

REPRESENTATION OF VIOLENCE IN MEDIA

Primary Division (Grade 2-3) Unit

INTRODUCTION

Students at this age level are immersed in a variety of media forms. Whether youth are viewing animated or live action television programs, commercials, or videos on the internet, or reading comics or graphic novels, they are exposed to violence. Research shows that sustained and repeated exposure to such images can contribute to children being desensitized to violence, leading to their acceptance as normal of more subtle forms of violence. It is important for students to recognize the violence in the media they enjoy, and to see how violence often is used as a source of entertainment. Students need to learn how to analyse the codes and conventions used by media, so they can recognise stereotypes, representations of violence, and depictions of bullying and power. Using this awareness of violence, they will be able to explore alternatives for solving problems and relating to peers.

Teachers should consider reviewing all lessons, links, and resources to ensure the content is still available and accessible online.

UNIT OVERVIEW

The purpose of this unit is to help youth identify how violence is represented in the media. Through examinations of animation, comics and graphic novels, commercials, advertisements and PSAs, and spin-off products, the students will learn how to critically evaluate the media portrayals of violence.

- Lesson 1: Violence in TV Animation
- Lesson 2: Who Is Violent?
- Lesson 3: Violence in Comics / Graphic Novels
- Lesson 4: Violence in Commercials
- Lesson 5: Stay Fit... *Or Else!?!*
- Lesson 6: A Matter of Perspective

Lesson 1: Violence in TV Animation

In this lesson, students will examine a number of clips of children’s animated TV programs, and will be encouraged to consider what kinds of violence are being demonstrated. While overt messages about violence are clearly presented and easily recognized, more subtle messages about violence often go unnoticed. Frequently, these messages are ignored, or may be embraced as sources of humour, leading to desensitization of the viewer. Through a series of activities, students will be provided with the opportunity to reflect on such media messages, in order to think more critically about their own attitudes and behaviours.

Lesson 2: Who is Violent?

Clips of children’s animated TV shows reveal an astonishing number of incidents of violence, perpetrated both by heroes and by villains. In this lesson, the students will be asked to predict and then verify the number of times violent acts occur in short clips of animated TV shows. They will examine who commits these acts, and then think about their reactions to these acts. Their conclusions will be presented in a graph format, and then in creative presentations.

Lesson 3: Violence in Comics / Graphic Novels

Students will examine comics and graphic novels to see how violence is presented and implied in these visual texts. Then they will compare the findings from this exercise to their previous observations about animated texts. A concluding activity will have them take a sample page or frame from a comic or graphic text, and remove the violence, creating an alternative text. A journal entry will provide the opportunity to synthesize what they have learned, and will encourage the students to draw conclusions and express their opinions.

Lesson 4: Violence in Commercials

In this lesson, students will examine samples of commercials that rely on violence to persuade viewers. They will discuss the fact that this violence often is expected to create humour, and will explore the effectiveness of this kind of marketing. Through this exercise, the students will become more aware of the frequency of these kinds of messages, and will consider the impact these messages have on the viewers’ ideas about violence.

Lesson 5: Stay Fit... Or Else!?!

In this lesson, students will be encouraged to look beyond the obvious messages provided in PSAs (public service announcements) and advertisements, to discern the implied messages below. They will see that the overt message can be very different from the implied message, and that it is important to be aware of both kinds of information.

Lesson 6: A Matter of Perspective

Young people experience media through a variety of different kinds of texts. They can observe, guide, or become the main character, depending on the format chosen. In this lesson, students will look at a variety of different forms of media texts, and analyse their reactions to them. They also will consider the different audiences and purposes for which media characters have been created, and the role played by violence in these texts.

For additional lessons on these topics, visit www.media-awareness.net and click on the “For Teachers” section.

LESSON 1: VIOLENCE IN TV ANIMATION

40 minutes

CURRICULUM EXPECTATIONS

- MEDIA LITERACY – UNDERSTANDING MEDIA TEXTS
 - 1.2 – Identify overt and implied messages in simple media texts.
 - 1.3 – Express personal thoughts and feelings about some simple media works and explain their responses.
 - 1.5 – Identify, initially with support and direction, whose point of view is presented in a media text, and suggest how the text might change if a different point of view were used.

KEY CONCEPTS AND QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- Audiences negotiate meanings from media texts.
- Media convey value messages.
- What does violence look like or sound like in the shows that I watch?
- Might others think differently than I do about what is “violence” and what is not?
- Is violence ever okay?

INTRODUCTION/OVERVIEW

Students at this age watch a number of animated television programs, and are exposed to many varied representations of violence. Some forms of violence represented in animated programs are quite subtle, which can contribute to students being desensitized to these forms. Other, more obvious forms of violence also are represented in animated programs, and when mixed with humour, may contribute to students seeing such forms as normal or acceptable. Animated programs, like all media, convey value messages about violence, and are influenced by how the violence is represented and the context in which it is presented. In this lesson, students will be provided with the opportunity to reflect on such media messages, in order to think more critically about how these messages influence their own attitudes and behaviours.

TEACHING/LEARNING STRATEGIES

PLACEMAT – Have students work in table groups. Create a chart paper placemat for each group, or hand out to each group a copy of **Favourite Show Placemat (1.1 H)**. Tell the students to record the titles of their favourite animated television programs, using one corner of the placemat for each student.

After students have recorded their individual preferences, instruct the groups to talk about what it is that they enjoy about these programs, and to record their ideas in the centre of the placemat. When they have finished, tell the groups to choose a representative to present a summary of his or her group’s thinking. These representatives will respond by completing the prompt: *“We enjoy animated shows that...”*

ELBOW PARTNERS AND GROUP DISCUSSION – Next, activate students’ prior knowledge by asking them to turn to an elbow partner, and to consider the question: *What does the term “media violence” mean?*

Ask a few students to share their ideas with the rest of the class. Using an interactive writing strategy, develop a student-friendly definition of media violence, and record it in your class **Media Journal**.

Ask students to look again at their placemat lists of show titles, and then discuss in their groups whether or not they think that their favourite animated programs might be considered violent. Tell them that they must be able to explain their thinking.

VIEWING CLIPS – Tell the class that you now are going to watch some clips from animated shows, and will view them critically to determine what levels of violence are demonstrated. Show the students a clip from one animated television program that shows a degree of violence (e.g. Lucy pulling the football away from Charlie Brown. If you wish to model the strategy several times, you also could use the Joker terrorizing the citizens of Gotham, or Bart Simpson’s sarcasm).

Note to teacher: if you do not have access to clips through the library or pre-recorded shows, you can find clips or full episodes of shows on YouTube and on station websites.

When the clip is over, use the Think Aloud strategy to model your ideas about violence. For example, you could say, *“When I see Lucy pull the ball away from Charlie Brown, I realize that she is teasing him. Even though I have laughed at this many times before, I have to admit that I wouldn’t want to be in Charlie Brown’s place. He gets hurt, and it is because Lucy is tricking him. This is violence. Because he gets hurt, I think that this shows a VIOLENT act.”*

FOUR CORNERS – Once the students understand the task, and are ready to critically evaluate clips on their own, use the Four Corners strategy to allow them to respond. To do this, show them the signs from **Four Corners Signs (1.2 H)**, and then place one of these signs in each of the four corners of the classroom. After viewing each clip, instruct the students to decide whether they felt the action in the clip they viewed was **“NOT AT ALL VIOLENT,” “A LITTLE VIOLENT,” “VIOLENT,”** or **“VERY VIOLENT.”** Students will move to the corner of the room that they feel best represents their thinking. While in their corner groups, students should consider these questions:

- Why do I think the way I do?
- Who might think differently than I do? Why?

Keep a tally of the number of students in each corner for each clip.

After all the clips have been viewed and discussed, share with students the results of the tally that you took during the Four Corners activity. Write on the board or a piece of chart paper the title of the show and the number of students who stood in each corner. As a class, discuss what the tally shows. Consider which shows seemed to be the most violent, what kinds of violence occurred most frequently, what surprises they experienced, and what their overall conclusions about violence in animated programs might be.

