MEETING 2: TEAMBUILDING, BIAS, DECIDE YOUR LOCAL TOPIC

Objectives of Meeting 2
- ❖ Teambuilding
- ❖ Understand bias
- ❖ Learn the power of seeking diverse opinions
- ❖ Identify local issue the delegation will research
- ❖ Assign work to be completed prior to the next meeting

1.	**The meeting essentials**
2.	**Civil discourse**
3.	**Using media to inform on a local topic**

Activity 9:	**Teambuilding**

A picture speaks a thousand words:
You will need printed copies of pictures from magazines, photographs or postcards, enough for each participant to have one. Spread them out on a table and have each participant pick one and hold on to it. Then, go around and allow participants to introduce themselves and indicate why they picked the photograph and what it says about them. They can define this however, they would like. (This activity allow for unique details of participants' lives to emerge as well as gets them thinking about how photos tell stories or speak a thousand words.
- How did the photos make the person's words or story more interesting or meaningful?
- What was something interesting you learned about another person?

Activity 10:	**Seek Diverse Opinions**

This activity is about purposely seeking diverse opinions and listening to learn. For many reasons, we are surrounded by people and news sources that are consistent with what we already believe. We may not realize how prevalent other viewpoints are and when we do hear differing opinions, we may believe they are untrue or misguided.

View these videos prior to the meeting and pick at least two of these three videos to show the group:
1. Katie Couric: On Civil Discourse, Disagreement and Respect (Less than 3 minutes) (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VbOcWhFJHus)
   After watching this video, think about who you respect but do not share the same worldview. How has that impacted your interaction with that person?

1. Why Facts Don't Convince People (Less than 3 minutes) (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S74C-XF9kYY)
   Did anything in this video resonate with you? What and why?

1. How our Friendship Survives Our Opposing Politics (This is 15 minutes but very complete in the message) (https://www.ted.com/talks/caitlin_quattromani_and_lauran_arledge_how_our_friendship_survives_our_opposing_politics)
   After watching this video, think about your own personal relationships. Have any of them been affected due to differing beliefs?

In the end, the opposing beliefs or opinions may not change our minds but it can help us learn how to explain our beliefs in a way that can be better heard or understood.

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Personal Bias There is not only bias in media, but also in persons.

Personal Bias is defined as a strong leaning in either a positive or a negative direction. It is a point of view influenced by experience.
Point of View is defined as an opinion, attitude, or judgment on the part of an individual .

Ask the delegates how many of them feel they are not biased. (If some raise their hands, be sure to ask again at the end of this section.) Propose that EVERYONE has bias. Bias is neither good nor bad; it is just a perspective/opinion on a subject that is influenced by the background of a person. We are all diverse individuals with different perspectives. Their experiences and personalities form who they are and what they believe. Tell the students that we all have biases, but we are not always aware of them. Since people have different experiences, we all develop different biases.
● What examples of bias does one observe in everyday life?
It may take some time, but please reinforce the idea of bias in everyday life.

Bias is a leaning in a particular direction or a tendency to think or feel in a particular manner. For example: Terri loves sports while her brother Ben spends his spare time playing his violin. If their school suddenly had money to build either a new weight room or new practice rooms for the orchestra, we can see that Terri and Ben would be likely to have differing opinions about how that money should be spent. Their opinions would give them a bias towards what they feel the school should do with the money.

How we deal with our biases is important. Whether we have an argument with a friend, wish to prove a point to our family, write a letter to the principal or an editorial for the newspaper, we are expressing our opinion. How others feel about that opinion will depend upon how convincingly and respectfully we present the case for our opinion and how well we take into account the possible biases of our audience.

Even when we are not trying to convince others to see things our way, the manner in which we express our opinions affects the way others see us.

A bias can create an unfair situation. Have a student read the following paragraph out loud to the group:
When a big-city symphony wants to hire musicians, they do not judge the applicants on their appearance; they judge them only on their musical ability. That seems fair, doesn't it? But that hasn't always been the case. At one time, more men than women were hired to play in symphonies. For some reason, the judges preferred male musicians. Today, however, most symphonies listen to the musician applicants from behind a screen so they can't see what they look like. Sometimes the musicians even have to take off their shoes so the judges can't get hints from their footsteps about whether they are listening to a man or woman. Although that may seem unnecessary, it has been proven to be the fairest way to hire. Now, because of the practice of "blind auditions," the balance of men and women is more equal. This is how the symphony overcame a bias. It wasn't enough just to be aware they had a bias; they had to guarantee it with a "blind audition" so they wouldn't let their bias toward male musicians influence their decisions.

