

LESSON PLAN

Wacky Media Songs: Reading Media

This lesson is part of USE, UNDERSTAND & ENGAGE: A digital media literacy framework for Canadian schools. <http://mediasmarts.ca/teacher-resources/digital-literacy-framework>



LEVEL: Grade K to 3

DURATION: 10-15 minutes per activity

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Overview

This lesson series contains discussion topics and extension activities for teachers to integrate the TVOKids Original series *Wacky Media Songs*. This lesson focuses on how media are made, how different media and genres tell stories and communicate meaning, and the affordances and defaults of different networked media.

Learning outcomes

Students will:

- Understand that media are constructions that imperfectly reflect reality
- Explore how media producers make choices that produce different effects for different purposes
- Understand that each medium has a unique aesthetic form
- Learn that different media have different codes and conventions that are used to direct attention and communicate meaning
- Understand that how interactive media are made influences how we use them
- Consider how the designers of interactive media make choices that influence how we use them, and explore their reasons for doing so

Preparation and materials

- Review the following *Wacky Media Songs* videos and prepare to show students the ones you wish to discuss:
 - [Frame It!](#)
 - [Media is Everywhere!](#)
 - [Reading Images!](#)
 - [The Algorithm Knows!](#)

- [Make Me Shine!](#)
- [The Emoji Dance!](#)
- [We'll Make Them Want It!](#)
- If you are showing students *Frame It!* you may also wish to prepare to show the following videos:
 - [House Hippo 2.0](#)
 - [Basic Puppeteering Using a Monitor](#)

Procedure

Each of the videos in this lesson has discussion prompts for before and after viewing the lesson. Some also have extension activities to follow the lesson.

After reviewing the videos, choose which ones you feel will be most interesting and relevant to your students.

FRAME IT!

Frames aren't just for pictures! When we tell a story, we choose what parts to keep in and what parts to leave out. What we keep is "in the frame". Every type of media has a kind of invisible frame, too! Get in the frame with Ava!

Before the video, ask: What kinds of choices do you think people make when they make media, like filming a movie?

After the video, ask: What's the difference between looking out a window and seeing something framed in media?

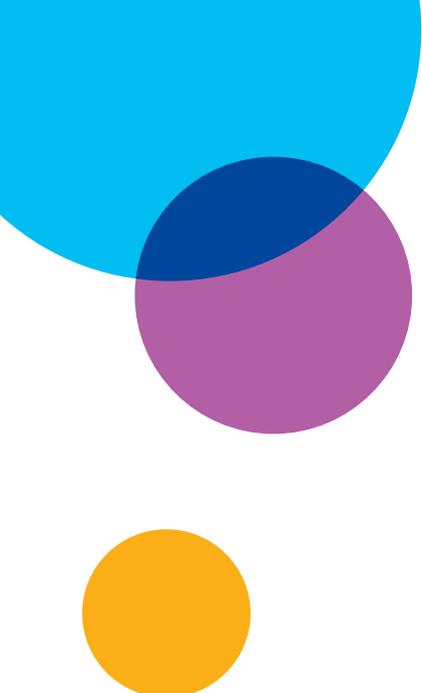
How can the media frame sometimes be misleading?

Extension Activity: Watch the video [House Hippo 2.0](#). How does it use the media frame to make the hippo look real?

You can also watch the video [Basic Puppeteering Using A Monitor](#) to see how important the media frame is in making puppets look real. If you have any puppets, you and your students can use your phone to "frame" a puppet video!

MEDIA IS EVERYWHERE!

From billboards to magazines, music, apps, text messages and even the logo on your jacket, media is any form of communication that gets messages across to an audience. Ava sings about all the media surrounding us 24/7!



Before the video, ask: What do you think the word “media” means? What are some examples of media?

After the video, ask: What kinds of media do you see, hear or play most often?

What are some differences between media and real life?

Extension Activity: Make a list of all the media you see in a day. (Make sure to include things like billboards, T-shirts with logos or characters, statues, and anything else that carries a message.)

READING IMAGES

Did you know you can read images almost like you read words? It’s called visual communication and it has its own language. Sing along with Ava as she explores how camera angles and lighting are used to affect our emotions.

Before the video, ask: Think about some of the best scenes in your favourite movies. What makes you remember them? What makes them exciting, or funny, or dramatic?

After the video, ask: Did some of the movie scenes you thought of use the things Ava was talking about, like close-ups, camera angles, and light and colour? (You can use YouTube to watch some of these scenes if you don’t have a copy or access on a streaming service.)