CONTINUUM OF VIOLENCE – Hand out **Continuum of Violence (1.3 H)**, and instruct the students to begin to create a Continuum of Violence, using the results of your tally and their discussion. They will write *“Very Violent”* at one end of the line, and *“Not Violent”* at the other end of the line. The other descriptors, *“Violent”* and *“A Little Violent,”* will be placed somewhere between the two ends, where appropriate. (You may wish to create a larger model of this handout, on chart paper, to hang on the bulletin board. If you do this, students could work alone on their copies of the Continuum, and then share their ideas in a class discussion, to be added to the large model of the Continuum.)

Use a Think Aloud strategy to model for students your thinking about a more subtle form of violence, and then show where the title you modelled would appear on the **Continuum of Violence (1.3 H)**. (e.g. *“Bart says a lot of things that are funny, but some of the things he says are meant to hurt someone’s feelings. So, even though I laugh sometimes, I realize that he is using words to hurt someone. So, I think that this is A LITTLE VIOLENT.”*)

Tell the students that in each example they give, below the title of the show, they must write what the violent act was and their reason for placing the title in this position on the continuum. Write, on the board (or the large chart, if you are using one), this information for the example you modeled, to demonstrate what is expected. Provide enough time for the students to think about all the other clips they viewed, and to place these titles and reasons on the **Continuum of Violence (1.3 H)**. When they are finished, discuss where they placed each of the clips, and why. If there are differences of opinion, discuss why this might occur, and whether or not some answers could be incorrect. This is a good time to explore the idea of desensitization, and to point out the importance of being aware of the feelings of others.

BRAINSTORM – Have students brainstorm other examples from animated programs that might be added to the continuum. Over the course of the week, have students keep track of additional examples they find in their viewing, and provide time for the students to share these examples with the class, for discussion before they are added to the continuum.

Have students reflect on the continuum they have created, and then write in their personal media journals, choosing from the ideas on **Media Journal Prompts (1.4 H)**. Also, hand out **Success Criteria (1.5 H)** for students to use as a checklist for completing the journal entry. Instruct them to hand in this completed self-evaluation when they submit their journal to you.

ACTIVISM

Students can raise awareness about the more subtle forms of violence that are represented in animated programs, and which are reflected in the schoolyard. Students can create posters to express that *“_____ is Violence Too! Help put a STOP to it.”* These posters can be posted around the school and in classrooms as a means for making staff and students more aware of the varying degrees of violence, and their impact on students.

ASSESSMENT OPPORTUNITIES

- **Continuum of Violence (1.3 H)** – Students can be assessed according to their explanations of their thinking. Have they provided a supported opinion?
- **Success Criteria (1.5 H)** – Students’ journals can be assessed, in relation to the criteria established for the task.

IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE LESSONS/HOMEWORK/EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

Students could be encouraged to keep a list of examples of violence that they see in the programs that they watch on TV. These lists could be used to create a newsletter for parents or a poster for fellow students outlining “Shows to Watch” and “Shows to Avoid” for students their age. In each case, they should be encouraged to explain their choices and offer examples to illustrate their ideas.

Students could make posters entitled “*It’s Not A Joke,*” on which they explain why put-downs or sarcastic comments are hurtful rather than funny. These explanations could be illustrated by examples taken from the programs discussed in class, or programs they view themselves.

On a piece of chart paper, write a name or a descriptor of a violent action or words. Below this, write an example of this kind of violence, taken from an animated TV show. Create several different charts, describing a series of different kinds of violence, especially those that you think will resonate with the children in your classroom. Post these charts on the board in the room, or place them on a series of desks.

Then, encourage students in the class to write their own examples of this kind of violence, taken from their own lives, from the playground, or from things their friends have told them. Be sure to explain the “no name rule,” meaning that they should not use names that identify specific individuals when giving their examples. When the lists are completed, discuss the examples and explore possible solutions to the problems that are described.

CROSS CURRICULAR CONNECTIONS

- Dramatic Arts
- Oral Language
- Health

MATERIALS AND RESOURCES

- Clips from popular animated programming viewed by this age group (e.g. Arthur, George Shrinks, Beyblades, Scooby Doo, Spongebob SquarePants, The Simpsons; you could invite students to add to the list by naming their favourite programs). When choosing your examples, try to find a variety of forms of violence, both subtle and overt, to demonstrate.
- Data projector, SMARTboard, or other equipment needed for viewing of clips
- Favourite Show Placemat (1.1 H)
- Four Corners Signs (1.2 H)
- Continuum of Violence (1.3 H)
- Media Journal Prompts (1.4 H)
- Success Criteria (1.5 H)

IMPORTANT TERMINOLOGY / BACKGROUND FOR TEACHERS

- **Media Violence:** Violence is behaviour that is abusive, threatening, or hurtful, by way of physical, emotional, verbal, sexual, spiritual, or regulatory (restrictions, rules, laws) means. Media images and messages containing such content are violent.

