

5

UNIT 5: THE LANGUAGE OF POLITICS

Unit Overview

This unit focuses on the media’s function as a tool for political persuasion. Television advertisements and political speeches, in particular, are important components of the process of political communication. The activities in this unit help students understand some key strategies used in the construction of political persuasion.

This unit explores the media’s impact in shaping the process of democracy. Students learn how politicians appeal to voters, how symbols are manipulated, and about the increasing importance of “personality” as a major factor in getting elected. Students select a character from history or literature to be a political candidate and create a 30-second political TV ad for that person.

This unit provides the opportunity for much discussion of concepts related to Character Education in the context of complex social issues such as colonialism. These concepts may be particularly valuable: **courage, responsibility, faith, loyalty, self-direction, and perseverance.**

The “essential questions” of this unit are:

- **How are communication strategies used in political leadership?**
- **How are images, language, sounds, and symbols used to persuade people about who to vote for?**
- **What do voters need to understand about the role of media in the political process in order to be effective decision makers and citizens?**
- **Are some political communication strategies inherently more or less fair?**
- **How has the mass media of communication affected democracy?**



5

UNIT 5: THE LANGUAGE OF POLITICS

Analyze political communication strategies and evaluate the impact of the mass media on the political campaign process.

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

5.1 Distortion Tactics

Learn five communication strategies used by political candidates.

5.2 Shrinking Sound Bites

Learn about the concept of “sound bites” and explore how sound bites can create bias.

5.3 Analyzing the Language of Political Ads

Read the voice-over of two political ads and analyze the purpose, connotation, and sound bites.

5.4 Exploring Candidate Mythologies

Examine myths revealed through campaign advertisements and special events.

5.5 Every Voter Should Know

Create a list of ten things that voters should understand about media and the political process.

PRODUCTION ACTIVITY

Create a Political Campaign Ad

Select a candidate from fiction or history who wants to run for political office. Create a thirty-second TV ad for this candidate.

5

UNIT 5: THE LANGUAGE OF POLITICS

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.

HIGH SCHOOL LANGUAGE ARTS

1.12.1	Concepts of Print and Structural Features of Text (all)
1.12.5	Comprehension and Interpretation of Informational Text (all)
1.12.6	Evaluation of Informational Text (all)
2.12.2	Comprehension, Interpretations, and Analysis of Text (all)
3.12.1	Organization and Focus (all)
3.12.2	Research (all)
3.12.3	Personal Narrative Writing (all)
3.12.7	Persuasive Writing (all)
4.12.1	Acquisition and Application of New Vocabulary (all)
4.12.2	Comprehension and Application of Standard English Language Conventions
5.12.1	Active Listening Strategies
5.12.2	Comprehension and Analysis (all)
6.12.1	Organization and Delivery Strategies (all)

HIGH SCHOOL SOCIAL STUDIES

1.12.7	Analyze an author's implicit and explicit philosophical assumptions and beliefs about a subject.
1.12.8	Synthesize information from multiple sources and make distinctions between sound generalizations and misleading oversimplifications.
2.12.4	Analyze how shifts in regional relationships result from changes in political, economic, cultural, and environmental factors.
7.12.1	Evaluate the ways in which the public agenda is shaped and set, including the influence of political parties, interest groups, lobbyists, the media, and public opinion.
7.12.3	Analyze the roles of political parties, campaigns, and elections in U.S. politics, including the importance of the nominating process, campaign finance and advertising, and the Electoral College.
2.12.1	Evaluate the role of institutions in guiding, transmitting, and changing culture.



TEACHER NOTES

UNIT 5 | ACTIVITY 5.1 | DISTORTION TACTICS

Students learn about five distortion tactics that are used to slant information in order to persuade. Students see how these tactics are used in political campaign advertising on television.

Background

This activity provides five examples of logical fallacies with examples of their use in political campaign history. The videotape provides two campaign ads for students to use in identifying distortion tactics in an actual political message. This is an ideal activity for large-group discussion.

Getting Started

Not all persuasive strategies distort information, but the five tactics outlined on this activity sheet do. You can use the guided questioning that follows to explore this in more detail.

