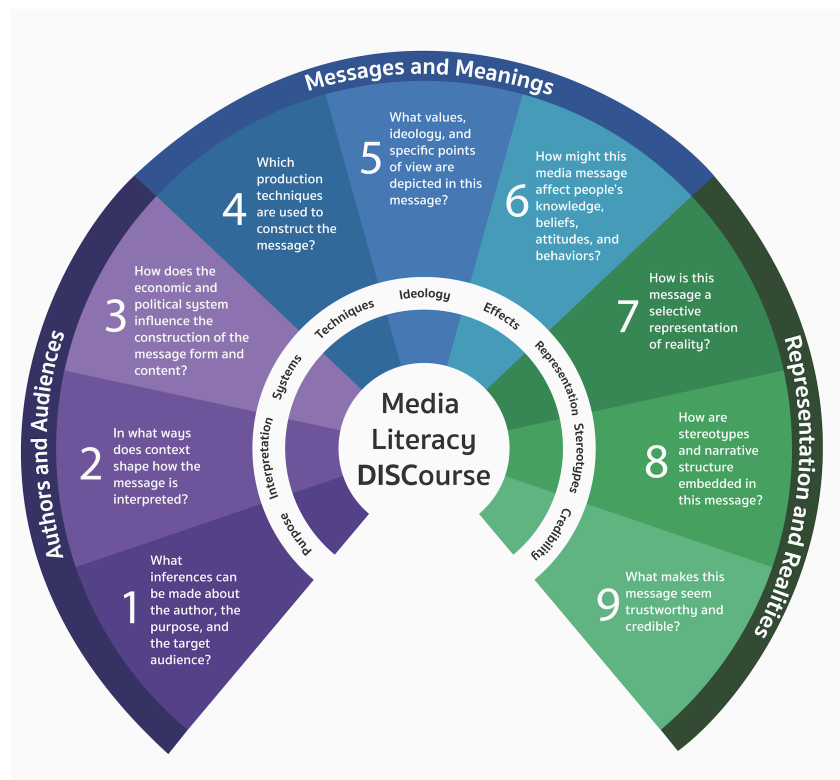


The Media Literacy DISCourse Wheel

A spin-the-wheel discussion tool puts nine critical questions in front of students and asks them to answer one, in writing, about media they actually use.



THREE FAMILIES, NINE QUESTIONS

Authors & Audiences

Purpose · Interpretation
· Systems

Messages & Meanings

Techniques · Ideology · Effects

Representations & Realities

Representation · Stereotypes
· Credibility

THE TOOL

mldisc-wheel-mel.netlify.app

SOURCE

Renee Hobbs, *Media Literacy in Action*,
2nd edition

01 · WHERE THE MODEL COMES FROM

The Media Literacy DISCourse Model is new to the second edition of *Media Literacy in Action* by Renee Hobbs. It gathers the book's theoretical foundations into nine questions that a student can ask of any media text — a post, an ad, a news story, a game clip, a song, a meme or anything with a URL.

The nine questions sit in the book's three-part structure — **Authors and Audiences, Messages and Meanings, Representations and Realities.**

The ML DISCourse Wheel helps students demonstrate their developing media literacy competencies and it also supports rich dialogue and discussion. The conceptual language gives your class a shared vocabulary for talking about media in a way that will sharpen their critical thinking in responding to all sorts of media artifacts.

#	CONCEPT	THE QUESTION STUDENTS ANSWER
1	Purpose AUTHORS & AUDIENCES	What can we infer about the author, purpose, and target audience?
2	Interpretation AUTHORS & AUDIENCES	How does context shape how the message is interpreted?
3	Systems AUTHORS & AUDIENCES	How do economic and political systems influence the message form and content?
4	Techniques MESSAGES & MEANINGS	Which production techniques are used to construct the message?
5	Ideology MESSAGES & MEANINGS	What values, ideology, and points of view are depicted in this message?
6	Effects MESSAGES & MEANINGS	How does this message affect knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors?
7	Representation REPRESENTATIONS & REALITIES	How is this message a selective representation of reality?
8	Stereotypes REPRESENTATIONS & REALITIES	How are stereotypes and narrative structure embedded in this message?
9	Credibility REPRESENTATIONS & REALITIES	What makes this message seem trustworthy and credible?