LINKS / RESOURCES

- YouTube
- Television Station websites

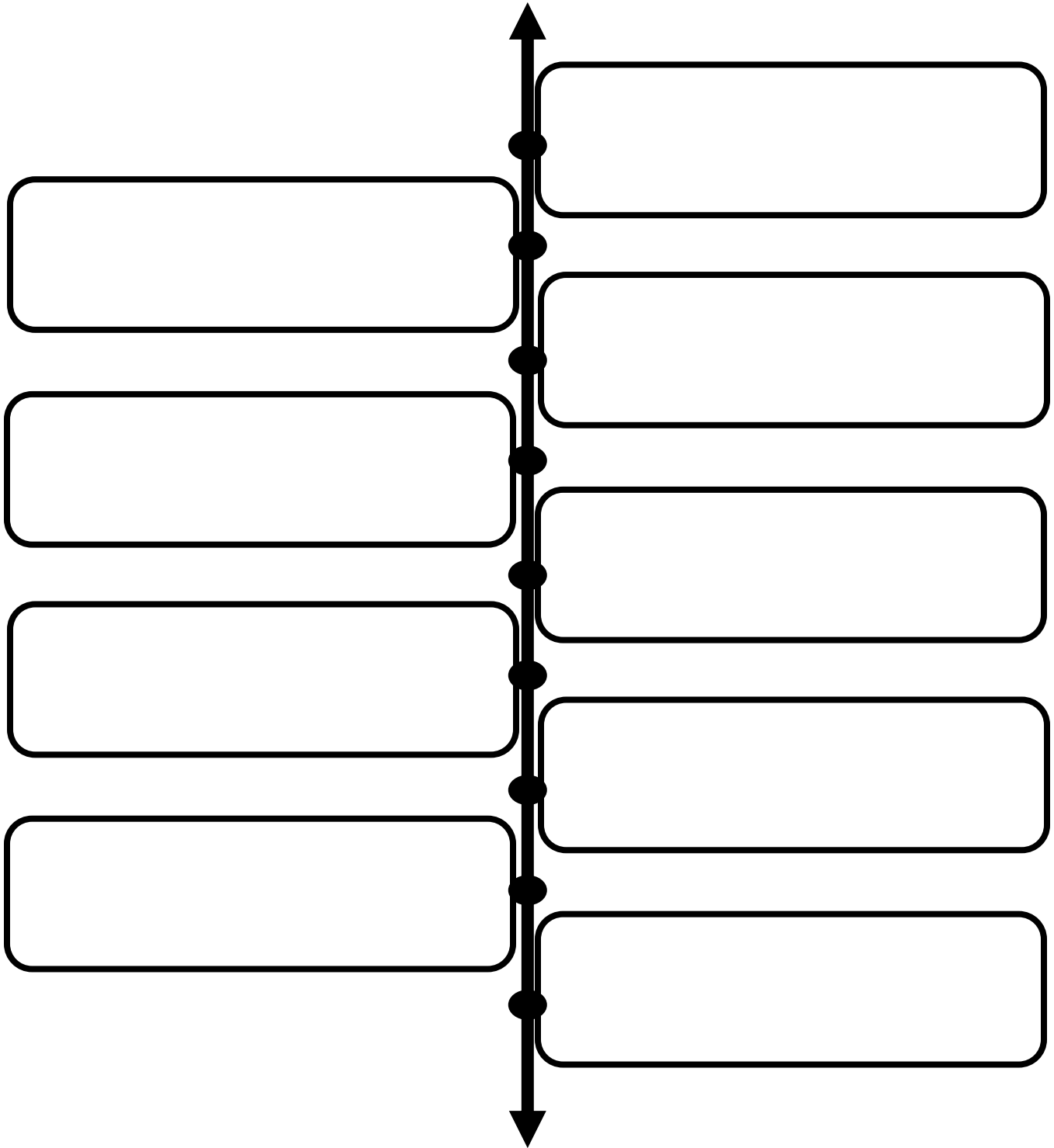
1.1 H

FAVOURITE SHOW PLACEMENT

A large rounded rectangle is divided into four quadrants by a vertical line and a horizontal line. A smaller rounded rectangle is centered at the intersection of the lines, overlapping all four quadrants.

CONTINUUM OF VIOLENCE

OUR CLASS'S CONTINUUM OF VIOLENCE: WHAT IS VIOLENCE ON TV



MEDIA JOURNAL PROMPTS

I was surprised to discover my favourite shows were kind of violent because...

I was not surprised to discover my favourite shows were kind of violent because...

Why are some forms of violence not as bad as other forms of violence?

Why do producers use violence in animated television programs?

Who might think differently than I do about media violence? Why? How do I know?

1.5 H

SUCCESS CRITERIA

Name: _____

CRITERIA	YES!	KIND OF	No
I explained my opinion about media violence very clearly.			
I supported my opinion by comparing what I saw with things that I know.			
I supported my opinion by giving examples from other texts, like books or TV shows.			
I can explain how I think others might feel about my ideas.			
<i>Comments:</i>			

LESSON 2: WHO IS VIOLENT?

40 minutes

CURRICULUM EXPECTATIONS

- MEDIA LITERACY – UNDERSTANDING MEDIA TEXTS
 - 1.2 – Identify overt and implied messages in simple media texts.
 - 1.3 – Express personal thoughts and feelings about some simple media works and explain their responses.
 - 2.2 – Identify the conventions and techniques used in some familiar media forms.

KEY CONCEPTS AND QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- Media construct meaning using their own unique languages to position viewers.
- Media convey value messages.
- Who uses violence in the shows that I watch? Why?
- What do I think about the violence I see?
- How do producers make violence seem okay or normal?

INTRODUCTION/OVERVIEW

Violence in animation is represented in many different ways. Animated violence often is connected with humour, or with a heightened sense of justice. These techniques contribute to a normalizing of violence, whereby violent acts are justified or excused. In this lesson, students will view a number of animated clips to examine how often violence is presented, and by whom. Students also will respond to their findings.

TEACHING/LEARNING STRATEGIES

REVIEW – Have students review the **Continuum of Violence (1.3 H)** that was developed in Lesson 1, so that they are familiar with the various examples of violence represented in the animated programs they discussed in this lesson.

Explain that the students will be viewing a number of clips (either the same ones again or new ones you have chosen), but this time, they will be analyzing the clips with a different specific purpose.

Note to teacher: if you do not have access to clips through the library or pre-recorded shows, you can find clips or full episodes of shows on YouTube and on station websites.

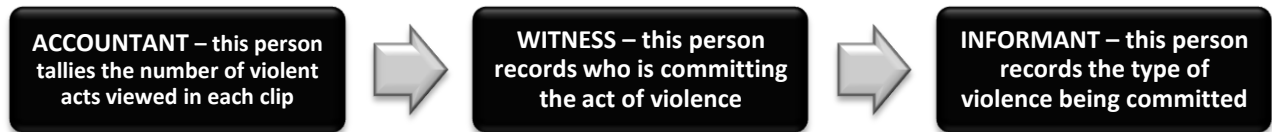
Ask students: How often do you think you will see a violent act in a 30 second clip of a children’s animated TV program? Each person should write down their prediction, to compare to what they find when viewing.

Take a sampling of students’ guesses, and record the numbers on the chalkboard or on chart paper.

JIGSAW STRATEGY – Hand out **Viewing Tasks (2.1 H)**, and read over the headings together. This next activity will use a jigsaw strategy. For further instructions on this strategy, see the **Terminology/**

Background for Teachers. Divide the class into groups of three, and tell the students that these are their “home” groups.

Assign each group member one of the following three viewing tasks:



Before viewing the clips, have all of the Accountants move into one area of the classroom, so that they can work together, all of the Witnesses move to another area to work together, and all of the Informants move to the last area to work together. Tell the students that they now are part of an “expert” group. They will share ideas with this “expert” group, and then will return to their “home” groups to report. They will need to make good notes so that they have detailed information to share with the “home” group.

After each clip, students will talk with their “expert” group members to review what they saw and recorded. Encourage them to find consensus in their answers by discussing the details of what they saw. Remind them to write down their answers on the handout.

After viewing and discussing a number of clips, students will return to their “home” groups to share their findings. Everyone will complete all the boxes on the chart **Viewing Tasks (2.1 H)** by adding the details provided by the experts.

Instruct the students to look at the Accountant column of their charts. Ask: *How do the numbers of examples of violence in a 30 second clip compare to the guesses you made earlier? Are you surprised by these findings? Explain why or why not.*

Have groups graph the data they collected. They will use the following details:

- How often was violence viewed?
- How often does the hero commit the violence?
- How often does the villain commit the violence?

PIE CHART – Instruct them to create a pie chart. The number of violent acts would be the pie slices, and the portions (or numbers of slices) would be divided between the hero and the villain. They can use different colours to indicate whose portion the slices are. They must label the graph to indicate all the important details.

Each group’s graph assignment must include a summary statement, in which they express their reactions to their findings. What surprises were there, or why weren’t they surprised? (e.g. *It surprised us that heroes were just as likely to commit violent acts as villains were.*)

GALLERY WALK – Have groups post their graphs around the room, and have students tour the room to examine all of the graphs. Instruct the students to return to their home groups, and ask, “*When might violence be considered acceptable?*” Allow time in groups to discuss their thinking.

Have each group prepare and share a response to the above question, using one of the following formats:

- Written (e.g. poem, statement)
- Tableau (with narration)
- Movement or dance
- Dramatic Performance
- Poster
- Song
- Debate
- Another format of the group's choice, to be discussed with you before beginning

PRESENTATIONS – Before the presentations begin, hand out **Peer Assessment (2.2 H)**. Read over the instructions, and then tell the students that they will complete this form for each of the other groups' presentations. They will need one **Peer Assessment (2.2 H)** for each group.

Note to teacher: Another approach would be to have each student complete this form for one presentation only. If you choose to do this, you will have to organize who will offer feedback for each presentation. This could be done by numbering the groups, and then having group one fill in the form for group two, group two fill in the form for group three, and so on. You will need to check before each presentation begins that the appropriate group is ready to fill in the form.

When everyone has presented their ideas to the class, discuss any differences of opinion. Collect the feedback forms after each presentation.

When all the presentations are finished, hand out **Self Assessment (2.3 H)**. Instruct each student to complete the form, thinking of their contribution to the group's discussions, preparations, and performance.

ACTIVISM

Students may want to share their group responses with others, in the form of an assembly or presentations to another class. Be sure to have students consider the audience for whom they are presenting, and to ensure that their message is clear and appropriate. Invite the audiences to provide descriptive feedback to your students in regards to both the content and the presentation. To do so, they could use Peer Feedback (2.2 H), or could offer their ideas orally.