Issues and Topics to Discuss

Pass out Activity Sheet 5.1 and ask students to read the five distortion tactics. After reading, ask these questions and discuss:

- 1. Why are the strategies defined on this sheet labeled “distortion” rather than “persuasion” tactics?** Emphasize that these five strategies are intended to be persuasive through providing misleading information or presenting information in a highly selective and incomplete way.
- 2. Why do phrases such as “doing what’s right” and “living up to his word” trigger a positive connotation?** Do they trigger a positive connotation in everybody? What meaning do those words have for teenagers? Answers will vary.

3. **How do glittering generalities distort information?** Because they are “general” rather than specific, the candidate sounds as if he or she is saying something important when in fact the phrase is empty of meaning. If Bush defined specifically what he meant by “kinder, gentler America,” then he would not be distorting his message.
4. **How could Rush Limbaugh have substantiated his claim that Vince Foster was murdered?** The ad could have quoted a verifiable source or sources. However, to simply say, “a Washington consulting firm” without identifying it specifically is to distort information.
5. **In the 1960 campaign, what message were Kennedy’s opponents communicating to the voting public about the candidate’s relationship with the Pope?** The non-verbal claim was that Kennedy was not an independent thinker, that electing Kennedy was the same as electing the Pope.

Applying the Tactics to Video Examples

The videotape provides two examples of political campaign ads for students to analyze:

- a negative ad featuring anti-Castro imagery
- an ad from the “Morning in America” campaign for Ronald Reagan.

View each one and ask students to review the definitions of distortion tactics. Which distortion tactics are being used in each ad? What specific clues from the verbal or visual images led them to select this tactic?

DISTORTION TACTICS

Distortion Tactic #1: NAME-CALLING

Definition: Name-calling attacks a candidate personally without providing any real information about the candidate's abilities or experiences. The media often repeat the label in the guise of reporting a candidate's accusations.

Example: Opponents to Andrew Jackson called him "a home wrecker." Opponents to Richard Nixon labeled him "Tricky Dicky." Opponents to Bill Clinton called him "Slick Willy."

Distortion Tactic #2: LOADED WORDS

Definition: Loaded words have either positive or negative connotations intended to trigger an emotional response from the audience.

Example: In a televised campaign advertisement for her presidential candidate husband, Elizabeth Dole described Bob Dole this way: "Honesty, doing what's right, living up to his word." Presidential candidate Ross Perot appeared in his own televised advertisement and asked the American people this question: "Do either of the other candidates give you this kind of straight talk? Or are they so busy promising you candy just to get your vote?"

Distortion Tactic #3: GLITTERING GENERALITIES

Definition: Glittering generalities carry positive connotations. Unlike name-calling, which refers to people, glittering generalities refer to abstract ideas that can and are interpreted differently by different people. Candidates who use glittering generalities do not define what they mean by the word.

Example: In his 1992 re-election campaign, President George Bush spoke of "a kinder, gentler America." Vice President Dan Quayle spoke often of "family values."

Distortion Tactic #4: RUMOR-MONGERING

Definition: Rumor-mongering is unsubstantiated statements or innuendo about a candidate. Most often the rumor is suggested, not stated directly.

Example: On March 10, 1994, radio commentator Rush Limbaugh announced that he had "enough information" to tell his audience that a Washington consulting firm was soon to release a newsletter stating that White House attorney Vince Foster "was murdered" and did not commit suicide, as the mainstream press and the White House itself had reported. Limbaugh later denied suggesting Foster's death was murder.

Distortion Tactic #5: MISLEADING ASSOCIATION

Definition: This strategy attempts to disqualify or dishonor an opponent by linking the candidate to some idea or some group that may not be directly connected to the candidate.

Example: In 1960, opponents of Catholic presidential candidate John F. Kennedy suggested that should he win, the Pope would rule the country. "One anti-Kennedy image showed the candidate kissing the Pope's hand with this warning: Keep Church and State separate!"



