

KEY QUESTIONS TO ASK WHEN ANALYZING MEDIA MESSAGES

USING THIS GRID – Media literate people routinely ASK QUESTIONS IN EVERY CATEGORY – the middle column – as they navigate the media world. Occasionally a category will not apply to a particular message, but in general, sophisticated “close reading” requires exploring the full range of issues covered by the ten categories.

- The specific questions listed here are suggestions; you should adapt them or add your own to meet your students’ developmental level and learning goals.
- Encourage students to recognize that many questions will have more than one answer (which is why the categories are in plural form).
- To help students develop the habit of giving evidence-based answers, nearly every question should be followed with a probe for evidence: HOW DO YOU KNOW? WHAT MAKES YOU SAY THAT?
- And remember that the ultimate goal is for students to learn to ask these questions for themselves.

		SAMPLE QUESTIONS
AUTHORS & AUDIENCES	AUTHORSHIP	Who made this?
	PURPOSES	Why was this made? What does this want me to do? Who is the target audience? Who are they talking to? or Who is this for?
	ECONOMICS	Who paid for this?
	EFFECTS	Who might benefit from this message? Who might be harmed by it? Is this message good for me or people like me? What does the storyteller want me to remember?
	RESPONSES	What actions might I take in response to this message? How might I participate productively? How does this make me feel and how do my emotions influence my interpretation of this?
MESSAGES & MEANINGS	CONTENT	What does this want me to think (or think about)? What would someone learn from this? What does this tell me about [insert topic]? What ideas, values, information, or points of view are overt? Implied? What is left out that might be important to know?
	TECHNIQUES	What techniques are used and why? How do the techniques communicate the message?
	INTERPRETATIONS	How might different people understand this message differently? What is my interpretation and what do I learn about myself from my reaction or interpretation?
REPRESENTATIONS & REALITY	CONTEXT	When was this made? Where or how was it shared with the public?
	CREDIBILITY	Is this fact, opinion, or something else? How credible is this (and how do you know)? What are the sources of the information, ideas, or assertions? Can I trust this source to tell me the truth about this topic?