Discuss:
● Are blind auditions a fair way to hire musicians? Why or why not?
● Have students describe a bias that they have seen in their peers that may not be fair to others. For example, they may form unfair opinions of people based on their looks, interests, dialect, clothing, neighborhood, or what music they listen to. Ask what they could or should do about it?
● Does anyone still think they do not have any bias?

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- What are my biases?
- What are the lenses I look through every day?
- If I did not have this bias, how might I look at things differently?
- When are personal biases positive?   Negative? Give examples

Activity 11b: Detecting Bias - Media

Bias in the news media

Bias in the news: is when a writer or speaker uses a selection of facts, choice of words, and the quality and tone of description, to convey a particular feeling or attitude. Its purpose is to convey a certain attitude or point of view toward the subject.

The concept of bias can be introduced by comparing how these three different newspapers reporting on the same news item. Copy these titles onto a large paper.

> *Glove and Mail*: "Senate votes 80-1 to give up $6000"
> *Toronto Star*: "Repentant Senators Hand Back $6000"
> *Toronto Sun:* "SENATE WAKES UP"

Discuss how each title affects your perceptions of the issue.

A.   Exploring Bias

- Divide your teens into two groups
- From **Handouts Section on Page 8**, give one group **"Sir Sam Steps Down!"** and give **"Hughes Fired from Cabinet**" to the other group.
- Have students read their particular article and write down a list of words that would describe Hughes based on the information in their handouts.
- Ask for descriptive words from one group. (*A uniform picture of Hughes will emerge. It will however, be very different from the picture the other group will have formed.*)
- Ask the other group to share their list.
- Discuss; how does bias or a slant on information, affect the outcome?

(Media Smarts; University of Manitoba, 1992)

Biased information tries to change your mind, how you think. Being aware of bias and knowing how to identify, analyze, and assimilate biased information properly is a skill to be treasured. It puts you in charge of how you think instead of the print and media world.

B.   Five Key Concepts and Questions

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Focusing on the *Five Key Questions* (from www.nedemocracy.org) can help us build the habit of routinely subjecting media messages to a series of critical questions to determine their true meaning.

1. In the same groups as the Sir Sam exercise, pass out copies of the **Five Key Questions of Media Literacy** from the **Handouts Section Page 9**.

2. Have each group read over the chart and discuss the questions as it relates to their Sir Sam passage. If the delegates need help understanding the various concepts, there is additional explanation for each key concept on the pages following the Five Key Questions of Media Literacy table **(Pages 10-14)**.

Discuss:

- How does the **Five Key Questions** help us determine bias?

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● Why is it important for citizens and information consumers to ask these questions and develop the skill of detecting bias?
● Does bias suggest that a message is false or unfair? Give an example.
● Is it possible to receive an unbiased news report? Why or why not?
● While it appears that the media is not controlled by outside forces because it is not controlled by the government, as in other countries, it is indeed, influenced. What are possible influences on the media, and how might those share the way news is presented? (owners, advertisers, audience, editors; what other ones?)

Reflect:
1. How does interaction with media provoke thinking and response?
2. How will you think about and look at bias differently in the future? At school? At home? In my community?
3. How will you interpret news differently now? What critical thinking skills will you apply to interpreting news at school or in community newspapers?
4. How will you use the knowledge you have gained through this lesson to look at news reporting?
5. Comprehension requires and enhances critical thinking and is constructed through the intentional interaction between reader and text. How will the use the new knowledge you have gained through this lesson to comprehend news information?

Post your group's thoughts to the 4-H KYG Facebook page: **WA State 4-H Know Your Government** https://www.facebook.com/WA4HKYG/. Respond to other's posts.

| Activity 12: Media on the Political Spectrum |
Now that you have explored personal bias and bias in the media, hand out the chart titled **"Media on the Political Spectrum" on Page 15**. (Source: https://imgur.com/ocPD49o, created using https://mediabiasfactcheck.com).
1. Do you agree with how the author of the chart placed the various media sources? Why/why not?
2. Any surprises?
3. Does this change how you will read stories coming from various sources?
4. Related to the "Seek Diverse Opinions" activity earlier, write down the sources of information you most frequently receive news from. Sign up/tune-in to at least one news source that you know presents different perspectives than the ones you currently rely upon. For at least one month, commit to giving this alternate new source as much attention as you do other you watch regularly.

| Activity 13: Invite your Legislators |
Have delegates draft and send emails to their two representatives and senator.
1. Have each delegate find their legislative district by looking up their address using the District Finder tool on the Legislature website: https://app.leg.wa.gov/districtfinder. Your delegates may live in different legislative districts.
2. Group up the delegates according to Legislative district and have them draft an invitation to the Legislative reception in the Legislative Building at 5:30 on Monday, February 18th. Other information to consider including:
   a) How many delegates are attending from their district
   b) Conference theme: Citizenship and Media
   c) Thank you for serving the district
   d) Topics they are studying (media, civil discourse, etc)
   e) Interest in making an appointment after the conference on Tuesday
   f) Sign every delegate's name at the end of the email
3. No other invitations will be sent to the legislators so please make sure this gets sent

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Activity 14: How Does "Fake" News Become News?