TEACHER NOTES

UNIT 5 | ACTIVITY 5.2 | SHRINKING SOUND BITES

This critical reading activity helps students explore the changes in political communication that have resulted from the increasing dominance of television.

Background

Candidates use sound bites to promote their positions, such as President Clinton's 1996 sound bite "a bridge to the 21st century." They also use sound bites to discredit an opponent. For example, in the 1996 campaign, Republican presidential candidate Robert Dole debunked Hillary Clinton's book titled *It Takes a Village* (taken from an African proverb, "It takes a village to raise a child") by stating, "It doesn't take a village; it takes a family to raise a child."

Sound bites are not new. As this article states, they originated during the age of radio and were simply a way of allowing a news maker to speak for him- or herself. In recent decades, however, sound bites have shrunk from many minutes to seconds. This is where the distortion, or bias, can enter the picture.

Getting Started

Pass out Activity Sheet 5.2 (A), which has the reading passage, and 5.2 (B), which includes the questions for students to answer. This is an ideal practice test-taking activity. Provide a limited amount of time for students to complete the questions, and then review the answers with students.

Extension

You might want to videotape a speaker at a community or school event and ask students to view the tape and select three sound bites which capture the speaker's main ideas. Share students' choices by listing on chart paper or the blackboard and evaluate the qualities of the messages.

UNIT 5 | ACTIVITY 5.2 (A)

SHRINKING SOUND BITES

By Catherine Gourley

Excerpted from *Media Wizards*

During the 1996 presidential campaign, Bill Clinton addressed the Democratic National Convention for more than an hour, discussing his vision for the future. He talked about education, technology, and the welfare of American citizens. The news media extracted a catchy phrase from that long, detailed speech: A bridge to the twenty-first century. News commentators and reporters and even the candidate himself repeated the phrase over and over. It became the sound bite of Clinton's reelection campaign.

The sound bite—a short extract from a recorded interview or speech—is not an invention of the 1990s. It actually began back in radio days, long before television changed the ways Americans viewed and voted for their presidents. In radio, a sound bite was a tape of someone speaking other than the news commentator. It was radio's way of allowing the news maker to speak for himself or herself. Then sound bites ran for minutes and could be as long as paragraphs.

Today, a sound bite is still someone speaking on tape or film. The difference is that today, the sound bite is short—and getting shorter every year. In 1968, a typical sound bite from a presidential election was more than 40 seconds. In 1996, the sound bite had shrunk to less

than ten seconds. Instead of paragraphs, the sound bite is now a single sentence or even a phrase, such as Bill Clinton's "A bridge to the twenty-first century." Sound bites make great headlines and teasers to get readers to buy a newspaper or stay tuned to a particular television program. But sound bites also reduce complex ideas into oversimplified buzzwords. Unless you heard Clinton's entire 60-minute+ speech, you wouldn't know what was the bridge to the future.

When people hear or read a sound bite, they aren't hearing or reading the entire message and so the original meaning may be lost or misinterpreted. Because sound bites are, by definition, repeated out of context, they slant reality.

Readers and viewers, and especially voters, have a responsibility to look beyond the slant or the sound bite and interpret a story's meaning or a candidate's message. But people interpret media messages differently, based on their own experiences or preconceived ideas and prejudices.

"When politicians can get away with talking like bumper stickers, we get used to listening for slogans—and not much else," says media specialist Norman Solomon. "Sadly, our attention span tends to parallel our thinking span."

That's how bias enters the language of politics—not only through the candidate's words, images, or sound bites but also through the eyes and ears of the audience.

UNIT 5 | ACTIVITY 5.2 (B)

SHRINKING SOUND BITES

Instructions: After reading the previous selection, answer the questions below.

Questions:

1. Write down the author’s definition of a sound bite.

2. What does the author mean by “oversimplified buzzwords”?

3. To what does Norman Soloman compare political sound bites?

4. The author states how sound bites have shrunk but she doesn’t explain why. What reason does Norman Soloman suggest for why sound bites have shrunk?

For Discussion

Discuss the short-term and long-term implications—both positive and negative—of reliance on sound bites as a dominant part of the political campaign process.