Table 1. The nine questions of the Media Literacy DISCourse Model, grouped by the three parts of *Media Literacy in Action*, 2nd ed.

02 • HOW THE ONLINE WHEEL WORKS

Every class gets its own board, identified by a six-character class code. Students describe a media artifact, spin for a question, answer it, and then read and rate each other's answers on a shared bulletin board. There is no student account and no login — a pseudonym and the class code are enough. Your posts, ratings and flags are saved online, so the board is the same for everyone in the class, on any device.



Describe your media first — then spin for your question.

Share your interpretations of the many different kinds of media in your life. Choose an artifact and describe it briefly, then spin the wheel to see what question from the Media Literacy DISCourse Model you must answer. See how critical questions activate critical thinking and discover the new insights that emerge.

01 YOUR ARTIFACT

02 THE SPIN

03 YOUR ANSWER

YOUR PSEUDONYM

e.g. RedPanda

WHAT IS THE ARTIFACT CALLED?

Nike, "Winning Isn't For Everyone"

LINK TO IT

https://

A post, ad, news story, video, meme, game clip, song — anything you can point at.

SCREENSHOT OR IMAGE URL optional

https://.../screenshot.png

Upload

KIND OF MEDIA

VIDEO

AD

SOCIAL POST

NEWS STORY

MEME

IMAGE

PODCAST

GAME

DESCRIBE IT BRIEFLY

Who made it, where you found it, what happens in it.

HOW DOES THIS MAKE YOU FEEL?

AMUSED

ANNOYED

MOVED

SUSPICIOUS

EXCITED

BORED

UNEASY

SEEN

MANIPULATED

CURIOUS



Wheel locked

Fill in the link, name, kind, description and a feeling — then the wheel unlocks.

WHAT COUNTS AS A GOOD ARTIFACT

Something you actually found this week in your own feed is best. The stranger the better; responding to strange media with insights from critical questions can

Figure 1. Step 01 of the student view. The wheel stays locked until the artifact is described — a link, a name, a kind of media, a description and a feeling.

STEP 01

Describe the artifact

A pseudonym, a title, a link or screenshot, the kind of media, a short description, and how it made them feel. Feelings matter here — the answer comes back to them later.

STEP 03

Answer in writing

The question and a supporting prompt sit above the answer box. The post goes to the class bulletin board under their pseudonym.

STEP 02

Spin the wheel

The wheel lands on one of the nine questions. It is weighted: questions your class has barely answered come up more often, so the board covers all nine over time. Students get one re-spin.

STEP 04

Read, rate and flag

Everyone reads others' answers, filters the board by question, gives 1–5 stars, and can flag anything inappropriate. A flag alerts you; it does not remove the post.

03 · YOUR TEACHER DASHBOARD

Your program coordinator has already set up a board for each of your classes. You will receive one **sign-in link**. Open it and you land on your teacher dashboard: every class you teach, in one list, with its class code, number of posts and number of flagged posts.

YOUR SIGN-IN LINK — TREAT IT LIKE A PASSWORD

The link carries your private **teacher key**. Anyone with it can moderate all of your classes, so never post it in your LMS or share it with students. Bookmark it. The browser you use also remembers you, so next time you can open the wheel and choose your name under **Teachers with several classes**.

ON THE DASHBOARD	WHAT IT DOES
Open	Goes to that class's board with moderation already unlocked. No extra key needed.
Copy student link	Copies a link with the class code built in. Paste it into your LMS and students land on the right board.
Flagged	The count turns red when students have flagged a post you have not reviewed yet.
Add a class	Type a class name to create one more board. It joins your list straight away.
Download class codes (CSV)	A spreadsheet of every class, its code, its student link, and post and flag counts.
Refresh · Sign out	Refresh updates the counts. Sign out on any shared or school computer.

04 · MODERATING A BOARD

Open a class from your dashboard and choose the **Instructor** tab. Flags are advisory: nothing disappears until you decide.

1. **Review the queue.** Every flagged or hidden post is listed with its flag count and the full answer.
2. **Hide or unhide.** Hide takes a post off the student board straight away. Unhide puts it back. You can also hide directly from the bulletin board while you are signed in.

3. **Watch coverage.** The panel shows how many of the nine questions your class has answered.
4. **Export the class set (CSV).** Every post with its question, artifact, emotion, answer, rating and flags. That's a ready-made corpus for a follow-up discussion or a graded reflection.

Students see the board without hidden posts. Each student can rate a post once and flag it once from their browser.

05 · THE ON-RAMP: YOUR FIRST CLASS SESSION

Plan on 45 minutes. Everything below assumes students bring their own phones or laptops. Nothing needs to be installed. You can also assign this as homework.

BEFORE CLASS — FIVE MINUTES

1. Open your **sign-in link** to reach your teacher dashboard.
2. Find the class and choose **Copy student link**. Paste it into your LMS. The code travels in the link, so students land on the right board.
3. Also write the **class code** on the board. Students can type it on the wheel's home screen instead.
4. Choose **Open**, spin once yourself and post a model answer. One good example does more than five minutes of instruction.

CLASS

CLASS CODE

0–5 min

Show the wheel, not the theory

Project the wheel and spin it once. Read the question it lands on out loud. Say nothing about media literacy theory yet.

5–12 min

Hand out the link and ask students to pick artifacts

Students open the student link (or type the class code) and choose something they actually saw this week in their own feed. Strange beats important. Anything with a URL works well.

12–25 min

Spin and write

Silence is fine here. Encourage students to take the time to summarize the artifact and reflect on their feelings before answering the question they landed on.

25–38 min

Read three, rate three

Send everyone to the bulletin board. Students click on the title to see the artifact for themselves and then read the response. Ratings enable students to judge the quality of an answer.

38–45 min **Name the concept**

Pull two posts on the screen and name which part of the model each question belongs to. How do “Authors and Audiences,” “Messages and Meanings” and “Representations and Realities” hang together?

WHAT TO SAY WHEN A STUDENT IS STUCK

“I don’t have anything to analyze” — open the last app they used and take the third thing in the feed.

They summarize instead of analyze — ask them to quote or describe one exact moment.

“I got a hard question” — encourage students to notice something they cannot tell from the artifact alone.

They finish in four minutes — send them to rate three answers and defend their rating of one artifact out loud.

06 · WHAT A STRONG ANSWER LOOKS LIKE

Before students rate each other's posts, it can be useful to make these three criteria public before they write. Strong responses will:

Point at the evidence

Quote or describe the exact moment in the artifact they are talking about — a frame, a line, a caption.

Name the limit

Say what cannot be known from the artifact alone. Naming the gap is analysis, not failure.

Close the loop on feeling

Connect the answer back to the emotion they recorded in step one. Why did the artifact work on them?

Use the class-set export over the term and see how their responses improve!

07 · FOUR WAYS TO KEEP USING IT

One question per week

Assign a single concept for the week. Students filter the bulletin board to that question and build a term-long board that maps the whole model.

Cross-section comparison

Each of your sections already has its own board. Export the class set from two of them and have students compare how the same question was answered by strangers.

Same artifact, nine questions

Put one artifact in front of the whole class and let the weighted wheel distribute the questions. The board becomes a nine-angle reading of one text.

Write from the board

Use the exported class set as the source material for a graded analytic essay — students cite their classmates' posts.

08 · QUICK FIXES

I lost my sign-in link

Ask your program coordinator. They can copy it again from the coordinator dashboard.

A student posted to the wrong class

Hide the post on that board and ask the student to re-post using the right student link.

Moderation asks for a key

Open the board from your dashboard instead, or paste your teacher key into the Instructor tab.

I need a class that isn't listed

Use **Add a class** at the bottom of your dashboard.

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