ASSESSMENT OPPORTUNITIES

- Viewing Tasks (2.1 H) – for completeness and accuracy
- Pie chart - details and conclusions
- Peer Assessment (2.2 H) - for the clarity of their message and the effectiveness of their presentation
- Self Assessment (2.3 H) - contributions to the group

IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE LESSONS/HOMEWORK/EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

Students could compare the types of violence used by heroes and by villains, to determine whether or not differences appear. Also, they could compare their reactions to violent acts, depending on whether

these acts are committed by a hero or a villain. The results of their research could be presented in a written journal, or discussed with the class.

Students could be encouraged to examine again the situations in the clips shown in which the hero used violence, and then to discuss whether another solution to the problem could have been successful. What techniques/skills could a hero use to avoid violence? What heroes do they know who try to avoid violence? Are non-violent heroes more or less popular than more violent ones? Why?

CROSS CURRICULAR CONNECTIONS

- Dramatic Arts
- Oral Language
- Health
- Mathematics

MATERIALS AND RESOURCES

- Clips from popular animated TV programming viewed by this age group - you could use the same clips as in the previous lesson, or could look for new examples from programs identified as favourites by students last class.
- Data projector, SMARTboard, or other equipment needed to show TV clips
- Viewing Tasks (2.1 H)
- Peer Assessment (2.2 H)
- Self Assessment (2.3 H)

TERMINOLOGY/BACKGROUND FOR TEACHERS

- **Forms of Violence:** It is important to remind students that violence can take many different forms. We easily recognize that hitting, pushing, and using weapons against someone are violent acts, but there are other forms of violence that can cause great damage to an individual. Some examples of other acts of violence would include using put-downs or demeaning language, excluding someone, bullying, and coercion. While students can recognize a violent act when a villain commits it, they often overlook the violent acts committed by the hero. Somehow, these acts seem more justified if the “good guy” is doing them. The result of this double standard is the desensitization of the viewer to certain unacceptable acts. It is important that the students recognize this issue, and consider other more appropriate responses to difficult situations.
- **Jigsaw strategy:** consists of students in “home” groups of three to five to address a topic of study. Each student from the home group meets with a member from each of the other home groups to form an “expert” group. Each expert group is assigned a particular aspect of the topic to explore, discuss, and summarize. Students then return to their “home” groups and teach what they have learned to their group members. Individual accountability is created by requiring students to complete a summary, or do a report or quiz. Group accountability is created by having the group share or present a summary for others
- **Gallery walk strategy:** a teaching strategy that enables students to explore multiple texts or images that are placed around the room. Have students work in groups to generate information on particular topics. This information should be displayed on chart paper. Once groups have finished recording their information, have students display their work “gallery-style” – in a way that allows students to disperse themselves around the room, with several students clustering

around a particular text. Texts can be hung on walls or placed on tables. The most important factor is that the texts are spread far enough apart to reduce significant crowding. Have students walk with their groups through the gallery, allowing time for them to stop and read at each station. Teachers can provide students with instructions for recording information from each station, or can just allow them to pass through and read the content

LINKS / RESOURCES

- YouTube
- Television Station Websites

VIEWING TASKS

ANIMATED CLIP	ACCOUNTANT: NUMBER OF TIMES A VIOLENT ACT HAPPENS	WITNESS: WHO DID YOU SEE DOING THE VIOLENCE?	INFORMANT: WHAT FORM OF VIOLENCE DID YOU SEE?	GROUP NOTES
SURPRISES:				
COMMENTS:				

PEER ASSESSMENT

CRITERIA	YES!	IT WASN'T CLEAR
I UNDERSTAND THE POINT THAT THE GROUP WAS SHARING. IT IS:		
THE GROUP SUPPORTED THEIR OPINION WITH GOOD EXAMPLES. FOR EXAMPLE:		
THE PRESENTATION OF THEIR IDEAS WAS CLEAR.		
I ENJOYED THE PRESENTATION.		
COMMENTS:		

SELF ASSESSMENT

CRITERIA	YES, I DID IT!	I'M WORKING ON IT!
I SHARED MY THINKING WITH MY GROUP MEMBERS.		
I SUPPORTED MY OPINION WITH EXAMPLES FROM THINGS I KNOW, THINGS I HAVE SEEN, OR THINGS THAT I HAVE DONE.		
I GAVE MY GROUP IDEAS THAT HELPED US GET OUR TASK DONE WELL.		
I PARTICIPATED IN THE PRESENTATION OF OUR IDEAS.		
COMMENTS:		

LESSON 3: VIOLENCE IN COMICS / GRAPHIC NOVELS

40 minutes

CURRICULUM EXPECTATIONS

- MEDIA LITERACY – UNDERSTANDING MEDIA TEXTS
 - 1.2 – Identify overt and implied messages in simple media texts.
 - 1.3 – Express personal thoughts and feelings about some simple media works and explain their responses.
 - 2.2 – Identify the conventions and techniques used in some familiar media forms.
 - 1.5 – Identify, initially with support and direction, whose point of view is presented in a media text, and suggest how the text might change if a different point of view were used.

KEY CONCEPTS AND QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- Media construct reality using their own unique languages to position viewers.
- Media convey value messages.
- What does violence look like or sound like in the comics that I read?
- How is the violence in illustrations (e.g. comics or graphic novels) similar or different from the violence in animated programs?
- How do producers make some forms of violence to seem okay?

INTRODUCTION/OVERVIEW

Aside from animated television programs, students also read still images such as comic books and graphic novels. Violence also is represented in these media texts, but can be more subtle or hidden. This can be due to the audience to which it is geared, or perhaps because some of the techniques and conventions available with moving image texts (e.g. sound, action) are missing. So, different techniques must be used to convey violence (e.g. the violence is implied but not seen, violent images are replaced with sounds written in words). In this lesson, students will examine examples of print animation (e.g. comics and graphic novels) and compare what they discover with what they discovered about moving image animation in the previous lessons. Students then will synthesize what they have learned, and attempt to draw conclusions and express opinions.

TEACHING/LEARNING STRATEGIES

MODELED READING STRATEGY – For this activity, everyone must be able to see the text that you are using. You could use a large-size comic, or could use a projector to place the pages of the comic on a screen. Using a Modeled Reading strategy, share with students the comic strip, comic page, or graphic novel, demonstrating how effective readers read this type of media text. Choose an example that contains violent actions (whether subtle or obvious). Read the dialogue and caption boxes aloud, but be sure to model the inferences you make about the actions between the frames. For example, *“In this frame, I see The Joker, who has evil eyes and who seems to be smirking. In the next frame, the warehouse has exploded. Knowing what I do about the Joker, I infer that he is responsible for the explosion because he thinks that Batman is inside, and he want to destroy Batman.”*

Continue reading more comic strips, or pages of the comic or graphic novel, using an Interactive Reading strategy. Invite students to share their inferences about specific panels and the spaces between them as you read aloud the comic strips, comic, or graphic novel.

PRIOR KNOWLEDGE – Activate students’ prior knowledge by having them review the **Continuum of Violence (1.3 H)** created earlier. Explain that they now will be looking for examples of violence in print images.

OBSERVATIONS – Hand out **Observation Chart (3.1 H)** and read the headings together. Tell the students that they are going to read a number of comics or graphic novels, and that they will record their observations about these texts on this chart. Even though they will be working in groups on this assignment, everyone must fill in their own chart.

Divide the class into small groups of three or four students. Provide each group with a selection of comic books and/or graphic novels. Have groups look through the images, looking for examples of violence (again, in its broadest sense), and consider how the violence is presented (i.e. what do we see, what do we read, what do we feel). They could work alone, but share ideas and discuss conclusions with group members, or could all work together on a single text at a time.

ENVOYS – When the groups have examined a number of texts, and have completed their notes, instruct them to choose one individual from their group to be an “envoy,” a person who will move to a new group to share ideas, and to gain ideas to bring back to their own group. Encourage students to add any new ideas presented by the envoys to their own charts.

REPRESENTATIONS – Next, tell students that they now will compare how violence is represented in still-image versus moving-image texts. In other words, what are the similarities and differences between the children’s animated TV texts they observed last class, and the comic and graphic novel texts they have observed today?