Watch this video from Teaching Tolerance: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qcRWkkSvfj0. Discuss how the delegates can prevent "fake" news from becoming news using what they learned from the video and earlier activities.

Activity 15:   Pick a Local Topic/issue Investigation

If you brainstormed more than one topic in Meeting 1, have the delegates present the information they found between meetings. Use the decision-making process decided by the group in Meeting 1 and choose your topic.

There are three parts to an argument:

A-assertion

R-reasoning

E-evidence

To be complete, arguments should have three parts: an assertion, reasoning and evidence (easily remembered with the mnemonic ARE).

An **assertion** is usually a simple statement, such as "Homework is a waste of time," "Television news is boring," or "Tomato soup is better than grilled cheese sandwiches." An assertion is the thesis statement or the main point of an argument.

FOR YOUR TOPIC, WHAT ARE YOU ASSERTING?

Reasoning is the "because" part of an argument, as in the following examples:

- "Homework is a waste of time because it takes time away from other activities that are more important."
- "Television news is boring because it doesn't talk about issues that are relevant to me."
- "Tomato soup is better than a grilled cheese sandwich because it is more nutritious."

Reasoning can be simple or complex, but when working with students who are new to this process, the most important things to emphasize are the use of the word "because" as a cue and the need to connect the statement and the reasoning. Some reasoning will always be better than others, but for beginning students it is useful to focus on the basic skill of linking reasoning to an assertion rather than critiquing the validity of the reasoning right away.

FOR YOUR TOPIC, WHAT IS THE REASONING?

You may have a few ideas for the reasoning but this may not be complete until research is performed. The reasoning you have already identified should be the start for gathering evidence in the next step.

Just as reasoning supports an assertion, **evidence** supports reasoning. There are many different kinds of evidence, ranging from expert testimony or statistics to historical or contemporary examples. As students learn the ARE framework for argumentation, it is helpful to encourage them to begin with the most basic and common form of evidence: the example. This also allows students to practice the verbal cue "for example."

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- "Homework is a waste of time because it takes time away from other activities that are more important. For example, we end up doing worksheets of math problems instead of getting outside and getting fresh air and exercise."
- "Television news is boring because it doesn't talk about issues that are relevant to me. For example, I never see stories about the issues that kids deal with every day."
- "Tomato soup is better than a grilled cheese sandwich because it is more nutritious. For example, tomato soup contains important vitamins such as lycopene, while grilled cheese sandwiches really don't have that much nutritional value at all."

Teaching students the importance of evidence isn't easy in a culture that doesn't prioritize evidence. From influential ideas circulated on television and in news magazines to letters to the editor in smaller newspapers, evidence is in short supply. Many arguments rely on appeals to emotion rather than evidence; others simply assume that reasoning will speak for itself and there is no need for evidence.

By working to overcome that societal deficit, we also find ways to combat stereotypical beliefs. When students learn to prioritize and critically investigate the evidence for ideas, they are more likely to question stereotypes and engage in arguments based on the content of the arguments themselves rather than the character and nature of people advancing the arguments. Students learn to focus their discussion on facts rather than emotions, acquiring important skills for civil disagreement at the same time that they are building critical thinking and reasoning skills.

Here we are focusing solely on introducing the need to have evidence. This obviously sets aside the question of the quality of evidence, the source of evidence and other questions of validity. As students practice disagreement, debate and discussion, they also can be taught not just to include evidence in their arguments, but to make sure the evidence they use is solid and reliable.

FOR YOUR TOPIC, HOW WILL YOU FIND EVIDENCE?

1. Research the topic of concern
- Discuss different ways to research the topic and what types of information will most clearly identify what the concern is in your community/county.
- What are reliable sources of information? What types of media can you use to get reliable, factual, information?
- Hand out **"News at its Source" on Page 16**, and break into small groups to fill out sheet. Take some time to share ideas with the whole group.