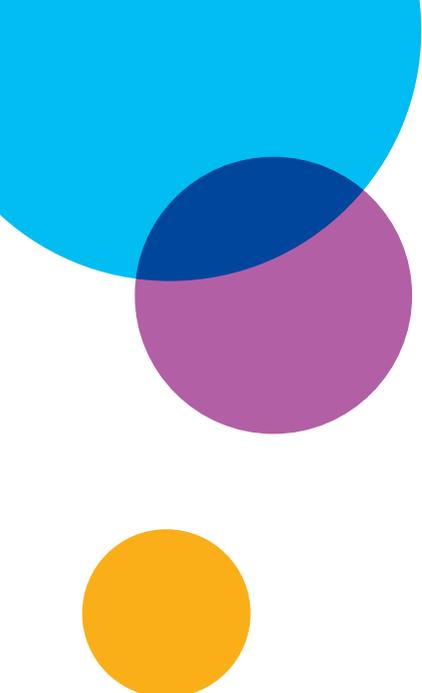
Do other media, like comics or video games, use some of the same techniques? What other techniques do they use to do the same thing?

Extension Activity: Use your phone to film a scene with your students. Can you use camera angles to make it look like your students are powerful and you’re scared of them? What other techniques from the video can you use?

THE ALGORITHM KNOWS!

How does the Internet know that Ava loves puppies and why does it show her all kinds of stuff about puppies? Because the algorithm knows! An algorithm is like an online formula that collects information about us based on what we search for and what videos we watch. Mystery solved!

Before the video, ask: Do you know the word “algorithm”? What do you think it means?



After the video, ask: What are some apps or websites that you use that use algorithms? (YouTube uses an algorithm to recommend what to watch next; Google uses one to decide what search results and ads to show you.)

Why do they use algorithms to decide what to show you? (It lets them target you with ads and other content you're more likely to respond to.)

What might be bad about only seeing the things the algorithm recommends to you?

MAKE ME SHINE!

The burger Ava bought doesn't look like the picture in the ad. That's because advertisers use all kinds of tricks to make food look amazing so that we'll buy it. And sometimes the food in ads isn't even edible! Sing along with Ava as she reveals some of coolest food styling secrets!

Before the video, ask: Do you think advertisers use real food in ads? What might be some reasons why they would, and some reasons why they wouldn't?

After the video, ask: What are some of the ways that people make food look good in ads? Do you think it's fair that they do that?

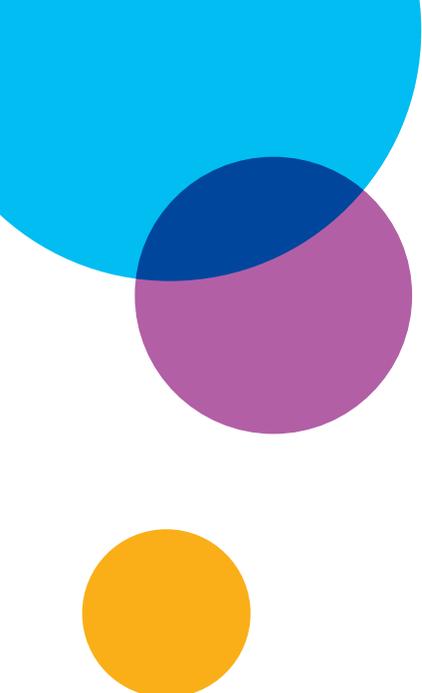
Extension Activity: Find an ad for fast food and then buy and take a picture of the food being advertised. Then compare the real thing to the food in the ad. (Remember that kids like fast food, so make sure they don't think you're telling them not to like it - just that they shouldn't count on ads to tell them what food really looks or tastes like.)

THE EMOJI DANCE!

Sometimes words aren't enough to get your meaning across. That's where emojis come in. Words and emojis make a great team. Do the emoji dance with Ava and end it with a big happy face emoji!

Before the video, ask: Do you ever use emojis when you're talking online? What do you use them for?

After the video, ask: Could you sometimes send a message you don't mean to with an emoji? How could you avoid that?



WE'LL MAKE THEM WANT IT!

Packaging is the marketers' last chance to convince us to buy their product. They have to grab our attention right away. Ava designs a package as she sings about the different packaging tricks marketers use to make kids say: "Wow! I want that!"

Before the video, ask: Have you ever seen something in a store that made you want to buy it (or ask for it)? What about it made you want it?

After the video, ask: Pause on this part of the video. Which box makes you want the cookies more? Why? (For example, bright colours, cartoon characters, fun logos and lettering.) Does it make any difference to how the cookies taste?

Extension Activity: Do a "media literacy field trip" to a grocery store. Look for packages that are aimed at kids and ask students how the packages try to make them notice and ask for the products. Look for things like bright colours, cartoon characters, and giveaways. Now look at products aimed at adults and talk about how they're different. What about packages is aimed at different audiences besides the packaging? (For example, kids' food is usually lower down on the shelf, at kids' eye-level.)