VENN DIAGRAM – Hand out **Venn Diagram (3.2 H)**. If they are unfamiliar with Venn Diagrams, explain that the details that are true of just one of the texts will go into the circle with the title of the text, and the details that are common to both types of texts will go into the overlapping part of the circles in the middle. Allow time to complete the chart, and then discuss the ideas and the details that the students have placed in their Venn Diagrams.

Provide students with the following prompt, to which they can respond either through conversation, or in written form in their media journals: *How is the violence in comics (and/or graphic novels) similar and/or different from the violence in animated programs?*

Afterwards, have students share their thinking. Synthesize their thinking by writing an entry in the class Media Journal, in which you capture their big ideas about how violence portrayed in comics and graphic novels is similar and/or different from violence shown in moving-image texts.

ACTIVISM

Provide students with a photocopied frame or short series of frames from one of the texts that they analyzed for this lesson. Students then can remove the text in the dialogue and caption boxes, using either white-out or glue and blank paper, or by photocopying the illustrations with blank paper over the text. Then, they can create new text to explain an alternative scenario in which there is no violence. This

provides students with an opportunity to re-purpose the illustrations, redevelop characters, and to convey a message of non-violence. These re-purposed illustrations could then be posted around the school to align with the theme of character-building and healthy living choices.

ASSESSMENT OPPORTUNITIES

- Students can be assessed according to their explanations of their thinking. Consider: have they provided a supported opinion? Are their inferences sound?
- Anecdotal notes about students' engagement and understanding can be made.
- Venn Diagram (3.2 H) – for completeness and accuracy

IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE LESSONS/HOMEWORK/EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

- Challenge students to find and bring to class a comic or graphic novel that is completely without violence. Remind them to consider the more subtle forms of violence, as well as the obvious kinds, when making their choices. If they can find a non-violent text, share it with the class. If they are unable to find such a text, discuss why this is the case.
- Have students take a well-known story (perhaps a fairy tale or nursery rhyme) and rewrite it without the violence. They could create their own comic or graphic novel of this revised tale. This project could be completed individually, or in small groups.
- Discuss with the students their answers to the following questions: *Is implied violence, like that suggested but not shown between the frames of a comic or graphic novel, more acceptable than actual violence, like that shown in animated TV shows? Why or why not? Which kind of violence, implied or actual, has more effect on the viewers? Why?*

CROSS CURRICULAR CONNECTIONS

- Dramatic Arts
- Oral Language
- Health

MATERIALS AND RESOURCES

- Samples of comics and graphic novels that contain violence (from subtle to obvious)
- Several large-size comic strips, or comic pages, or a graphic novel which can be seen by the whole class
- A projector or SMARTBoard that will put the comic strips, comic pages, or graphic novel on a screen will also work.
- Observation Chart (3.1 H)
- Venn Diagram (3.2 H)

IMPORTANT TERMINOLOGY / BACKGROUND FOR TEACHERS

- **Frame:** Frame refers to the individual boxes in which action is contained in a comic or illustration.
- **Inferential Gutter:** The inferential gutter is the space between individual frames. Readers must infer what takes place between the frames.

- ***Class Media Journal:*** This is writing that is done on chart paper, to be saved for future reference. A series of different ideas, definitions, or examples can be collected in this one place. Usually the whole class is involved in producing ideas for the journal, and the teacher writes these down.

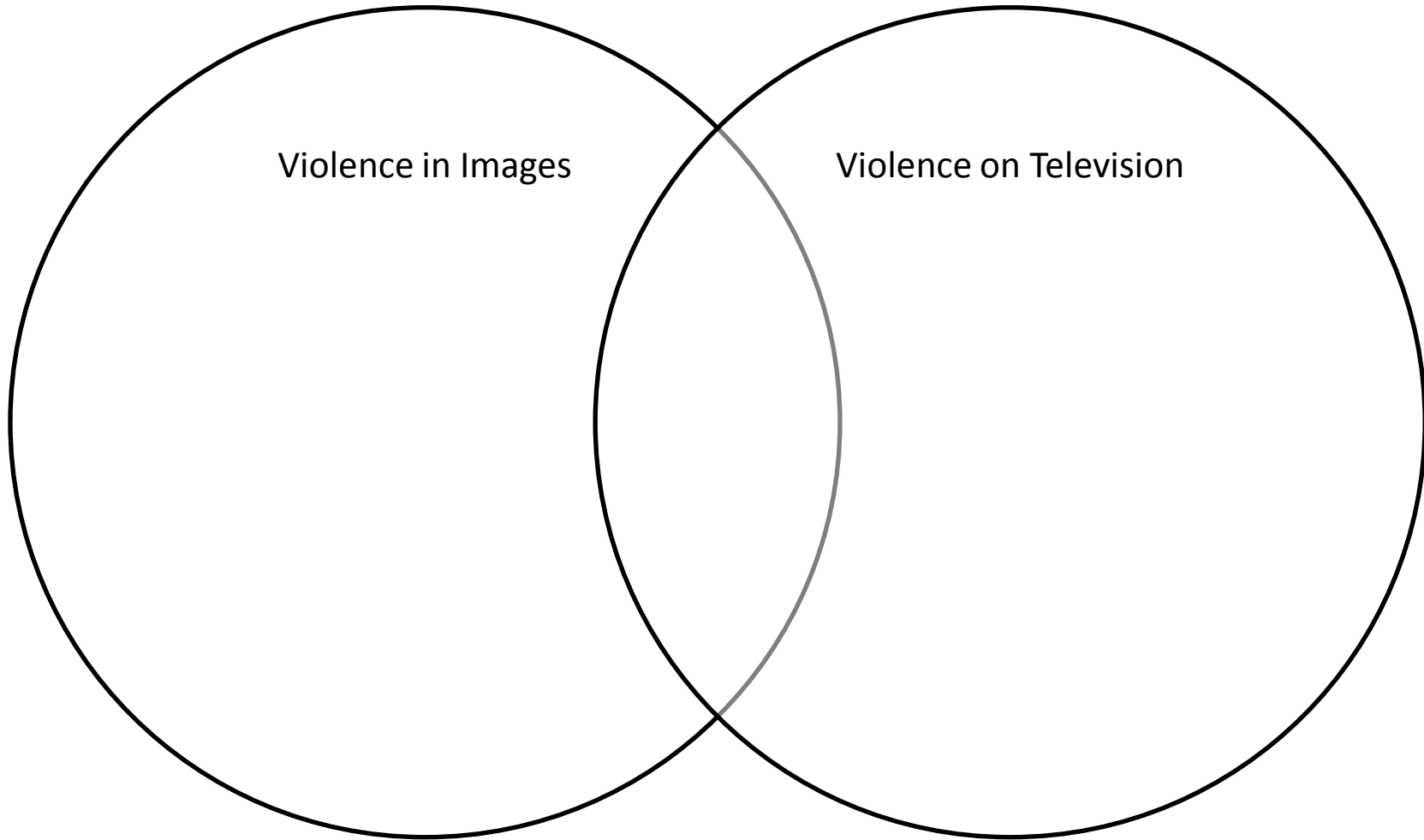
LINKS/RESOURCES

- None used in this lesson

OBSERVATION CHART

Source of Image:	Source of Image:	Source of Image:	Source of Image:
What I See	What I See	What I See	What I See
What I Read	What I Read	What I Read	What I Read
What I Feel	What I Feel	What I Feel	What I Feel

VENN DIAGRAM



LESSON 4: VIOLENCE IN COMMERCIALS

40 minutes

CURRICULUM EXPECTATIONS

- MEDIA LITERACY – UNDERSTANDING MEDIA TEXTS
 - 1.2 – Identify overt and implied messages in simple media texts.
 - 1.3 – Express personal thoughts and feelings about some simple media works and explain their responses.
 - 2.2 – Identify the conventions and techniques used in some familiar media forms.
 - 1.5 – Identify, initially with support and direction, whose point of view is presented in a media text, and suggest how the text might change if a different point of view were used.

KEY CONCEPTS AND QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- Media construct reality using their own unique languages to position viewers.
- Media convey value messages.
- Why do we laugh at some forms of violence?
- How is violence used to persuade our thinking or influence our choices?
- How do producers make some forms of violence seem okay?

INTRODUCTION/OVERVIEW

The commercials that are aired during the live action and animated programs that students watch on television and online also contain messages that seem to normalize violence. Some commercials construct humorous situations using aggression and forms of violence as a means for conveying messages about power relationships and status. A popular hamburger chain boasts having the “angry burger,” and markets its burger to viewers through two comical men who attempt to “out-angry” each other, using threats and facial contortions. These messages can be confusing for some students, who may associate anger and aggression with power or humour. In this lesson, students will examine samples of commercials that rely on violence to persuade viewers. Students will deconstruct the messages in order to become more aware of the impact these messages have on their versions of reality.

TEACHING/LEARNING STRATEGIES

COMMERCIALS – Tell the class that today they are going to watch some commercials that air on TV. Remind them that the skill that they have been using during these lessons is critical thinking about what they are seeing. Inform them that when they have watched the commercial, they will be asked to share what they saw and thought.

Show students a commercial that uses violence as its premise for marketing its product (for example, the *Angry Whopper* commercials). View the commercial once, and then ask students to turn to an elbow partner to share their initial reactions. This step allows students to talk about their own personal viewing or consumer stories before getting down to more serious work.

Next, explain to the students that they will be viewing the commercial a second time, and that this time, they want to try to understand what the producers are trying to tell them. **What is the media message?** Play the commercial again.

THINK ALOUD – Using a Think Aloud strategy, model your thinking about this commercial for students. For example, you could say the following: *You know, I find myself laughing at this commercial because of the funny faces the man is making. If I turn the sound off, though, I get a bit of a different picture. These guys look angry...really angry. I don't think that I would like to meet someone who looked like that because I would be afraid that I might get hurt. I wonder why I find it funny. I think it is because I know that what the producers are really calling angry is the burger, because it is so red hot, like someone's face when they are mad. I think that because I know that I won't get hurt, I can find what I see funny. But I know that violence really isn't funny. I wonder how else the producers could market this burger to me without using violence.*

Discuss any additional ideas that the students can add to your analysis of this commercial. When they are finished, tell them that you now are going to show a different commercial, and they are to repeat the process that has been used with the first commercial. They will watch once to get a sense of what is going on, and to react to it, and then will watch again to analyse what really is going on.

GROUP WORK – Divide the class into triads, and assign each student in the group one of the following tasks:

- What do I see?
- What do I hear?
- What do I feel?

Show a different commercial. View once for pleasure and to gain a context. View a second time to analyse the commercial. Remind the students to focus on their assigned task: *see, hear, feel*. After the commercial has been viewed twice or three times, have students discuss their thinking in their triads. If time allows, show a third commercial and repeat the process of analysis in the triads.

SHARING – When they have finished viewing and discussing the commercials in the triads, ask students to share some of their findings with the rest of the class.

- What sorts of things did they observe?
- What conclusions did they draw?
- How do they feel about the use of violence in commercials: Is it just funny, or is there a more serious issue here?

FEEDBACK – Hand out **Stars and Stairs Feedback (4.1 H)**. Explain how this feedback sheet should be filled in, and provide time for the students to complete it. Each member of the triad will help the other two members by offering ideas for the top of the form. When the top sections are complete, the student will self-assess for the bottom section. Collect these forms when everyone is finished.

Instruct the students to write an entry in their media journals to respond to the prompts: *Why might commercials use violence to sell their products? Is this a good idea?*

RE-CREATE – Afterwards, have students choose a commercial to re-create. Explain that they are ad executives, and that they have been commissioned by the **No Violence Coalition** to revise some popular

commercials to remove violent messages, and to appeal to a broader audience. Have students use a story board to map out their commercial. These story boards may be handed in for assessment (see **Rubric for Story Boards, 4.2 REF**). If time permits, students could perform their commercials.

JOURNALS – Provide time for students to write in their Media Journals about this lesson and what it taught them about violence as a tool for humour. Use **Rubric for Journal Response (4.3 REF)** to assess journal responses.

ACTIVISM

With the help of older students, students can film their commercials and show them at a school assembly. Students could introduce their commercials by explaining why they had recreated the commercials, and what message they were trying to change. Students also could post their storyboards in the hallways, along with a brief explanation for why they have been created.

ASSESSMENT OPPORTUNITIES

- Stars and Stairs Feedback (4.1 H) Teachers also can keep anecdotal notes about the effectiveness of students in explaining their thinking about the overt and implied messages that they interpret from the commercials.
- Story Board of Reworked Commercial (Rubric for Story Board 4.2 REF)
- Journal Entry (Rubric for Journal Response 4.3 REF)
- Performance of Commercial

IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE LESSONS/HOMEWORK/EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

As a follow-up activity, have students browse a variety of commercials to consider which use violence and which do not. This could be assigned as a homework exercise. Tell the students to write down the name of the company advertising, the product they are selling, and a brief description of the events or scenes in the commercial. It would be an interesting addition to this study to ask the students to track how many commercials use violence and how many do not during an hour of programming. If you do this, also ask the students to note the time at which they watched the program, and the type of program they watched. These details may allow them to draw conclusions about when and where violence in commercials appears on TV. When they return to class, create small groups for students to talk about what they saw, their responses to these commercials, and whether or not the commercials are effective at grabbing their attention. Ask the small groups to share some of their conclusions with the rest of the class.

CROSS CURRICULAR CONNECTIONS

- Dramatic Arts
- Oral Language
- Visual Arts
- Health

MATERIALS AND RESOURCES

- Information in Links / Resources section

- Data Projector or SMARTboard for viewing YouTube clips
- Stars and Stairs Feedback (4.1 H)
- Rubric for Story Board 4.2 REF
- Rubric for Journal Response 4.3 REF

IMPORTANT TERMINOLOGY / BACKGROUND FOR TEACHERS

- ***Power Relationships:*** A power relationship refers to the difference in power between groups or individuals. Those who hold power over others are seen as strong, dominant, and powerful. Those without power are seen as inferior, weak, or powerless. In marketing products and messages to audiences, marketers generally want their audiences to associate power and strength with their product. So, establishing power relationships serves as a powerful technique in marketing.

LINKS / RESOURCES

- YouTube clips – Commercials that use violence as a premise for marketing
 - Burger King Angry Whopper commercial
 - Dairy Queen Blizzard commercial
 - Doritos commercial (aired during Super Bowl)
 - Stride Gum commercials
 - Snickers commercials

STARS AND STAIRS FEEDBACK



Something you did
well....

Something you might
work on...

MY COMMENTS:

STORY BOARD RUBRIC

CRITERIA	5 WAY TO GO!	3 GETTING THERE...	1 LET'S TRY AGAIN!	SCORE
TECHNICAL ELEMENTS -setting -perspective	SETTING AND PERSPECTIVE: <i>You understood the perspective of the audience.</i> <i>You re-created the story.</i>	SETTING AND PERSPECTIVE: <i>You made some links to the perspective of the audience.</i> <i>You're on the way to re-creating the story.</i>	SETTING AND PERSPECTIVE: <i>Figuring out the perspective of the audience was tough.</i> <i>You need some help to re-create the story.</i>	/5
CONTENT ELEMENTS -purpose of story -organization / structure -sequencing -narrative	PURPOSE AND ORGANIZATION: <i>You understood the purpose of the activity.</i>	PURPOSE AND ORGANIZATION: <i>You are starting to understand the purpose of the activity.</i>	PURPOSE AND ORGANIZATION: <i>You need some help to understand the purpose of the activity.</i>	/5

RUBRIC FOR JOURNAL RESPONSE

LEVEL	CRITERIA
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete entry that addresses several of the questions asked during the lesson • Entry demonstrates a thorough understanding of perspective, and makes several connections to their own experiences • Opinions and ideas are expressed clearly and effectively
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete entry that addresses most questions asked during the lesson • Entry demonstrates a good understanding of perspective, and makes several connections to their own experiences • Opinions and ideas are expressed clearly
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entry is only partially complete • Entry demonstrates some evidence of perspective, and makes limited connections to their own experience • Opinions and ideas are unclear at times
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entry is incomplete • Entry demonstrates little evidence of insight into a perspective, and makes little or no attempt to connect to own experiences • Opinions and ideas are not expressed clearly or effectively.
LEVEL:	COMMENTS:

LESSON 5: STAY FIT...OR ELSE!?!