2. Take pictures of the issue (See "Photography Quick Tips" Handout Page 17)
'Photovoice' is a technique that enables community residents of all ages to share information about their community through pictures. It serves as a grassroots approach to photography and social action. The purpose of the photos is to educate others about the issue and prompt discussion. <u>Once your topic is decided, think about two or three photos that you could take that would represent your topic.</u> For example, in Richland, CA, one resident took a photo of filthy drinking fountains at a local school. When the photo and write-up was shown to school officials, a cleanup effort was launched. In another community, because of a *Photovoice* project with the homeless, the photographs taken and the stories told by the homeless participants were exhibited in the Board of Supervisors chambers, bringing attention and action to the issues that were raised.
- Your goal is to produce two to three photos that represent or educate about your issue. They can be factual or emotional. These will then be shown to various community members, officials, or other invested individuals who may express their views or opinions on the topic of concern.

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Post one of your photos on the 4-H KYG Instagram page **wa.4h.kyg** *(do not use* **wa_4h_kyg**)
https://www.instagram.com/wa.4h.kyg/ *and see if other counties can identify your issue. Take time to respond to other county's issue photos too.*

3. **Get public input on the topic**
   - Identify two (three if possible) local citizens, who might have differing opinions on the topic of concern you have identified. It may be individuals you identified in the **"News at its Source" Handout Page 16**. For example, maybe your issue is the poor condition of the high school buildings. You could talk to a parent of a student, a student, a school board member, or a senior
   - citizen in the community who pays taxes for school improvements but does not have a relative attending the school any more.
   - Show them the photos you have taken regarding your project.
   - Have interview questions prepared that will help guide the conversation/interview to get their input on the topic. (**See "Interviewing Techniques" Handout Page 18**)
   - Write up a description of their thoughts and opinions on the issue.

> ****Assign delegates to complete this work before your next meeting.****

Activity 16: Compliments and Closing

Compliments: What individual contributions have you noticed from any of the teens in your group? Perhaps it was using good critical thinking in a response, showing self-responsibility in a new way, or sharing a creative idea. Maybe they showed excellent self-responsibility or simply showed kindness to another member. Try to compliment several in the group and then the others at your next meeting of if you connect with them in between meetings.

Before the next meeting:
Review research, interview and photography assignments. Make sure the work is evenly distributed.

We understand that this is a lot of work, but this is an important piece towards making the rest of your project easier. You find out more about your community and prepare for conference.

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HANDOUT: Sir Sam

SIR SAM STEPS DOWN
Toronto Times
November 1916

Sad news was announced in Ottawa today. Sir Sam Hughes is no longer the minister of Militia. The prime minister, bending to howls of criticism from Quebec, has dismissed this able, competent minister. Hughes has done more for the war effort that nay other Canadian. He has recruited thousands of volunteers and raised thousands of dollars.

Canada entered the war with only 3000 in the armed forces. By the end of 1915, thanks to Sir Sam's tireless energy and inspired leadership, more than 200,000 of our noble sons have taken their places on the battlefield.

Without Sir Sam's efforts, how will Canada maintain its contribution to the war cause? Many English Canadians are angered by the reluctance of French Canadians to volunteer for overseas service. English Canadians are willing to defend the British Empire. The Empire that has done so much for Canada.

Sir Sam Hughes, through the force of his personality, has persuaded reluctant industrialists to invest heavily in the production of much needed war materials. We should be thankful that, through the contracts negotiated by the minister, tons of vital munitions are making their way to our soldiers at the front.

HUGHES FIRED FROM CABINET
Montreal Matin
November 1916

At long last, Prime Minister Borden has done the honorable thing! He has thrown Sir Sam Hughes, his incompetent minister of Militia, out of the Cabinet. Now, Hughes will be unable to do any more damage to Canadian unity. Hughes, more than any other person, has divided and torn this country apart with his policies.

Hughes has managed to antagonize everyone in Quebec. Those French Canadians who have volunteered for the English war have been insulted. The recruitment posters, training and instruction manuals are in English only. More importantly, promotion have only been given to the English-speaking officers. How can Hughes and other Canadians expect French Canadians to join in the war effort when they are treated so poorly?

As Minister of Militia, Hughes has disgraced the nation by rewarding his friend and cronies with munitions contracts. These shady deals have allowed his friend to make millions at the taxpayer's expense.

Why should we spill one more drop of precious French-Canadian blood in Europe? Canada only want Quebec in Confederation when we are willing to sacrifice for the British Empire. Britain started this war. Let Britain finish it!

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HANDOUT: Five Key Questions of Media Literacy

	Keyword	Core Concept	Key Questions
1	Authorship	All media messages are "constructed"	Who created this message?
2	Format	Media messages are constructed using a creative language with its own rules	What creative techniques are used to attract my attention?
3	Audience	Different people experience the same media message differently	How might different people understand this message differently from me?
4	Content	Media have embedded values and points of view	What lifestyles, values and points of view are represented in, or omitted from, the message?
5	Purpose	Power	Why is this message being sent?

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Key Question #1

Who created this message?

1

Core Concept #1

All messages are 'constructed.'

Keyword: Authorship

Guiding Questions:

What kind of "text" is it?
What are the various elements (building blocks) that make up the whole?
How similar/different is it to others of the same genre?
Which technologies are used in its creation?
What choices were made that might have been made differently?
How many people did it take to create this message? What are their various jobs?

To explore the idea of 'authorship' in media literacy is to look deeper than just knowing whose name is on the cover of a book or all the jobs in the credits of a movie. *Key Question #1* opens up two fundamental insights about all media – "*constructedness*" and *choice*

The first is the simple but profound understanding that media texts are not "natural" although they look "real." Media texts are built just as buildings and highways are put together: a plan is made, the building blocks are gathered and ordinary people get paid to do various jobs.

Whether we are watching the nightly news, passing a billboard on the street or reading a political campaign flyer, the media message we experience was written by someone (or probably many people), images were captured and edited, and a creative team with many talents put it all together.

The second insight is that in this creative process, *choices are made*. If some words are spoken; others are edited out; if one picture is selected,

dozens may have been rejected; if an ending to a story is written one way; other endings may not have been explored. However as the audience, we don't get to see or hear the words, pictures or endings that were rejected. We only see, hear or read what was accepted! Nor does anybody ever explain why certain choices were made.

The result is that whatever is "constructed" by just a few people then becomes "normal" for the rest of us. Like the air we breathe, media get taken for granted and their messages can go unquestioned. Media are not "real" but they affect people in real ways because we take and make meaning for ourselves out of whatever we've been given by those who do the creating.

The success of media texts depends upon their apparent naturalness; we turn off a TV show that looks "fake." But the truth is, it's all fake – even the news. That doesn't mean we can't still enjoy a movie or sing along with a favorite CD or tune in to get the news headlines.

The goal of *Key Question #1* is simply to expose the complexities of media's "constructedness" and thus create the critical distance we need to be able to ask other important questions.

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#2

Key Question #2

What creative techniques are used to attract my attention?

Core Concept #2

Media messages are constructed using a creative language with its own rules.

Keyword: Format

Guiding Questions:

What do you notice... (about the way the message is constructed)?

- **Colors? Shapes? Size?**
- **Sounds, Words? Silence?**
- **Props, sets, clothing?**
- **Movement?**
- **Composition? Lighting?**

Where is the camera? What is the viewpoint?
How is the story told visually? What are people doing?
Are there any symbols? Visual metaphors?
What's the emotional appeal? Persuasive devices used?
What makes it seem "real?"

The second *Key Question* explores the 'format' of a media message and examines the *way* a message is constructed, the creative components that are used in putting it together – words, music, color, movement, camera angle and many more. The goal of *Key Question #2* is to help students build an internal checklist that they can apply to *any* media message *anytime*

To build this checklist, we have to, first, begin to *notice* how a message is constructed. Through the activities in this unit, students will grow in understanding how all forms of communication – whether magazine covers, advertisements or horror movies – depend on a kind of "creative language": use of color creates different feelings, camera close-ups convey intimacy, scary music heightens fear.

"What do you notice. . .?" is one of the most important questions to ask in the media literacy classroom. And, of course, all answers are acceptable because different people notice different things. (More about this in *Key Question #3*.)

Because so much of today's communications, including the news, comes to us visually, it is critical that students learn the basics of visual communication– lighting, composition, camera angle, editing, use of props, body language, symbols, etc. – and how the use of these techniques influences the various meanings we can take away from a message. Understanding the grammar, syntax and metaphor system of media, especially visual language, not only helps us to be less susceptible to manipulation but also increases our appreciation and enjoyment of media as a constructed "text."

Just as writing improves not only one's reading skill but also one's appreciation for good writing, the best way to understand how media are put together is to do just that – make a public service announcement, create a website, develop a marketing campaign for a activity. The more real world the project is, the better. Digital cameras and computer authoring programs provide easy ways to integrate creative production projects in the classroom from writing and illustrating their own stories in kindergarten to creating a personal video documentary in the upper grades.

The four major arts disciplines – music, dance, theatre and the visual arts– can also provide a context through which one gains skills of analysis, interpretation and appreciation along with opportunities to practice self-expression and creative production.
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Key Question #3

How might different people understand this message differently from me?

#3

Core Concept #3

Different people experience the same media message differently.

Keyword: Audience

Guiding Questions:

Have you ever experienced anything like this in *your* life?
How close is this portrayal to your experience?
What did you learn from this media text?
What did you learn *about yourself* from experiencing the media text?
What did you learn from other people's response? From their experience of life?
How many other interpretations could there be? How could we hear about them?
Are other viewpoints just as valid as mine?
How can you explain the different responses?

