

Lesson Plan: Media Detectives - Uncovering the Message

Materials Needed:

- A simple notebook (to be the "Media Detective Notebook")
 - Pencils, markers, and colored pencils
 - A few kid-friendly magazines, comics, or newspapers
 - Scissors and a glue stick
 - Several examples of product packaging (e.g., a cereal box, a toy box, a juice box)
 - Access to a computer or tablet with internet (for viewing a short, pre-selected video or website)
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Subject: Media Literacy

Grade Level: 3rd-4th Grade (Age 9)

Time Allotment: 60-75 minutes

1. Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson, the student will be able to:

- Identify at least three different forms of media (e.g., advertisement, news article, TV show).
- Explain the three main purposes of media: to inform, to persuade (influence), and to entertain.
- Analyze a simple advertisement to determine its purpose and who it is trying to reach (its target audience).
- Create a unique piece of media (an advertisement) with a clear purpose and audience in mind.

2. Key Concepts

- **Media:** Different ways we share information and ideas with lots of people at once.
- **Purpose:** The main reason something was created.
- **Inform:** To give facts and information.
- **Persuade (Influence):** To try to make you think, feel, or do something.
- **Entertain:** To provide fun and enjoyment.
- **Target Audience:** The specific group of people the media is made for.

3. Lesson Procedure

Part 1: The Media Scavenger Hunt (10 minutes - Engagement)

1. **Introduce the Mission:** "Today, you are a Media Detective! Your mission is to uncover the secret messages all around us. Media is just a fancy word for all the ways we share ideas—from books to TV shows to the logos on our clothes. First, we need to find the evidence!"
 2. **The Hunt:** Set a timer for 3 minutes. Challenge the student to run around the room (or house) and find as many different types of media as they can. They can either bring the items back or write them down in their new "Media Detective Notebook." Examples could include a book, a magazine, a cereal box, a remote control (for the TV), a tablet, a T-shirt with a logo, etc.
 3. **Discuss the Findings:** Talk about what they found. Explain that all these things are "media" because they are all communicating a message to us.
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Part 2: Cracking the Code - The Three Purposes (15 minutes - Exploration)

1. **Introduce the "Three Secret Codes":** In the Detective Notebook, create three columns with the headings: **INFORM**, **PERSUADE**, and **ENTERTAIN**.
2. **Code #1: To Inform.** Explain that this media gives us facts and teaches us something new.
 - **Example:** Quickly look up a fun fact on a kid-friendly news website (like National Geographic Kids or DOGO News) about an animal the student likes. Ask: "What did we just learn? This website's job is to *inform* us."
3. **Code #2: To Entertain.** Explain that this media is made for our enjoyment and fun.
 - **Example:** Ask about their favorite cartoon, movie, or storybook. "Why do you like watching/reading it? Is it trying to sell you something or teach you a fact?" Explain its main purpose is to *entertain*.
4. **Code #3: To Persuade.** Explain that this media tries to get you to do something, buy something, or believe something. This is the code we need to watch out for the most!
 - **Example:** Show them a commercial on a video platform (a pre-selected, kid-friendly toy or food ad works best) or a colorful ad in a magazine. Ask: "What does this ad want you to do?" (Buy the toy/food!). "It is trying to *persuade* you."

Part 3: Case File - The Cereal Box Investigation (20 minutes - Application & Analysis)

1. **Select the Evidence:** Place a cereal box (or other product packaging) on the table. "Detective, let's investigate this piece of evidence."
2. **Guided Questions:** Guide the student through analyzing the box, asking questions and writing down clues in their notebook.
 - "Who do you think this cereal is for? Kids or grown-ups? How can you tell?" (This is the **Target Audience**). Point out the cartoon character, bright colors, and puzzles on the back.
 - "What words do they use to make it sound good?" (e.g., "Frosty," "Super," "Chocolatey," "Part of a balanced breakfast").
 - "What pictures do they use?" (e.g., The cereal splashing in milk, the happy character).
 - "How does looking at this box make you feel?" (e.g., Hungry, excited).
 - "So, what is the main purpose of this box? To inform, entertain, or persuade?" (It's mainly to **persuade**, but it might have some informing (nutrition facts) and entertaining (games) elements, too!)
3. **Independent Case File:** Ask the student to choose a different ad from a magazine, cut it out, and glue it into their notebook. Beside it, they should complete their own "Case File" by answering: 1. What is it selling? 2. Who is the target audience? 3. What is its main purpose?

Part 4: You're the Creator! (15-20 minutes - Creation & Assessment)

1. **The Final Challenge:** "Detective, you've cracked the code. Now it's your turn to create the media! Your mission is to invent a new product and create a magazine ad for it."
2. **Brainstorm:** The product can be anything they imagine (e.g., shoes that make you jump super high, a pencil that never makes mistakes, a brand of pet food for dragons).
3. **Design the Ad:** On a blank piece of paper, the student will draw their ad. Before they start, remind them to think like a media creator:
 - "Who is your **target audience**?" (Kids? Parents? Dragon owners?)
 - "How will you **persuade** them?" (Catchy name, bright colors, exciting words, a picture of someone happily using the product).
4. **Create:** Let the student draw and design their ad.

4. Wrap-up and Debrief (5 minutes)

- The student presents their ad, explaining their product and the choices they made to persuade their target audience.
- Ask for a final review: "Quick! Name one type of media that **informs**." (News). "One that

entertains." (Movie). "And one that **persuades.**" (An ad!).

- Congratulate them on a successful mission and officially name them a "Master Media Detective."

5. Differentiation and Extension

- **For Extra Support:** Provide a pre-drawn template for the ad with boxes for "Product Name," "Drawing," and "Catchy Slogan." Work side-by-side during the Cereal Box Investigation, writing down the answers together.
- **For an Advanced Challenge:** Ask the student to find an example of media that has two purposes (e.g., an educational TV show like *Wild Kratts* that both informs and entertains). Or, have them write and perform a 30-second TV commercial script for their created product.