TEACHER NOTES

UNIT 5 | ACTIVITY 5.3 | ANALYZING THE LANGUAGE OF POLITICAL ADS

This activity provides the voice-overs of two different political campaign ads and involves students in critically analyzing the purpose, point of view, and persuasive techniques used in the ads.

Background

This is an ideal activity for large-group or small-group discussion. You might want students to select their own small group of two or three people, or you may wish to assign students with different learning styles to work together.

Getting Started

You might introduce this activity by passing out Activity Sheet 5.3 and reading each of the two political ads aloud. Or you may want to have students read these in their best dramatic voices before discussing the questions.

After students have discussed the questions, review the main ideas in a large-group discussion to conclude the activity.

Questions and Answers:

Text A

1. The Democratic Party representing candidate William Clinton.
2. against
3. Wrong in the past; wrong for our future.

Text B

1. The Republican Party representing candidate Robert Dole.
2. America deserves better.
3. Issues are mentioned in both texts. However, the text doesn't substantiate the claims or provide specific supporting details. Both are targeting the candidate's character concerning the issue, though neither is an attack on the candidate's private life or morals.

4. Text A, in thirty-seconds or less, covers Medicare, Department of Education, drug policy, gun control, family leaves, vaccines. Again, the advertisement does not substantiate or explain the issues and so simplifies them by repeating the negative word “against.” Text B focuses on a single issue, teen drug use. It provides two statistics—“doubled in the last four years” and “cut by 83 percent.” Even so, teen drug use and the budget cuts to the Office of National Drug Control Policy are not so easily explained. Both texts oversimplify issues.
5. Students’ answers will vary. As suggested in answer 4, statistics, anecdotes, and reasons for the actions or cuts would clarify the message. However, that requires much more time than a thirty-second TV spot will allow.

Extension

Invite students to find and analyze political campaign ads from a current or recent election. The full text and video of many political campaign ads can be found at the *New York Times* website, <http://www.nytimes.com>.

You might want to ask students to write out the full verbal text of the ad and design questions, like the ones in this activity, to help critically analyze the media messages. Students could lead a discussion on these ads for the class.

ANALYZING THE LANGUAGE OF POLITICAL ADS

Instructions: Read the two different campaign texts from political TV ads and discuss the answers.

Text A:

Let's go back in time—to the sixties. Bob Dole is in Congress. Votes against creating Medicare. Against creating student loans. Against the Department of Education. Against a higher minimum wage. Still there. Against creating a Drug Czar. Against the Brady Bill to fight crime. Against family and medical leave. Against vaccines for children. Against Medicare—again. Dole-Gingrich tried to cut 270 billion. Bob Dole: wrong in the past; wrong for our future.

1. Which presidential candidate's party sponsored this 1996 televised ad?
2. What word is purposely repeated to create a negative connotation?
3. Reduce this ad to a single-sentence sound bite.

Text B:

Thirty years ago, the biggest threat to her [image of adolescent girl] was nuclear war. Today, the threat is drugs. Teenage drug use has doubled in the last four years. What's been done? Clinton cut the Office of National Drug Control Policy by 83 percent. And his own Surgeon General even considered legalizing drugs. Bill Clinton said he'd lead the war on drugs and change America. All he did was change his mind. America deserves better.

1. Which presidential candidate's party sponsored this 1996 televised ad?
2. Reduce this ad to a single sentence sound bite.
3. Which text—A, B, both or neither—is a personal attack on the candidate rather than on the candidate's position on real issues?
4. What complex ideas in both texts A and B are being oversimplified and reduced to a single paragraph?
5. What information is missing from both texts A and B? Discuss whether this missing information could or could not be included in a thirty-second or sixty-second TV spot.



TEACHER NOTES

UNIT 5 | ACTIVITY 5.4 | EXPLORING CANDIDATE MYTHOLOGIES

This critical reading activity introduces students to the concept of candidate mythologies and introduces students to the function of a storyboard in providing a visual “map” of the elements of a film or TV message.