40 minutes

CURRICULUM EXPECTATIONS

- MEDIA LITERACY – UNDERSTANDING MEDIA TEXTS
 - 1.2 – Identify overt and implied messages, initially with support and direction in simple media texts.
 - 1.3 – Express personal thoughts and feelings about some simple media works.

KEY CONCEPTS AND QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- Media use their own “language” to position readers/viewers in certain ways.
- How might the choice of music influence how we understand a media text?
- How might the choice of characters influence how we understand a media text?
- What other choices might influence how we understand a media text?

INTRODUCTION/OVERVIEW

On a daily basis, students are immersed in messages conveyed through a variety of media forms, including sounds, still and moving images, and text. Many of these messages contain subtle violent undertones that may serve to normalize some forms of violence. To help students better analyse violence in the media, it is helpful to have them begin to consider what violence is, and how violence is portrayed in media. In this lesson, students will view a PSA (public service announcement) that conveys an overt message about staying healthy, but implies a message that bullying may be okay in some circumstances. Students then will search for other examples, and express their understanding of both the overt and implied message. When they become aware of the implied message, students then might challenge it.

TEACHING/LEARNING STRATEGIES

MEDIA JOURNAL – Create a class Media Journal (e.g. using chart paper), into which you will record ideas, terminology, and learning experienced during the study of media.

Enter into the journal the terms Overt and Implied. Explain what each term means.

- Overt means something that is obvious, intended, and easily seen.
- Implied means something that is suggested or hinted at, rather than openly stated, but which influences interpretations of a message.

Media texts contain an overt message, the stated reason behind their creation. This is the product they are selling or the information that they are delivering. Frequently, media texts also contain an implied message, one that the viewer has to think about to see, but which never-the-less influences their understanding of the product or message. Sometimes, these implied messages are hidden enough that the viewer accepts them as truth, without thinking about what they really mean. Tell the class that the focus of the lesson today is to discover and analyse some of these implied messages, and to think about what impact these messages have on viewers.

PSAs – Show students the PSA titled “*The Chase*,” from the Concerned Children’s Advertisers web site (see information in **Links/Resources** section). In this PSA, a group of girls chases a boy down the street. The boy slows down when he loses his breath, presumably due to not being in good physical shape, and the girls then catch him and kiss him. The end caption reads, “*Stay fit...because you never know.*”

Have students turn to an elbow partner to react to the PSA, and to determine its overt message. In the class journal, record the class’s ideas about the overt message (e.g. it is important to be healthy).

Next, have students talk with their partner about what messages they believe are implied. What other messages might we be getting from this media text? Record students’ responses in the class media journal.

TABLEAU – Invite students, in groups, to create a tableau to represent the final scene of the PSA.

When you tap the shoulder of each student in the tableau, ask the student to speak in character, to express what they are thinking or feeling. Begin with getting reactions from the girls in the scene.

Then, focus on the feelings of the boy. Ask:

- What is he feeling just before the girls arrive?
- What is he thinking and feeling when the girls kiss him?
- How might our responses have been different had this been a group of boys chasing a girl?
- What is the implied message of this PSA?
- What is your reaction to this implied message?

Explain that doing something against the will of another is a form of aggression, and may be an act of bullying.

PSA REVIEW – Re-view the PSA (multiple times), and ask students to watch and listen for techniques that the producers have used to convey a message that the girls’ behaviour is “okay” (ideas may include the choice of upbeat music, the choice of using young children, the humorous slogan). Ask what impact this implied acceptance of bullying could have on viewers of this PSA. Is this what the creators wanted viewers to learn from this PSA? Suggest why this implied message might have been used, despite its potentially negative impact. Record responses into the class media journal.

Hand out **Overt and Implied Messages (5.1 H)**. Show the students a print or video advertisement, or another PSA, and tell them to watch for the overt and the implied messages, as well as the techniques used to convey the implied message. Instruct them to write the appropriate information in each of the boxes on the handout. Model additional examples if necessary.

ACTIVISM

Students might re-design a public service announcement campaign to remove the implication of violence, but to maintain the integrity of the overt message.

Students might write letters or emails to the Concerned Children’s Advertisers group, to express their concerns over the implied messages in this PSA. They would point out the influence of these implied messages could have on children’s views of violence, and their understanding of what is acceptable behaviour.

ASSESSMENT OPPORTUNITIES

- Students can be assessed during the class discussions as to the degree to which they support their thinking as they explain their interpretations of implied messages, and the techniques used by producers to normalize violent messages.
- Overt and Implied Messages (5.1 H)

IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE LESSONS / HOMEWORK / EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

Point out to students that overt and implied messages can be found in many places, not just in advertisements or PSAs.

Ask them to suggest other experiences they have had, where what appeared on the surface was not the whole story. Their examples could include instances where they were bullied or manipulated by other children, especially in situations where “it’s just a joke!” was used to justify bad behaviour.

Ask students to choose a favourite TV program, and to suggest what implied messages are presented. Encourage them to look at details such as who has money and who doesn’t, who is attractive and who isn’t, who wins and who loses, and who is smart and who is foolish. This activity works particularly well with sitcoms or satiric animated TV programs.

CROSS CURRICULAR CONNECTIONS

- Health
- Dramatic Arts
- Oral Language

MATERIALS AND RESOURCES

- Information in Links/Resources
- Data projector or SMARTboard
- Overt and Implied Messages (5.1 H)
- Examples of print or video advertisements, or another PSA, containing both overt and implied messages

IMPORTANT TERMINOLOGY / BACKGROUND FOR TEACHERS

- **Overt:** something that is obvious, or intended to be seen
- **Implied:** something that is suggested or hidden, but which influences reactions; something that subtly shapes the interpretation of a message

LINKS / RESOURCES

- Concerned Children’s Advertisers – “The Chase” Public Service Announcement (PSA)
www.cca-kids.ca/psas/active_living.html

OVERT AND IMPLIED MESSAGE

Media Text

(e.g. advertisement, visual image, slogan, website link)

Overt Message:

What does the producer want me to understand?

Implied Message:

What other message(s) do I understand?

Techniques Used

How did the producer help make the implied message seem normal?

LESSON 6: A MATTER OF PERSPECTIVE

40 minutes

CURRICULUM EXPECTATIONS

- MEDIA LITERACY – UNDERSTANDING MEDIA TEXTS
 - 1.1 – Identify the purpose and intended audience of some simple media texts.
 - 1.2 – Identify overt and implied messages, initially with support and direction in simple media texts.
 - 1.4 – Describe how different audiences might respond to specific media texts.
 - 3.4 – Produce media texts for specific purposes.

KEY CONCEPTS AND QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- Media construct versions of reality using their own languages to position readers/viewers in certain ways.
- Audiences negotiate meaning of media texts.
- How might audiences experience similar media texts differently?
- How might you create a media text that appeals to your interests?

INTRODUCTION/OVERVIEW

Media texts are multimodal forms of expression and communication, and can be experienced in many different ways by audiences. For example, Batman may be enjoyed through reading the comics, wearing a costume, playing a video game, or watching a television program, just to name a few formats. Students experience the narrative of Batman differently through these various media forms. The child who plays the video game assumes the role of Batman in a virtual world. The child who wears the costume re-enacts or creates new adventures as the character. The child who reads the comic books becomes a third-party witness to the adventures. The medium changes the experience. Students will look at a variety of different methods of experiencing a character, and will consider how the message they receive may differ, depending on the point of view they assume. They also will connect their ideas about these characters to the topic of Violence.

TEACHING/LEARNING STRATEGIES

CREATE LIST – In the centre of a page of chart paper, write the name of a popular animated franchise (e.g. *Batman, Star Wars, Bratz, Toy Story, Cinderella*, etc.). Ask the students about the various forms in which they have experienced the franchise (e.g. seen a show, bought a tee shirt, played a video game, bought food or souvenirs with the picture of the character, etc.).

Once you have created a list of all the different ways the story or characters have been experienced, invite a student to come up and touch one of the points on the chart. Ask that student to describe how they experienced the main characters in the format they have chosen (e.g. *Movie: I watched Andy's toys battling against Lottsa Bear; or Video Game: I was Buzz trying to escape from Evil Emperor Zurg*).

After the first student shares, write the following title on the board or on chart paper: **How I Can Experience Media**. Then, under this title, write the method just described by the first student. This could

be I can watch action happen, I can make decisions about what happens, I can pretend to be the characters, I can create my own story, I can change how things happened. After each student shares, record the different ways of experiencing a text. Ask the students how their feelings about the character may change, depending on whether they watch the person in a video, become the person in role playing, or control the person in a video game.

SMALL GROUP S – Divide the class into small groups of three or four students. Instruct each group to choose a different animated franchise from the one used as a class example. Students then will talk about the different ways in which to experience the animated franchise (just as they did as a whole class). Encourage them to be as thorough as possible, listing all the different points they can. Ask the students to discuss the following:

- Which format do they like best. Why?
- Is one format more effective than another?
- Why are there so many different forms of this animated character?
- Is there a pattern to who likes which format (e.g. girls, boys, younger children, older children)?

GROUP DISCUSSION – When they have discussed their ideas in the small groups, ask the students to share their ideas with the rest of the class. Once they have described their different experiences of the texts, it is important that you channel or lead the discussion toward recognition of the different kinds of messages that are delivered by these animated franchises, and that they are designed to appeal to different audiences. What lessons or messages are delivered by each of the examples they have given in the discussion? You could ask the students what older or younger siblings would think about the media text, or what their parents think. Do the boys and girls in the class agree about the texts? Are there certain situations or behaviours that appeal to one audience and not another?

Once the students understand the different audiences and purposes of the various texts, remind them that the focus of the lessons that you have been completing has been Violence. Ask if the topic of violence came up in their discussions, and why or why not. Ask them what they can notice about the topic of violence in the texts they have been discussing. (*Answers may include the following ideas: Most of the examples we have discussed have violence in them, because the hero is fighting evil. Even the seemingly less violent characters, like Bratz, still have to face bullying or social pressures, which are forms of violence. Girls and boys seem to like the same/different kinds of activities, and here's an example ..., The hero always is trying to help others/ protect victims from aggressors.*)

If the discussions all have focused on a hero, ask if the violence that they noticed was acceptable or necessary, and why. Is violence good if you are fighting something or someone bad? Ask if it is possible for the characters they have been discussing to exist in a world without violence. Encourage the students to give reasons for their opinions. What other methods, if any, could be used to reach a positive resolution to the problems? Ask if the characters they have been discussing are good role models for the students, and why or why not.

MEDIA FORMATS – Tell the class that they now are going to explore these ideas further, by using two different media forms to make a point. Instruct the students, still working in their small groups of three or four, to choose two different media formats (e.g. video game, board game, video, song, comic book, graphic novel) with which they would like to work. They are going to use these formats to compare the experiences of the audience, and to draw conclusions about violence. Suggest to the groups that they

choose two very different kinds of media format, so that they can show different audiences and purposes.

Hand out **Media Text Analysis (6.1 H)**, and tell the students that they can use this organizer to sort their ideas. Tell them to be creative in how they present their final ideas: they can design or dramatize the playing of a video game, illustrate a comic strip, write a song, design a costume, write or act in role, etc. The aim of this task is for the students to create two different ways of experiencing a text, and to be able to explain to the class how the experiences and messages are different.

Hand out **Peer Evaluation of Presentations (6.2 H)**. Number each of the groups. Organize the class by saying that group #1 will fill in the form after group #2 presents, and group #2 will fill in the form for group #3, and so on, until everyone has presented and everyone has evaluated a group. (*Another option is to divide the class in half, and provide enough copies of Peer Evaluation of the Presentations (6.2 H) for half the class to evaluate all the presentations of the other half.*)

Have students showcase their presentations in a gallery format, or in oral presentations to the class. After each presentation, collect the peer evaluation forms from the group(s) that completed them.

When everyone has presented, and you have reviewed the peer evaluation forms, pass the forms to the group about whom they were written, and provide time for them to go over the feedback they were given.

ACTIVISM

Write a letter (or letters) to the producers of media texts that convey messages that include violence. Students can share with the producers their ideas about the appropriate audience for their product, and their concerns about some of the dangers that might occur if audiences attempt to emulate and recreate what they see and experience when they take on the role of the key character. Students can share their thoughts about how producers might use more peaceful resolutions to the challenges and problems, so that violence is not seen as the only solution.

ASSESSMENT OPPORTUNITIES

- Observations of participation in whole-class and small-group discussions
- Teacher evaluation of presentations of two media forms
- Peer Evaluation of the Presentations (6.2 H)

IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE LESSONS / HOMEWORK / EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

Students could conduct a survey of other classes, to determine the most popular media formats. Before conducting the survey, they could predict what they will find. Some criteria could include age, gender, level of violence, or type of message. Results could be presented in graph forms. A class discussion of the results would include the reasons why their predictions were correct or incorrect.

Students could choose one of their favourite media characters, and write or draw an episode in this character's life, eliminating all violence. They should remain true to the personality and purpose of this character, but create a new way of delivering the message.

Students could be reminded about the earlier lesson, in which they discussed overt and implied messages. Instruct the class to write a journal entry about the implied messages in one of the media formats discussed in this lesson.

CROSS CURRICULAR CONNECTIONS

- Health
- Dramatic Arts
- Writing
- Oral Language
- Visual Arts
- Music

MATERIALS AND RESOURCES

- Chart paper and markers
- Samples of comic books, video games, television shows, and merchandise of popular narratives (e.g. Batman, Star Wars, Spongebob, PowderPuff Girls).
- Data projector or SMARTboard, if videos or TV shows are used
- Media Text Analysis (6.1 H)
- Peer Evaluation of the Presentation (6.2 H)

IMPORTANT TERMINOLOGY / BACKGROUND FOR TEACHERS

- **Media texts:** these are any formats that a media character could take: movie, TV show, video game, t-shirt picture, poster, food package illustration, clothes, toys, etc. Media text experiences differ, depending on the form they take. An individual may feel differently when watching a movie character fight the villain than when playing that character in a video game. The experience may be even more intense if the individual becomes the character in a dramatization of the character's exploits. In this lesson, students are encouraged to recognize these differences in experience, and to examine the intensity of the experience in the different media texts.

LINKS/RESOURCES

- None used in this lesson

MEDIA TEXT ANALYSIS

MEDIA TEXT	WHEN I _____ THEN I...	WHEN I _____ THEN I...	WHEN I _____ THEN I...
For Example: Anakin Skywalker	When I watch the movie, I get to see how Anakin defeats the bad guys using his light-saber to battle them.	When I wear the costume, I can act as if I am Anakin. My brother and I battle in the basement. I usually win.	When I play the video game, I get to be Anakin, with his special powers. Sometimes I get defeated. I am trying to get better so that I can defeat General Greivous.
Differences I see between the two media texts:			

PEER EVALUATION OF THE PRESENTATION

Something I really liked about your presentation:



Something I really liked about your presentation:



A suggestion I have for you is:



Something I learned from you today is:

