8 | Access the credibility of primary and secondary sources, assessing the accuracy and adequacy of the author's details to support claims, note instances of bias, propaganda, and stereotyping, draw sound conclusions. |
| 1.8.9 | Explain the different points of view in historical accounts of controversial events and determine the context in which the statements were made (e.g., the questions asked, the sources used, the author's perspective). |
| 1.8.11 | Identify topics, ask and evaluate questions, and develop ideas leading to inquiry, investigation, and research. |
| 7.8.1 | Describe the influence of the media on political life in the United States, including recognizing bias in reporting, analysis, and editorializing. |

MIDDLE SCHOOL VISUAL ARTS**Content Standards**

| | |
|-------------|---|
| Outcome I | Perceiving, Performing, and Responding—Aesthetic Education: Expectation A, Indicator 1, 2; Expectation B, Indicator1, 2 |
| Outcome III | Creative Expression: Expectation A, Indicator 1,2; Expectation B, Indicator 1, 2, 3, 4. |

MIDDLE SCHOOL THEATRE**Content Standards**

| | |
|-------------|---|
| Outcome I | Perceiving, Performing, and Responding—Aesthetic Education: Expectation A, Indicator 1, 2; Expectation B, Indicator1, 2 |
| Outcome III | Creative Expression: Expectation A, Indicator 1,2; Expectation B, Indicator 1, 2, 3, 4. |
| Outcome IV | Aesthetic Criticism: Expectation A, Indicator 1, 2; Expectation B, Indicator 2; Expectation C, Indicator 1, 2, 3. |

MIDDLE SCHOOL MUSIC**Content Standards**

| | |
|-------------|---|
| Outcome III | Creative Expression and Production: Expectation A, Indicator 4. |
|-------------|---|



TEACHER NOTES

UNIT 3 | ACTIVITY 3.1 | WHAT'S REAL AND WHAT'S REEL

Students generate examples of some of the different production strategies that can be used to suggest that a media message is real or fictional.

Getting Started

Use the video segment for this activity to introduce the topic of different levels of realism in film and TV programming.

Ask students if they have ever been fooled into thinking that a fictional TV program or film they were watching was actually a real event.

Students may refer to films like *The Blair Witch Project*, TV programs like *Unsolved Mysteries* or *The Real World*, or other programs.

The activity sheet provides some examples of production techniques that can be used for both fictional and non-fiction media messages.

Ask students to work in pairs or small groups to generate specific examples of TV programs or films that use the different production strategies on the activity sheet. If students can think of more than one example, encourage them to describe the examples briefly.

Here are some examples:

- **People filmed are not actors:**
MTV's Real World—not fictional
- **Production style looks like a news or documentary format:**
Animal Planet's Wild Rescues—real, not fictional
- **Camera movement is shaky, blurry, and sometimes out of focus:**
Visa TV ad—fictional, not real

You'll want students to see that these techniques can be used for content that is real or fictional—but we tend to associate some of these techniques with content that is “real” or “actuality” footage.

UNIT 3 | ACTIVITY 3.1

WHAT'S REAL AND WHAT'S REEL



Instructions: Here is a list of some media production techniques that are used by producers to indicate that a media message is “real” or “authentic” or to indicate that a message is “fictional” or “unreal.” For each of the examples, see if you can name a TV program or film that uses this strategy. Then indicate whether your example represents an actual real event captured on film or a constructed media event created by a filmmaker.

| PRODUCTION TECHNIQUE | MEDIA EXAMPLE | REAL OR FICTIONAL? |
|---|---------------|--------------------|
| Footage is gathered in an actual location, not a studio set. | | |
| Camera position is fixed and image is grainy and jerky, like a surveillance camera. | | |
| Setting is contemporary and modern in appearance. | | |
| People filmed are not actors. | | |
| Interviews are used with people who have special knowledge. | | |
| Black-and-white footage is used to indicate events that happened in the past. | | |
| Still photographs or images are used. | | |
| People filmed are actors. | | |



TEACHER NOTES

UNIT 3 | ACTIVITY 3.2 | REALITY CHECK

This activity is designed as a mock “game show” where students explore the different levels of television “reality” and consider the complex ways in which television programs blend aspects of artifice and reality.

Background

This activity is designed to be a classroom “game show.” There are four video clips to use in playing this interactive classroom game:

- ABC News on car chases shown on local TV news in Los Angeles
- A scene from the *Three Ninjas Fight Back* film
- A film trailer for the film *Anna and the King*
- An ad for ADT, a home security firm

Getting Started

The video introduction explains that students will evaluate how realistic or unrealistic a specific scene is and place the name of the clip on a continuum from “realistic” to “unrealistic.”

There are four video excerpts in this activity. To involve all students and encourage more reflective responses, you might use Activity Sheet 3.2 to allow students time to write down their responses regarding the realism of each of the video segments. Doing will give students the time needed to think about both what was realistic about each video segment and what was unrealistic.

Select four contestants and have other students be the studio audience. Have a student signal for “applause,” and so on. View each of the four segments of the program again and ask the contestants to explain what is realistic and unrealistic about this message.

Draw a Continuum from “Real” to “Unreal”

Draw a continuum on the blackboard and have each student write in the spot where they would place the video clips on a continuum from “realistic” to “unrealistic.” Class members can create their own continuum using paper at their desks and place the shows in the positions they think are best.

It's important to emphasize that this activity involves making **reality judgments** and that reality judgments are different for different people. People make different reality judgments depending on their life experiences and exposure to media messages.

You might extend the game by adding TV program titles (without showing video) and ask students where they would place shows like *Monday Night Football*, *ER*, or *Cops* on the continuum.

You may be surprised at students' judgments about what they perceive to be "realistic" and "unrealistic." It's important to realize that students use both their limited real-world experience *plus* their experience of watching television and films and other media in judging the realism of different kinds of media messages.

The important part of the activity is in having students verbalize what their reasoning is for placing the show on the reality continuum and in recognizing that people are making reality judgments constantly when using media—reading books, using the Internet, and watching film and TV shows.

Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

UNIT 3 | ACTIVITY 3.2

REALITY CHECK

Instructions: For each of the video segments, complete the pair of sentences below.

Video Segment 1

This message seems realistic because _____

This message seems unrealistic because _____

Video Segment 2

This message seems realistic because _____

This message seems unrealistic because _____

Video Segment 3

This message seems realistic because _____

This message seems unrealistic because _____

Video Segment 4

This message seems realistic because _____

This message seems unrealistic because _____



TEACHER NOTES

UNIT 3 | ACTIVITY 3.3 | TV TEASERS

In this activity, students identify the different ways in which television newsmagazine programs are structured to maximize the entertainment value of the non-fiction story presented.

Background

A Gallup poll from the late 1990s discovered that most Americans named TV newsmagazines as the medium they trusted the most to deliver the truth about the news. They rated newsmagazines higher than nightly newscasts and local newspapers. Middle school students are starting to watch more TV news but may not be aware of the different purposes and motives of entertainment news and other newsmagazine programs that blend entertainment values with news and information.

Getting Started

Show the video for this segment, which is a montage of four different short introductions from TV newsmagazines:

- charity crime
- adoption fairs
- beauty pageant mystery
- digitally created ad

Ask students to select the one story from this montage that they would be most interested in seeing, giving reasons for their choice.

Introduce the term **infotainment**, which is the blending of information and entertainment in a news program. Ask students why they think that news programs blend information and entertainment.

Critical Reading

Pass out copies of Activity Sheet 3.3 and read the instructions aloud. After students have read the two different segments from *Dateline*, you might emphasize this point: The construction of news through a storytelling format with characters and conflicts may alter the accuracy of the story.

Use the four questions presented on the activity sheet as an in-class writing activity, a small-group discussion, a large-group discussion, or a homework activity.

UNIT 3 | ACTIVITY 3.3
TV TEASERS

Instructions: Read these script excerpts which come from two different NBC Dateline TV shows. After reading both, answer the questions that follow.

| | |
|--|---|
| June 27, 1999, Sunday FAMILY FOCUS: STUDY EXAMINES TEMPERAMENT OF CHILDREN | June 25, 1999, Friday KEEPING THE FAITH: BLOODLESS BRAIN SURGERY PERFORMED |
| JANE PAULEY: Many a parent has had dark thoughts at 3:00 AM when the baby's been crying for an hour. But imagine the baby has been crying for days. Other parents may be full of advice, but they never raised your baby. This is not a <i>Dateline</i> Survivor Story, but if you've ever struggled with a fussy newborn, you know it could be. Here's Dawn Fratangelo with a <i>Dateline</i> Family Focus. | JANE PAULEY: Good evening. Is there anything more important than your health? How about your faith? And what if you had to choose? For the young woman you're about to meet, that was a life-or-death dilemma. Just a teenager, she was desperately ill. There was a medical treatment that could save her life. But it threatened the thing she valued more than life, her religious faith. Chief science correspondent Robert Bazell has our story tonight. |

Questions:

1. A TV teaser is a short promo (promotion) that persuades viewers to tune in to a program. Teasers are also the opening words and images intended to hook and hold an audience. Circle the specific words in each promo above that "tease" a viewer to watch the complete report.
2. Newsmagazine-type programs are cheaper to produce than hour-long dramas. And yet these newsmagazines use drama to tell their non-fiction stories. Explain what is dramatic or suspenseful about both teasers above. What are the unanswered questions each teaser presents to the viewer?
3. A successful newsmagazine like *Dateline* often follows a formula in presenting their stories. Like all narratives, conflict and characters are the very heart of the telling. Who is the main character and what is the character's conflict in each teaser?
4. Don Hewitt, the producer of another newsmagazine, *60 Minutes*, has stated in a *New York Times* magazine interview, "I wish we were still in the business of reporting news. I'm afraid a lot of us are now in the business of filling time." What do you think he means and do you agree with him? Why or why not?



TEACHER NOTES

UNIT 3 | ACTIVITY 3.4 | BLOOD 'N' GUTS IN THE ER

Students learn some of the “behind-the-scenes” techniques used to create the illusion of realism in the dramatic program ER.

Getting Started

Show the video that displays a promo for a non-fiction “reality” show, *Life in the ER*. A **promo** is a commercial for a TV or film. Ask students how this show is both similar to and different from the popular prime time drama *ER*.

You might want to introduce students to vocabulary words for the names of two program genres:

“Reality” TV programs are non-fiction shows that use documentary techniques to record real people and real events. By carefully selecting which sequences of action to include in the program, a real event can be made dramatic and exciting. The most well-known example of this genre is the program *Survivor*.

Realistic dramatic programs are fictional stories that use actors and scripts, but present the sequence of action in ways that seem authentic and realistic. These shows are written and edited in a way that makes the action seem unpredictable and unscripted. They may use film production techniques that are similar to documentary footage. A well-known example of this genre is the show *ER*.

Critical Reading

This critical reading activity uses two activity sheets: 3.4 (A) contains the reading and 3.4 (B) displays the reading comprehension and critical thinking questions. Pass out Activity Sheet 3.4 and ask students to read silently.

The questions on the activity sheet can be used in several ways, depending on your goals and the time available. You may want to use the questions on Activity Sheet 3.4 (B) as an in-class writing, as a small-group discussion and writing, or as a large group discussion.

BLOOD 'N' GUTS IN THE ER

By Catherine Gourley
Excerpted from *Media Wizards*

As Dr. Mark Greene on NBC's dramatic series *ER*, Anthony Edwards has sutured wounds, suctioned throats, and paddle-shocked non-breathing patients back to life again. The fast-paced action on *ER* looks and sounds so real that people often mistake the characters, including those bloodied bodies writhing on hospital gurneys, for the real thing.

The medical instruments may be real, but the lacerations, bruises, and heart attacks are pure Hollywood special effects. Liquid plastic poured into molds makes a batch of phony wounds and scars of various sizes that a makeup artist can glue onto an actor's body. The actor-doctor stitches away through the supple plastic without ever piercing real-life muscle or skin.

