

Teacher Tool 354: Media Literacy: Political Campaign Ads—How to Cut Through the Noise

Program Guide

Study Guide for Point to Point 12: Campaign Ads—How to Cut Through the Noise

Program Objectives, Description and Availability	Page 2
Cost, Connection, and Enrollment Information	Page 2-3
Pre-Program Activity Suggestions	Page 3
Post-Program Activity Suggestions	Page 3-4
Featured Vocabulary and National Standards	Page 4-5



Media Literacy: Political Campaign Ads—How to Cut Through the Noise
Expert: Members of the Gateway Media Literacy Partnership

Targeted Grade Levels: 5-12

Availability: Program requests must be made at least two weeks prior to your desired date. When enrolling, please let us know at least three possible dates and times you'd like to schedule your interaction.

Program Description:

Political campaign ads often affect what we think of candidates and influence who we ultimately vote for and elect into office, likely more than we realize. We all like to think that we're immune to falling for marketing tricks, but these ads use certain tactics to make sure that they stick in our brains and leave us with a particular impression or feeling. We often don't realize how much we've learned to pick up on these cues that are so prevalent in campaign ads, which is why they have such a deep but insidious effect on us.

There are many ways that we can use tools from the media literacy toolkit to analyze political campaign ads in order to help us cut through the noise and get a better understanding of what candidates and political issues are really all about. We're going to look at two tools specifically: affective response and production values.

The goal of all of Educate.Today's programs is for the conversation to be guided entirely by the topics you wish addressed and the questions your students want answered. Your topic preferences and advance questions are due to us no less than three days prior to your scheduled interaction.

Program Objectives:

Students will:

1. evaluate the reliability of a source by assessing bias, relevance, currency, and viewpoint.
2. evaluate media messages to recognize bias, spin, misinformation, and mistruths.
3. consider multiple viewpoints and cultural perspectives.
4. consider the purpose of media messages.
5. recognize that media messages shape our culture and society.

Program Format:

Introduction: We'll begin with a short biography of the presenter and an overview of the session.

Heart of the Program: Several political ads will be presented to analyze the affective responses desired, and how production values were used to reach that response. Production values will be discussed including editing, color, movement and angle.

Conclusion: A quick wrap up, reemphasizing important points.

How To Connect for the Program:

1. Via h.323 Videoconference
2. Via Skype, Zoom, or other similar desktop videoconference software

When you enroll for the program, please let us know your preferred method of connection.

To Enroll: Enrollment can occur in any of the following ways:

1. Go to our web site and enroll via the link provided on the video play page for this program.
2. E-mail us at info@educate.today and put “Enrolling for Campaign Ad Point to Point“ in the title of the e-mail. Please include your contact information in the e-mail and at least three proposed dates and times for your interaction.

We will respond to either method of enrollment to finalize a scheduled date for your interaction, make sure you have all program preparatory materials, and handle technical details for your method of connection including test calls.

Cost and Payment: \$110—Payment may be made via credit card or school district purchase order. Payment must be received prior to the scheduled program date.

Cancellation Policy: Once a date and time has been scheduled for your interaction, you can cancel or reschedule without penalty within 24 hours. After 24 hours and up to 7 days before your scheduled program, we’ll refund 50% of your original fee. Within 7 days of the scheduled date, we do not offer a refund. Should an uncontrollable emergency occur (i.e.: snow day, etc.), we will work with you to reschedule the program for a new date and time but should that prove impossible, we will refund 50% of your original fee. Should our program expert or other circumstance force a cancellation on our end from your original date, we will work with you to reschedule the program for a new date and time that works for you, or we will refund your purchase in full.

Pre-Program Activity Suggestions:

1. Assign students to watch two current political ads. After an hour or so, they should make notes of what they saw, heard and remembered. This will be used after the program also.
2. Send Us Your Advance Questions for Your Interaction: Work with students in advance of their interaction to determine up to the ten (10) most important questions you’d like to ask the experts during your program. Send these questions to us by completing the Campaign Ads Point to Point Worksheet document sent to you with preparatory materials for this program and also available on our Educate.Today website. E-mail it to us at info@educate.today no less than three days prior to your scheduled interaction. Additional spontaneous questions will be encouraged during the program, but these questions will be used to organize the conversation.

Post-Program Activity Suggestions:

1. After the session, have your students watch the same ads as they have viewed before the program. They should compare and contrast what they observe now with the notes they took previously.
2. Students could create two ads for a made-up organization, one positive and one negative. The copy should be the same or very similar. The production values used in each ad should be as different as possible to bring about the affective response desired. As part of our mission, Educate.Today is dedicated to publishing student work for other students to learn from. If you’d like to submit a student video interview, article, or essay based on this activity for possible

publication, e-mail us at info@educate.today and put “Publish Student Work” in the title line. We’ll respond with next steps for possible publication.

Vocabulary Related to the Program:

Access: The ability of media consumers to produce their own texts and to have those texts acknowledged by the agenda setting media. Also, the ability of media consumers to respond to the dominant media.

Agenda-setting: The ability of the media to tell people what and whom to talk and think about. Also refers to those media that have more credibility than their competition.

Audience: The group of consumers for whom the media text was constructed as well as anyone else who is exposed to the text.

Branding: The process by which a commodity in the marketplace is known primarily for the image it projects rather than any actual quality.

Censorship: The practice of suppressing a text or part of a text that is considered objectionable according to certain standards.

Construct or Construction: The process by which a media text is shaped and given meaning through a process that is subject to a variety of decisions and is designed to keep the audience interested in the text.

Consumers: The audience for whom a commercial media text is constructed and who responds to the text with commercial activity.

Critical: A reflective position on the meaning, biases or value messages of a text.

Critical Viewing: The ability to use critical thinking skills to view, question, analyze and understand issues presented overtly and covertly in movies, videos, television and other visual media.

Deconstruction: The process by which the audience identifies the elements that make up the construction of meaning within a text.

Demographics: Measurable characteristics of media consumers such as age, gender, race, education and income level.

Marketing: The way in which a product or media text is sold to a target audience.

Mass Media: Mass media refers to those media that are designed to be consumed by large audiences through the agencies of technology.

Media Education: Traditionally, it's the process by which one learns the technical production skills associated with creating media texts. More recently, it has also included the intellectual processes of critical consumption or deconstruction of texts.

Media Literacy: The process of understanding and using the mass media in an assertive and non-passive way. This includes an informed and critical understanding of the nature of the media, the techniques used by them and the impact of these techniques.

Media: The plural form of medium; the term has come to mean all the industrial forms of mass communication combined.

Narrative: How the plot or story is told. In a media text, narrative is the coherent sequencing of events across time and space.

Production: The industrial process of creating media texts as well as the people who are engaged in this process.

Production Values: Describes the quality of a media production proportional to the money and technology expended on the text.

Propaganda: Any media text whose primary purpose is to openly persuade an audience of the validity of a particular point of view.

Stereotypes: A form of media representation by which instantly recognized characteristics are used to label members of social or cultural groups. While often negative, stereotypes can contain an element of truth and are used by the media to establish an instant rapport with the audience.

Text: The individual results of media production: a movie, a TV episode, a book, an issue of a magazine or newspaper, an advertisement, an album, etc.

Transparency: The quality of a media text by which it appears to be natural rather than constructed.

Word-of-mouth: Informal way in which media products become known by audiences.

Featured National Standards:

Common Core National Standards are Referenced Below:

CC.3.R.I.9 Integration of Knowledge and Ideas: Compare and contrast the most important points and key details presented in two texts on the same topic.

CC.6.R.I.7 Integration of Knowledge and Ideas: Integrate information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words to develop a coherent understanding of a topic or issue

CC.7.W.8 Research to Build and Present Knowledge: Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, using search terms effectively; assess the credibility and accuracy of each source; and quote or paraphrase the data and conclusions of others while avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation

CC.9-10.SL.2 Comprehension and Collaboration: Integrate multiple sources of information presented in diverse media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) evaluating the credibility and accuracy of each source.

RI.4.8* (Priority Standard) Explain how an author uses reasons and evidence to support particular points in a text.

RI.4.7 (supporting standard) 7. Interpret information presented visually, orally, or quantitatively (e.g., in charts, graphs, diagrams, time lines, animations, or interactive elements on Web pages) and explain how the information contributes to an understanding of the text in which it appears.

RI.4.9 Integrate information from two texts on the same topic in order to write or speak about the subject knowledgeably.

P21: Partnership for 21st Century Learning Standards are Referenced Below:

<http://www.p21.org/our-work/p21-framework>

Analyze Media

- Understand both how and why media messages are constructed, and for what purposes
- Examine how individuals interpret messages differently, how values and points of view are included or excluded, and how media can influence beliefs and behaviors
- Apply a fundamental understanding of the ethical/legal issues surrounding the access and use of media