How do audiences interact with the media in their lives? Our bodies may not be moving but in our heads, we're constantly trying to connect what we're hearing, seeing or reading with everything else we know. *Key Question / Core Concept #3* incorporates two important ideas: first, that our *differences* influence our various interpretations of media messages and second, that our *similarities* create common understandings.

When you think about it, no two people see the same movie or hear the same song on the radio; even parents and children do not "see" the same TV show! Each audience member brings to each media encounter a unique set of life experiences (age, gender, education, cultural upbringing, etc.) which, when applied to the text – or combined *with* the text – create unique interpretations. A World War II veteran, for example, brings a different set of experiences to a movie like *Saving Private Ryan*

than a younger person – resulting in a different reaction to the film as well as, perhaps, greater insight.

The line of questions in *Key Question #3* turns the tables on the idea of TV viewers as just passive "couch potatoes." We may not be conscious of it but each of us, even toddlers, are constantly trying to "make sense" of what we see, hear or read. The more questions we can ask about what we and others are experiencing around us, the more prepared we are to evaluate the message and to accept or reject it. And hearing multiple interpretations can build respect for different cultures and appreciation for minority opinions, a critical skill in an increasingly multicultural world.

Our similarities are also important to understanding how media makers "target" different segments of the population in order to influence their opinion or, more typically, to sell them something. The concept of "target audience" will be explored more deeply in *Key Question #5*

Finally, exploring this question reminds teachers that they must not only be open to various interpretations among their students but also that students and teachers don't experience the same media the same way, either! The goal of media literacy is not to ferret out one "right" interpretation that resides in the head of the teacher but rather to help students think through the "constructedness" of a media message and then substantiate their interpretation with evidence.

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Key Question #4

What lifestyles, values and points of view are represented in, or omitted from, this message?

#4

Core Concept #4
Media have embedded values and points of view.

Keyword: Content
Guiding Questions:

What kinds of behaviors / consequences are depicted?
What type of person is the reader / watcher / listener invited to identify with?
What questions come to mind as you watch / read / listen?
What ideas or values are being "sold" to us in this message?
What political ideas are communicated in the message? Economic ideas?
What judgments or statements are made about how we treat other people?
What is the overall worldview of the message?
What ideas or perspectives are left out? How would you find what's missing?

When looking at the content of a media message, it is important to understand that there are no value-free media and never will be. All media carry subtle messages about who and what is important.

Because all media messages are constructed, choices have to be made. These choices inevitably reflect the values, attitudes and points of view of the ones doing the constructing. The decision about a character's age, gender or race mixed in with the lifestyles, attitudes and behaviors that are portrayed, the selection of a setting (urban? rural? affluent? poor?), and the actions and re-actions in the plot are just some of the ways that values become "embedded" in a TV show, a movie or an ad. Even the news has embedded values in the decisions made about what stories go first, how long they are, what kinds of pictures are chosen, and so on.
Sometimes, like us, media makers are careless and

turn a generalization (a flexible observation) into a stereotype (a rigid conclusion). We should expect them, however, to strive for fairness and balance between various ideas and viewpoints. But we also need to know how to locate alternative sources of both news and entertainment and to be able to evaluate the alternatives as well for their own embedded values.

What's significant about *Key Question / Core Concept #4* is not that ideas and values are embedded in media messages but that the values of mainstream media typically reinforce, and therefore, affirm, the existing social system.
This explains two of the major complaints many people have about media:
1) Less popular or new ideas can have a hard time getting aired, especially if they challenge long-standing assumptions or commonly-accepted beliefs; 2) Unless challenged, old assumptions can create and perpetuate stereotypes, thus further limiting our understanding and appreciation of the world and the many possibilities of human life.

If we have the skills to question and rationally identify both overt and latent values in a mediated presentation, whether from the news, entertainment – or now especially from the Internet – we are likely to be much more astute in our decision-making to accept or reject the overall message. That's vital for effective citizenship in a democratic society.

Being able to recognize and name missing perspectives is also a critical skill as we negotiate our way *each day of our lives* through an increasingly multicultural world.

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MEETING 2: TEAMBUILDING, BIAS, DECIDE YOUR LOCAL TOPIC

Key Question #5

Why is this message being sent?

#5

Core Concept #5

Most media messages are organized to gain profit and/or power.

Keyword: Purpose
Guiding Questions:

Who's in control of the creation and transmission of this message?
Why are they sending it? How do you know?
Who are they sending it to? How do you know?
What's being sold in this message? What's being told?
Who profits from this message? Who pays for it?
Who is served by or benefits from the message
– **the public?**
– **private interests?**
– **individuals?**
– **institutions?**
What economic decisions may have influenced the construction or transmission of this message?

With *Key Question #5,* we look at the *motive and purpose* of a media message
– and whether or how a message may have been influenced by money, ego
or ideology. To respond to a message appropriately, we need to be able to see beyond the basic content motives of *informing persuading*

Much of the world's media were developed as money making enterprises and continue to operate today as commercial businesses. Newspapers and magazines lay out their pages with ads first; the space remaining is devoted to news. Likewise, commercials are part and parcel of most TV watching. What many people do not know is that what's really being sold through commercial media is not just the advertised products to the audience – but also the audience to the advertisers!

The real purpose of the programs on television, or the articles in a magazine, is to create an audience (and put them in a receptive mood) so that the network or publisher can sell time or space to sponsors to advertise products. We call this "renting eyeballs." Sponsors pay for the time to show a commercial based on the number of people the network predicts will be watching. And they get a refund if the number of actual viewers turns out to be lower than promised. Exploring how media content, whether TV shows, magazines or Internet sites, makes viewers and readers of all ages receptive target audiences for advertisers creates some of the most enlightening moments in the media literacy classroom.

Examining the purpose of a message also uncovers issues of ownership and the structure and influence of media institutions in society. Commercially sponsored entertainment may be more tolerable to many people than, say, a commercial influence over the news. But with democracy at stake almost everywhere around the world, citizens in every country need to be equipped with the ability to determine both economic and ideological "spin." *entertaining*

But there's more. The issue of message motivation has changed dramatically since the Internet became an international platform through which groups and organizations – even individuals – have ready access to powerful tools that can persuade others to a particular point of view, whether positive or negative. The Internet provides multiple reasons for all users to be able to recognize propaganda, interpret rhetorical devices, verify sources and distinguish legitimate websites from bogus, hate or hoax websites.

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MEETING 2: TEAMBUILDING, BIAS, DECIDE YOUR LOCAL TOPIC

HANDOUT: Media on the Political Spectrum
https://imgur.com/ocPD49o, created using https://mediabiasfactcheck.com
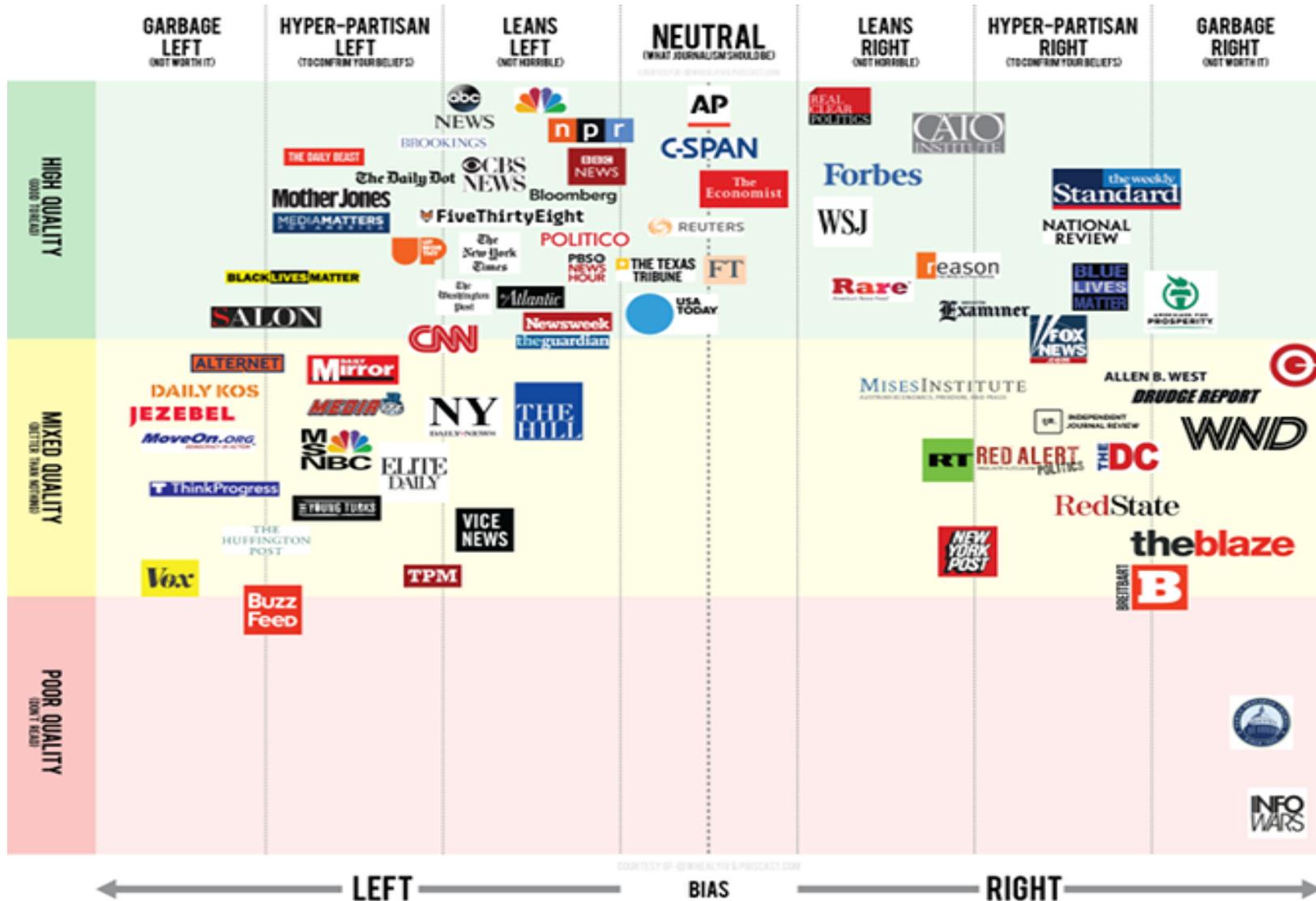
MEETING 2: TEAMBUILDING, BIAS, DECIDE YOUR LOCAL TOPIC

News at its Source

Potential news sources are all around us. Complete the following chart on news sources pertaining to your specific issue with names of local contacts and other sources.

Interesting People   Local Sources

Examples: politicians, government employees   _____
people affected by the issue   _____

Other News Media Sources

Examples: wire services, TV, magazines,   _____
newsletters, periodicals, journals, blogs, Facebook,   _____
websites and newspapers   _____

Press Releases

Examples: Issued by government agencies,   _____
and trade business associations, unions,   _____
Chambers of Commerce, special interest   _____
groups, i.e., Sierra Club, MADD, Right to Life   _____

Hearing and Public Meetings

Examples: Legislative committees, local   _____
government, city council, school boards,   _____
commissioner hearings, utilities commission,   _____
planning commission   _____

Public Records

Examples: County assessor's office, county   _____
Auditors, planning commission office, school   _____
administrator's office, courts, police stations   _____

Other Sources

_____

_____

_____

_____

MEETING 2: TEAMBUILDING, BIAS, DECIDE YOUR LOCAL TOPIC

Photography Quick Tips

<u>Do's and Don'ts</u>

1) Identify Opportunities
- Don't try to capture the moment
- Do try to schedule and structure the shot/stage manage

2) Control Environment and Lighting
- Don't use fluorescent lighting
- Don't overcrowd image with people
- Do use natural light when possible
- Do use fill flash outdoors
- Do change the environment
- Do change your camera angle

3) Composition problems
- Do eliminate distracting elements (pole in head)
- Do resolve issues of perspective (tiny people)

<u>Tips for taking better photos</u>

1) What do you want your photo to do?
- Tell a story
- Document a moment in time
- Aesthetic quality

2) Composition
- Consider the following when selecting a subject:
  - Shapes; Lighting; Flow; Angle; Color; Contrast; Texture; Motion/action
- Focal point—Rule of thirds
- Cropping—Picture within picture

3) Understanding the math
- Print resolution is about 3x larger than that for web
- Converting pixels to print
- Divide pixels dimensions by print resolution (240–300 dpi)
  - 1500 x 2100 pixels divided by 300 = 5 x 7"
  - 640 x 480 pixels divided by 240 = 2.66 x 2"

4) Get a photo release, especially when minors are involved

MEETING 2: TEAMBUILDING, BIAS, DECIDE YOUR LOCAL TOPIC

Interviewing Techniques

1.   Identify the issue you are to investigate and the purpose of the interview—"What do you want to learn?"

2.   Request an interview appointment. Be sure to tell the prospective interviewee the purpose of the interview and its purpose to educate the public. Arrange a meeting time and place before or during your next meeting.

3.   Formulate a list of questions to ask during the interview. It will be easier for you do conduct the interview if you leave space after each question to write the interviewees' response. The questions should be central to the purpose you stated.

4.   Sample questions are:
Are you familiar with . . .? (Show your topic photos)
What do you know about . . .?
What do you think about . . .?
What is your opinion of . . .?
What have you been doing about . . .?
What are you planning to do about . . .?
How do your constituents feel about . . .?

5.   Note: The above questions may all serve as an example of questions to ask your legislator during the breakfast.

6.   Plan to break the ice at the interview by introducing yourself and explaining again your purpose for the interview and about the 4-H KYG Program.

7.   Practice before you attend the interview; check out your camera and be sure you know how to use it.

8.   Dress professionally.

9.   Be on time