Should the script call for an amputation, for example, no problem. The special effects team creates prosthetics, or human body parts, also made of plastic. In this particular scene, an actress played the role of a traffic accident victim. The makeup artist "strapped" a prosthetic shoulder onto the actress, then secured a false arm to the stump end of the shoulder.

Next came the body makeup. Dabs and streaks of blues and grays, reds and purples suggested that the woman's arm was nearly severed from the shoulder. To complete the

grisly makeup, the artist mixed corn syrup, which is just the right thickness to simulate human blood, with food coloring. During the amputation scene, the actor-doctor cut away the fake arm from the fake shoulder while the fake patient provided very real cries and moans.

So realistic are the special effects that a crew member has said, "I have to keep telling myself this is make-believe." The show's jolts of reality involve more than just corn-syrup blood and liquid plastic lacerations. The team of writers interviews practicing doctors and nurses in emergency rooms across the country and delves into medical journals.

Professional doctors are among the show's technical advisers. They provide insight into how a doctor might treat a patient suffering from traumatic injuries and teach the actors how to properly handle the medical instruments, how to pronounce really long medical terms like *idiopathic thrombocytopenia purpura*, and how to speak emergency room lingo.

"Call for Neg, 15 units, stat!" means the shooting victims just wheeled in need blood transfusions—now!

No matter how it's constructed, *ER*'s realism keeps more than 60 million viewers around the world tuning in each week. And that's just the way the show's creator and producer, Michael Crichton, likes it. By the way, Crichton's credentials include an M.D. degree from Harvard Medical School.



BLOOD 'N' GUTS IN THE ER

Instructions: After reading the article on the previous page, answer the questions below.

1. What are prosthetics in the real world? On *ER*?

2. Name three construction strategies that create the illusion of reality on *ER*.

3. What 's the purpose of *ER*—to inform, to persuade, or to entertain an audience?

4. Is *ER* a realistic drama or a reality TV show? What is the difference?

5. If Michael Crichton is a doctor, why is he producing television shows? Write your answer in a paragraph on the back of this page.



TEACHER NOTES

UNIT 3 | ACTIVITY 3.5 | **ROCK 'N' ROLL 'N' RACISM IN BALTIMORE**

This activity helps students learn about the process of re-creating a film set in a particular historical time and place.

Getting Started

Begin by asking students to describe what they think their school or their hometown might have looked like in 1954. What sort of music was popular? What clothing and hairstyles did their grandparents, for example, wear? If they wanted to re-create a scene set in their hometown or school in 1954, where would they go for information to make it look authentic?

This activity includes two pages of writing from people involved in the construction of the 1999 film, *Liberty Heights*, set in Baltimore in the 1950s. Pass out copies of these two activity sheets and read the instructions aloud.

This activity is best done as a large-group discussion activity, creating a list of ideas on chart paper or the blackboard to help students analyze the information presented.

You may want to read aloud the passages, or ask students to read each passage silently. After reading each passage, create a list on the blackboard of all the elements, facts, and information that are “real” and all the elements that are “reel” or “fictional.” By using the blackboard to identify student responses, you can help students to clarify the distinctions between the actual historical facts presented and the fictional story provided.

Questions and Answers:**Passage A**

| REAL | FICTIONAL |
|--|---|
| Desegregation was occurring; rock 'n' roll was growing in popularity; more people were able to afford automobiles. | The Kurtzman family and their story is fictional. |

Passage B

| REAL | FICTIONAL |
|--|--|
| Frank Sinatra was popular during the 1950s; <i>Look</i> and <i>Time</i> were very popular magazines. Society as well as some parents did look down on interracial relationships. Also, as Rebekah states, black people sat at the back of the bus; and anti-Semitism was real. | Sylvia's character and her relationship with Ben Kurtzman and her father is fictional. |

Passage C

| REAL | FICTIONAL |
|--|--|
| Pennsylvania Avenue was destroyed during riots following the assassination of Martin Luther King. Royal Theater was a place where racial barriers could come down. Ventura was a popular watch in 1954; hairstyles of 1954 did not favor dreadlocks or braids. | Although Peranio takes great care to research and replicate his sets, they are constructions. The car models may be real, but the re-creation of Pennsylvania Avenue, with neon lights and even authentic "walk" street signs is still invention. Gilliam's band playing back-up for James Brown; a mass of people costumed in 1954 clothing and styles attending a James Brown concert are fictional. |

Career Connections Extension

Based on the information provided on these sheets, ask students to imagine the roles and responsibilities of a production designer, a propmaster, and a casting director. What would each of these jobs entail?

UNIT 3 | ACTIVITY 3.5 (A)

**ROCK 'N' ROLL 'N' RACISM
IN BALTIMORE**

Instructions: *The passages below come from promotional materials for the 1999 movie Liberty Heights, set in Baltimore, Maryland, in 1954. After each passage, identify what information is real and what information is reel fictional. What is constructed (or reconstructed) to give the appearance that the characters and the action took place almost 50 years ago?*

Passage A: The Press Release

It is Baltimore in 1954 and everything is changing. In this year, school desegregation is happening for the first time, bringing black and white children from different neighborhoods into the same classrooms. In this year, the dawning of rock 'n' roll is giving teenagers their first slice of a musical world that will become uniquely their own. In this year, the influx of automobiles becomes a powerful force in America, allowing people the mobility and privacy to travel at will—to see things right in their own hometowns that were previously unknown to them. And in this year, the Kurtzman family develops a newly heightened understanding of what it means to be Jewish in a rapidly growing world.

| What's True? | What's Fictional? |
|--------------|-------------------|
| | |

Passage B: Interviews with the Actors

BEN FOSTER (plays Ben Kurtzman): “My character’s obsessed with Frank Sinatra, so I got every single album that he recorded from 1940 to 1954. I bought all the *Look* and *Time* magazines from the years 1954 to 1955. The interesting thing is that my character was born before my real-life father was. So I grilled my grandmother about how things were at that time and pored over all her old photo albums.”

REBEKAH JOHNSON (plays Sylvia): “Sylvia’s father is a doctor and very wealthy. She goes to a high school that is predominantly white and she’s one of the lone black girls. Sylvia is just lonely until she meets Ben and then sparks fly. But of course it’s forbidden because it is 1954. Her father is furious with her relationship with Ben. Her father considers it disrespectful . . . [the script] says some serious things about race—not just black and white but about Jewish people in the ‘50s . . . I knew that black people had to sit at the back of the bus but I didn’t realize how much anti-Semitism there was.”

| What's True? | What's Fictional? |
|--------------|-------------------|
| | |

UNIT 3 | ACTIVITY 3.5 (B)

**ROCK 'N' ROLL 'N' RACISM
IN BALTIMORE**

Passage C: Location, Props, Costumes, and Casting

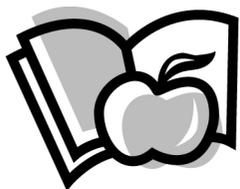
VINCENT PERANIO, Production Designer: “Pennsylvania Avenue was destroyed during the Martin Luther King riots [in 1968] and we only had black-and-white photographs that we researched to reproduce it. We spent quite a bit of time at the Historical Society and I spent five months recalling when I was ten years old, remembering if there were parking meters and what the street ‘walk’ signs looked like . . . I had a crew of about 35 people working on the exterior neon lights for the old Hippodrome Theater. When we lit up the neon the entire street came alive, with the old cars . . . it was an incredible nostalgic feeling. For three days, this street was back in time and prosperous, and looking beautiful.”

GEORGE GILLIAM, Pennsylvania Avenue Commissioner: “During the period of *Liberty Heights*, the Royal Theater on Pennsylvania Avenue was a desegregated area because everyone came to enjoy the world-renowned talent and the artists who played there . . . we’ve always been proud of the fact that the Royal Theater was a place where we could all come together and enjoy the facility and the social life on the avenue. I put together the band for the James Brown sequence. The casting director looked me up to have me bring my band to have us play behind James Brown in the movie. Me and my committee were very excited about it, because keeping the legacy of the Royal Theater has been our passion . . .”

STEVE WALKER, Propmaster: “There are a lot of little things that the audience will probably not notice that we had to get because the director requested them. A friend of his wore a particular watch that he wanted for the character Trey. It’s a Ventura, a very highly collectible watch now and worth thousands, but it was a popular watch at the time.”

JOHN STRAWBRIDGE, Casting Director: “For the James Brown concert . . . we had a mass of 500 people. We had to narrow the age range to 18 to 35. And hairstyles today are very different, especially among African-Americans, where shaved hair, braided or dreadlock styles are very popular—none of that would be appropriate for 1954.”

| What’s True? | What’s Fictional? |
|--------------|-------------------|
| | |



TEACHER NOTES

UNIT 3 | ACTIVITY 3.6 | LISTEN UP!

This listening skills activity is designed to build knowledge about media production concepts and strengthen students' ability to recall information presented from an audio source.

Getting Started

You might talk about the special vocabulary used in the movie business. See if students can tell you of some of the special terms used in the production of film and television.

Use the video to provide students with the listening experience. Depending on your students' skills, you may want to ask students to see if they can explain the production terms in their own words after only one listening experience.

You may find that students are able to explain these terms better after listening and looking at the terms on the activity sheet, or after listening, looking, and discussing the terms. Feel free to use all of these methods or the method that works best with your students.

Questions and Answers

1. A **concept** is the main idea for a television program or a film.
2. A **treatment** is the short written document that explains what the show will be about. A treatment is created to persuade a funder to provide money to produce the program.
3. A **script** is the written document that presents all the dialogue, language, and a description of what the viewer will see during a program. A script is used to help everyone involved in the production know what to do.
4. A **re-enactment** is the use of actors in a dramatic re-creation of events to portray an actual event that happened in the past. Producers use re-enactments when they want the viewer to see something that was not captured on film or videotape.
5. **B-roll** is the name producers use for the visual images that will be used as background footage for a scene, when the voice-over is presenting the main information.

6. The **producer** is the person responsible for organizing and implementing a media production. This person selects or develops a concept, prepares the budget, hires all the people needed to complete the project, and oversees the whole production process from start to finish.
7. **Archival footage** is the use of old photos, films, or other visual material to convey what actual people or events in history looked like.
8. **Talking head** is the term used for interviews with experts or other people who provide information in a news or documentary program.
9. **Sound bites** are the short segments of a talking head interview that are used in a news or documentary program.
10. **Graphics/animation** is the term used for all the computer-generated imagery that is used to help viewers understand something that can't be captured using regular film or video images.

Extension

Ask students to bring in other terms for the film and video production process and invite students to create their own entries for a classroom-created media dictionary.

Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

UNIT 3 | ACTIVITY 3.6

LISTEN UP!

***Instructions:** After listening to the audio recording about the production process, explain the production terms below in your own words.*

Concept _____

Treatment _____

Script _____

Re-enactment _____

B-roll _____

Producer _____

Archival footage _____

Talking head _____

Sound Bite _____

Graphics/animation _____



TEACHER NOTES



UNIT 3

CREATE A PROMO FOR A COMMUNITY OR SCHOOL EVENT

Create a 30-second TV promo to persuade people to attend a community or school event.

This activity involves student teamwork and problem solving in designing a persuasive message to promote a school or community event. Students construct a short TV commercial, using in-camera editing and home camcorder equipment.

Review the Checklist

Pass out the Production Activity worksheet and review the steps in the process needed to complete the activity. Encourage students to check off the steps by using the circles on the left margin. Establish a realistic deadline and monitor students' work during the process. You may want to involve the whole class in this production, or divide the class into smaller groups and create two or three promos for different community or school events.

Establishing Group Roles

Team-based media production projects can often be accomplished effectively by assigning students specific roles. As teacher, you should always clarify to students that you are the Executive Producer, the person who is ultimately responsible for the overall production. That means you have veto power over productions that may have inappropriate elements.

Students often respond well to being “hired” to complete a complex media production—and even a simple commercial is a complex production. Some student roles appropriate for this project include:

Producer: oversees whole project and makes sure everyone is working effectively.

Researcher: researches the attitudes, knowledge, and characteristics of the target audience to help in the effective design of the message.

Recorder: keeps notes during brainstorming and maintains a file of all drafts and notes. Keeps a “to do” list for producer.

Writer: writes script and description of all action. Revises as needed throughout to keep script current at all times.

Liaison: communicates with teacher and others to get script approvals and filming approvals as needed.

Artist: draws storyboard showing all shots to be included in the filming.

Director: supervises the actors and leads their rehearsal. Provides critique and support to get effective performances.

Talent: actors and actresses who perform in front of the camera.

Camera Operator: responsible for labeling tape, filming, and taking care of equipment.

Technical Assistant: provides additional support for camera and other production needs.

Musician: composes, performs, or selects music to be used in the production.

Evaluation

Use the evaluation rubric provided to give students feedback about their writing. You might also want students to evaluate each other's work using this evaluation sheet.

Publishing Student Work on www.AssignmentMediaLit.com

See the Resources section on page 157 on how you or your students can send completed promos to be published on the *Assignment: Media Literacy* website.

ASSIGNMENT



UNIT 3

CREATE A PROMO FOR A COMMUNITY OR SCHOOL EVENT

(**ASSIGNMENT:** Create a thirty-second TV promo to persuade people to attend a community or school event.

USE THIS CHECKLIST TO COMPLETE THE ACTIVITY:

Select the event to promote, gather information, and brainstorm.

- Choose an event that could benefit from publicity, like a school play or musical event. Gather information about the event you are promoting.
- Learn about the target audience—the people who you want to see this message and respond to it.
- Be sure that team members all participate in brainstorming the ideas for your promo. Don't be critical during brainstorming—it limits creativity.
- Write down the ideas during brainstorming so you don't forget something good. Strive to find a memorable phrase or visual that will capture the imagination of your target audience.

Select the best idea and develop it into a script and storyboard.

- Write out any dialogue or voice-over that the viewer will hear.
- Plan out any action that the viewer will see by drawing a storyboard showing what the viewer will see.
- Get feedback from teachers and students about your script and storyboard and revise based on their comments.
- Select music that could be used.

Produce the video using in-camera editing.

- Time the script and music bits so that they fit into thirty-seconds.
- Shoot the scenes in the order they will appear in the video.
- Use the audio dub feature in your camera to add voices or music.
- Send your completed project to the www.AssignmentMediaLit.com website to publish it.

EVALUATION



UNIT 3

CREATE A PROMO FOR A COMMUNITY OR SCHOOL EVENT

Team Members: _____

The event is well chosen and appropriate information is provided in the promo.

| | |
|---|--|
| 4 | The promo gives viewers a good idea of what to expect about the event and contains information that viewers need if they plan to attend the event. |
| 3 | The promo gives viewers a good idea of what to expect about the event but leaves out some information that viewers need if they plan to attend the event. |
| 2 | The promo doesn't give viewers a good idea of what to expect about the event and leaves out some information that viewers need if they plan to attend the event. |
| 1 | The message does not promote an appropriate event. |

The promo uses attention-getting techniques and is creatively constructed.

| | |
|---|---|
| 4 | The promo uses fine attention-getting techniques and is creatively constructed. |
| 3 | The promo uses attention-getting techniques and is creatively constructed. |
| 2 | The promo does not use attention-getting techniques effectively. |
| 1 | The promo does not seem to use attention-getting techniques well. |

The promo shows evidence of careful planning and good teamwork.

| | |
|---|--|
| 4 | A script and storyboard have been written and team members worked effectively together. |
| 3 | A script and storyboard have been written but all the team members did not work effectively together. |
| 2 | A script and storyboard have been written but are not high quality and all the team members did not work effectively together. |
| 1 | A script and storyboard have not been written. Many team members did not work effectively together. |

Comments:

Grade:

