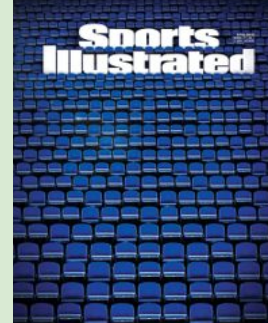


MAGAZINE MEDIA LITERACY IN THE TIME OF CORONAVIRUS

Use magazine covers from the pandemic to develop visual literacy & analyze informational texts.



Learning Goals

- Develop visual analysis skills with special attention to multimodal features including text, images and design;
- Understand, use and apply concepts in media literacy, including audience, authorship, representation, and meaning;
- Activate critical thinking in considering how the coronavirus pandemic is represented in media.

Instructions

Introduce the activity by asking students how they have seen the Covid-19 pandemic represented in the media they've consumed: TV, social media, memes, magazines, advertisements, etc. Are there any messages that stood out in particular?

Access Frank Baker's magazine cover collection, providing students with the context of this archive and asking students whether they've seen similar covers, at home or online.

Review the media literacy concepts included on the corresponding worksheet.

Apply the terminology in a group magazine analysis to model the activity, discussing one cover together as a class and asking questions to guide student interpretation and demonstrate close reading.

Direct students to choose a magazine cover from the collection and analyze the cover, applying 1 or 2 media literacy concepts.

Reflect on the activity as a group. Ask students: How does this activity change the way they feel about these images? How does your magazine cover differ from others? What can you learn about magazine audiences and authors from these examples?



Access [Frank Baker's Pandemic Magazine Cover Collection](#)

Visit the [Media Education Lab web page](#) for:

- A list of vocabulary words & definitions
- Common Core Standards

Technology

- This activity was first modeled by the Media Education Lab with MURAL, a virtual whiteboard. Learn about MURAL and view a blank template for this lesson's workspace [here](#).
- Other technologies compatible with this activity include: a class blog; a shared Google Doc/Slides on which students post their work and leave comments; screen-sharing over a video conferencing platform.
- This lesson works as a shared class time activity, or asynchronously by having students complete the activity independently and leave comments on other student work.

Working with All Grade Levels

This activity can be modified for elementary, middle and high school classes.

- **Elementary School:** Use this activity to build media literacy vocabulary. Spend time going over keywords, distinguishing between a magazine and an advertisement, and identifying images, words and symbols.
- **Middle School:** Have students demonstrate their knowledge by making their own magazine covers. Assign them a magazine title, and have them create a cover that would appeal to their audience through graphics and text.
- **High School:** Apply critical media literacy skills, thinking about power, information, and the commercial side of magazines.

Created by Sarah Clapp

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Examples



For Elementary & Middle School Students: Focus on identifying images, symbols and text.

TYPE OF PUBLICATION:

Based on the title, this is a magazine about money and business in Europe.

SYMBOL: The virus is an asteroid plummeting down to Earth. The cover makes it seem like the virus is an outside threat that can't be stopped.

COLOR: The orange and red flames are dramatic and scary.



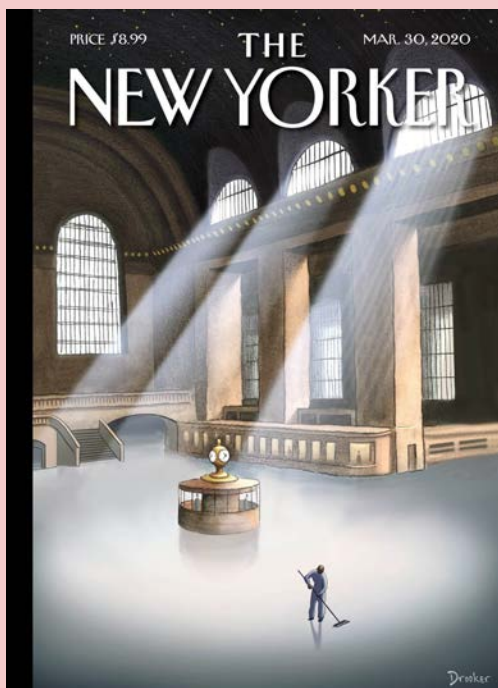
TEXT: The words 'survive' and 'impact' stir up fear and relate to the image. The asteroid colliding with Earth would be destructive. The magazine suggests that the virus would be just as bad to banking.

FEELINGS: The asteroid hitting Earth makes it seem like the world is going to end.

For High School Students: Think critically about messages, demographics and power.

CONTEXT: This is Grand Central Station, a landmark in New York representing travel, work, movement and public space.

REPRESENTATION: The custodian and ticket booth attendants are essential worker. With the absence of travelers/ commuters, this may be a comment on who gets to work from home vs. who do not.



COLOR/DESIGN: The light streaming in draws attention to the station's emptiness.

OMISSIONS: Even with stay at home orders, many people still use public transportation to get to work. Where are they? Is this an accurate reflection of the city, an incomplete snapshot, or a heightened version of life in the center of the pandemic?

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Key Concepts



Authors & Audiences

AA1. Authors create media for different purposes.

AA2. Authors target specific audiences.

AA3. People make interpretations of messages that can be shaped by the context in which they experience them and the context in which they are produced.

AA4. Both authors and audiences add value to media messages as part of an economic and political system.

Author's
Purpose

Interpretation

Type of
Publication

Context

Value

Target
Audience

Power

Representations & Realities

RR1. Messages are selective representations of reality.

RR2. Messages use stereotypes to express ideas and information.

RR3. Authority and authenticity are features of media messages that can be assessed.

Accuracy

Credibility

Omissions

Point of
View

Stereotypes

Authority

Authenticity

Messages & Meanings

MM1. Production techniques are used to construct messages.

MM2. The content of media messages contain values, ideology and specific points of view.

MM3. Messages have effects on people's attitudes and behaviors.

Color

Typography

Page Design

Symbols

Feelings

Ideas

Behaviors