Getting Started

Pass out Activity Sheet 5.4 (A) and ask students to read it. Or you may want to read it aloud while students follow along. Then show the famous “Daisy” political ad, which is provided on the video, and discuss it in relation to the points made in the reading.

Pass out copies of the Activity Sheet 5.4 (C), which presents a storyboard of the Daisy ad. A **storyboard** is a drawn representation of a media message, used in planning a media message. Each of the boxes represents a shot. Every shot has its own box, and the voice-over or other sound is written below the box. Help students to understand the symbols used for different camera techniques, including:

ECU = extreme close up

MS = medium shot

LS = long shot

VO = voice-over

Compare Storyboard to Political Ad

After students have reviewed the storyboard, play the Daisy ad on the videotape again. Ask students to add missing elements into the storyboard. Remind students that a storyboard is only a plan, a document created before a message is actually videotaped—it doesn’t capture everything about a media message.

Pass out Activity Sheet 5.4 (B) and have students write their answers on the page. Alternatively, you might want students to complete this activity as homework or you may want to use the questions to promote small-group discussion or large-group interaction.

Reading Subtext

Some of the most common candidate mythologies include:

- the war-hero myth
- the war-monger myth
- father/mother figure
- friend of the common people
- savior

These mythologies are rarely stated directly but rather are implied through choice of words and visuals. The mythology is a persuasive tactic, but one that can distort reality.

Questions and Answers:

1. **What special effects and visual strategies did Roosevelt’s campaigners use to promote his war hero image?** The bugle and uniformed soldiers were examples provided.
2. **In what way might a war-hero image be a stereotype?** Mythologies, like stereotypes, make generalizations about a candidate. Ask students to discuss the suggestion made in the first paragraph—just because a candidate is a war-hero, does that mean he or she will also be an effective leader in the Oval Office?
3. **What is a war-monger?** A war-monger is someone who favors going to war to solve political conflicts.
4. **What misleading association did the “Daisy” advertisement make?** It associates a vote for Goldwater with a vote for war. In reverse, it associates a vote for Johnson with a vote for peace. This might be a good point to expand the discussion somewhat to discuss the “Vietnam conflict.” Johnson would, in fact, defeat Goldwater and would—contrary to the “Daisy” message—send hundreds of thousands of American troops to fight in Southeast Asia.
5. **Why did the Johnson campaigners pull the “Daisy” advertisement after only one broadcast?** The article states that the Goldwater staff protested loudly. But more was probably at stake as well. The advertisement used a truly shocking contrast—a child at play and an atomic explosion. Perhaps the Johnson campaigners thought it would be too shocking and would backfire with a negative effect on their candidate.

UNIT 5 | ACTIVITY 5.4 (A)

EXPLORING CANDIDATE MYTHOLOGIES

By Catherine Gourley

A cavalry bugle sounding *Charge!* echoed on the campaign trail in 1903. The candidate, accompanied by seven uniformed Rough Riders, was Theodore Roosevelt. Roosevelt was himself a former Rough Rider, a hero of the Spanish American War. Leading troops in a charge against an enemy may not be the best qualification for the presidency of a country, but in Roosevelt's case the war hero image was not only popular but hugely successful.

Roosevelt was not the only war hero elected to the country's highest office. General Dwight Eisenhower, commander of the Allied Forces that successfully invaded Normandy on D-Day and ultimately defeated the Nazis in World War II, won the presidential election in 1952. Likewise, images and stories of John F. Kennedy's war injuries and heroic actions on behalf of his PT109 crew, became part of his presidential campaign strategy.

The war hero image—some call it a stereotype—is just one type of mythology that campaign strategists may use during an election campaign. Other mythologies include: Father/Mother figure, Friend of the Common People, Savior, Intellectual.

Not all mythologies are positive, however. One of the most famous televised political advertisements was called "Daisy." Paid for by the campaign to elect Lyndon B. Johnson president in 1964, the advertisement suggested that Johnson's opponent—Senator Barry Goldwater from Arizona—was a war-monger.

Here's how:

A little girl is outside on a sunny day picking the petals off a daisy. Her childish voice counts: *1, 2, 3, 4, . . .* A man's voice begins counting, too, but downward: *10, 9, 8, 7, 6,*

. . . The camera zooms for a close-up on the little girl's wide, innocent eyes. Suddenly an atomic explosion fills the screen.

What comes next is the voice of Lyndon Johnson: *These are the stakes: to make a world in which all of God's children can live . . . or to go into the darkness. We must either love each other, or we must die.*

The spot ends with the man's voice: *Vote for President Johnson on November 3rd. The stakes are too high for you to stay home.*

The political advertisement did not state Senator Goldwater's name. It didn't have to. The shocking images contrasting a child at play with an atomic explosion implied—or suggested—that a vote for Goldwater was a vote for war.

Candidate mythologies are most often implied or suggested through images. Sometimes those images are generated by the candidate, as in Theodore Roosevelt tooting his own horn. Other times, however, the mythologies are created by the candidate's opponent to discredit him or her.

In fact, Republicans protested so loudly the Johnson "Daisy" advertisement that it aired only once. The Johnson campaign pulled it. But in doing so, the news media jumped on the story and so "Daisy" became political advertising history.

How can you avoid being sucked into the stereotype's hype? One way, advised media specialists, is to simply ask yourself the key questions of all media messages: Who created this image and why?

EXPLORING CANDIDATE MYTHOLOGIES

Instructions: *After reading the short essay, answer the questions below.*

1. What special effects and visual strategies did Roosevelt’s campaigners use to promote his war hero image?

2. In what way might a war-hero image be a stereotype?

3. What is a war monger?

4. What misleading association did the “Daisy” advertisement make?

5. Why did the Johnson campaigners pull the “Daisy” advertisement after only one broadcast?

Storyboard for "DAISY" Political Ad



(Establishing shot) Child
VO: 1-2-3



(Zoom to MS)
Child VO: 1-2-3



(Zoom to CU)
Male VO: 10-9-8-7-6-5-4



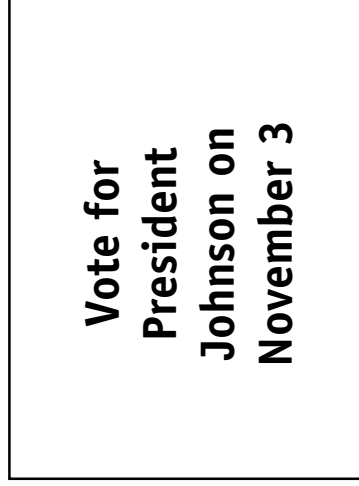
(Zoom to ECU)
Male VO: 3-2-1



(BOOM!) VO: President Johnson: These are the stakes. To make the world in which all of God's children can live



or go into the dark. We must either love each other or die.



**Vote for
President
Johnson on
November 3**

Male VO: Vote For President Johnson on Nov. 3rd. The stakes are too high to stay home.

Symbols

- ECU = extreme close up
- CU = close up
- MS = medium shot
- VO = voice-over



TEACHER NOTES

UNIT 5 | ACTIVITY 5.5 | EVERY VOTER SHOULD KNOW

This activity invites students to listen critically to a video interview with Don Baer, former journalist and White House speechwriter for President Clinton, and to create a list of ten things that every voter should know about the relationship between media and politics.

Getting Started

You'll want to tell your class about the video interview before you show it. It's not often that students get a candid "behind-the-scenes" opportunity to meet with someone who has been closely involved in shaping the way the media covers the political process.

About the Interview

Don Baer is a former senior White House adviser who served as Assistant to President Clinton for Strategic Planning and Communications and before that as Director of Speechwriting and Research and Chief Speechwriter. He joined Discovery Communications, Inc. in 1998 and is now Executive Vice President, Office of the President. He serves on the company's Executive Committee and is involved in directing many new ventures, including the expansion of Discovery's *Assignment: Media Literacy* program.

The students are from Towson High School in Maryland.

Taking Notes from Video

This activity provides a good opportunity to teach students about how to take notes from a videotape. You will want to model this activity yourself as you jot down memorable points or ideas as you watch this video.

You might help students learn to take notes by stopping the tape after one or two minutes and inviting students to read the phrases or ideas they jotted down. You can share the points you noted while listening. This will help students practice the skill of note-taking while viewing.

Creating the List

After viewing and note-taking, you might want students to work in groups to prepare their lists of what every voter should know. Students may want to make these serious or humorous, but the main criterion for this activity is to use the information from the videotape to create the list.



TEACHER NOTES



UNIT 5

CREATE A POLITICAL CAMPAIGN AD

Select a candidate—male or female—based on a figure in history, an author, or a character in literature. Plan and create a thirty-second TV advertisement for your candidate's election.

This Production Activity involves students in creating a persuasive message using the format of a television political campaign ad.

This activity is ideal for a small-group project, and will involve a range of skills, including writing, research, teamwork, problem solving, music, writing, acting, and more!

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 in the left margin. Establish a realistic deadline and monitor students' work during the process.

Evaluation

You might want students to evaluate each other's work using this evaluation sheet or you might want to use this as an evaluation tool yourself. Perhaps you'll hold a special event to screen the videos for the community or air them on your school's access channel!

Publishing Student Work on www.AssignmentMediaLit.com

See the Resources section on page 183 to learn how you or your students can send the completed videos to be published on the *Assignment: Media Literacy* website.

ASSIGNMENT



UNIT 5

CREATE A POLITICAL CAMPAIGN AD

(**ASSIGNMENT:** Select a candidate—male or female—based on a figure in history, an author, or a character in literature. Plan and create a thirty-second TV advertisement for your candidate’s election.

USE THIS CHECKLIST TO COMPLETE THE ACTIVITY:

Select a candidate and develop a campaign strategy.

- Brainstorm a list of possible candidates, taking into account the individual’s personal characteristics, past experiences, and the name-recognition that may give this person an advantage in running for office.
- Identify the candidate’s qualifications and position on a key issue.
 - What public issues are of genuine concern to your candidate? (For example, social welfare, economy, voting rights, drug use, gun control, health care, etc.)
 - What personal or professional experience does your candidate have regarding this issue or issues?
 - What proposals for action or solutions to an issue might your candidate favor?
- Identify the characteristics of the target audience of voters who will view the ad.

Plan the verbal and visual content for the ad.

- Imagine and gather possible visuals that could get the audience’s attention and relate to the campaign strategy.
- Write down the key phrases that the audience will hear.
- Plan your ad by creating a storyboard or script.

Create and present your ad.

- Collect the visuals you need using in-camera editing.
- Divide the treatment into major sections.
- Add the audio and music.
- Send your completed project to the AssignmentMediaLit website to publish it.

EVALUATION



UNIT 5

CREATE A POLITICAL CAMPAIGN AD

Student Name: _____

The candidate has been selected thoughtfully and a campaign strategy is evident.

4	Information has been gathered about the candidate and/or a plausible life story has been created for the character. The candidate is electable. The campaign strategy focuses on a key political issue.
3	Information has been gathered about the candidate but the candidate is not electable. The campaign strategy is not focused on a key political issue.
2	Not enough information has been gathered about the candidate and/or the life story created for the character is not plausible. The candidate is not electable. The campaign strategy is not focused on a key political issue.
1	Little evidence that the candidate has been selected with thoughtfulness.

The verbal and visual content has been planned effectively.

4	The visual elements of the message are attention-getting and relate to the campaign strategy. A storyboard or script has been written.
3	The visual elements of the message are not too attention-getting or relate to the campaign strategy weakly. A storyboard or script has been written.
2	The visual elements of the message do not relate to the campaign strategy. A storyboard or script has been written.
1	There is little evidence of effective planning.

The ad communicates to the target audience.

4	The ad has visuals and language that are persuasive to the target audience. Technical elements in constructing the video have been mastered.
3	The ad has visuals and language that are persuasive to the target audience. Technical elements in constructing the video need work.
2	The ad has visuals and language that are not persuasive to the target audience. Technical elements in constructing the video need work.
1	The ad is missing major components or is inappropriate for the target audience.

Comments:

Grade:

