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UNIT 2: UNDERSTANDING MEDIA GENRES

Unit Overview

This unit strengthens students' organizing, classifying, and creative thinking skills by learning about the different forms or types of media messages.

Students learn the vocabulary names for different media messages, including documentary, news, comedy, drama, and advertising. Children explore how to classify media messages by type. They practice predicting what will happen next with different types of media messages and write a story based on an image from a photo card.

This unit is especially effective with non-native speakers and special needs children because of the use of the SNAPS, which can activate visual learners' critical and creative thinking skills. See the directions for using the SNAPS Photo Cards inside the kit of materials.

The "essential questions" in this unit are:

- **What makes an ad different from a cartoon? What makes a sitcom different from a talk show?**
- **What are the names used to identify different types of programs that are on television?**
- **What are the characteristics of comedy, drama, advertising, news, and documentary TV programs?**
- **How can you predict what a TV show will be like by knowing its genre?**



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UNIT 2: UNDERSTANDING MEDIA GENRES

Learn the vocabulary for different media messages, and explore how to classify media messages by type. Practice predicting what will happen next with different types of media messages.

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

2.1 What Type of Message is This?

Identify the different types of media messages using vocabulary words.

2.2 Riddle Me This

Match TV genres to the riddles about different media genres.

2.3 Classify It!

Sort the SNAPS cards by target audience, purpose, and genre.

2.4 Make the Match

Match the *TV guide* show titles to the genre.

PRODUCTION ACTIVITY

Coming Up Next!

Using a SNAPS card as a writing prompt, write a story explaining what has just happened in this scene and what will happen next.

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UNIT 2: UNDERSTANDING MEDIA GENRES

CONNECTIONS TO MARYLAND STATE CONTENT STANDARDS

The *Assignment: Media Literacy* curriculum has been designed to align with Maryland State Content Standards. Many of the activities and lessons are modeled upon the structure and format used in the MSPAP tests for language arts and social studies.

For each unit, the Grade 3 standards are listed first for each subject area, followed by the Grade 5 standards. The numbers at the end of each line refer to specific instructional goals identified in the Maryland Content Standards.

Use the chart below to identify the specific instructional objectives developed in each unit of the program.

ELEMENTARY LANGUAGE ARTS

Grade 3 Content Standards

1.3.5	Comprehension and Interpretation of Informational Text (#3,5,6,7,8)
2.3.2	Comprehension, Interpretation, and Analysis of Text (#1)
3.3.1	Organization and Focus (#1,2,3)
3.3.3	Revision and Evaluation of Writing (#1,2)
3.3.4	Personal Narrative Writing (all)
3.3.6	Informational Writing (#1,2)
3.3.7	Persuasive Writing (all)
4.3.2	Comprehension and Application of Standard English Language Conventions (#1,2,3)
5.3.1	Active Listening Strategies (all)
5.3.2	Comprehension and Analysis (all)

ELEMENTARY SOCIAL STUDIES

Grade 3 Content Standards

1.3.8	Determine the author's purpose in a primary or secondary source document.
1.3.9	Identify and summarize different viewpoints on a single issue.
1.3.11	Frame questions that can be answered by historical study and research.

ELEMENTARY LANGUAGE ARTS**Grade 5 Content Standards**

1.5.5	Comprehension and Interpretation of Informational Text (#1,2,5)
1.5.6	Evaluation of Informational Text (#1,3)
2.5.1	Characteristics of Literary Genres (#2)
2.5.2	Comprehension, Interpretation, and Analysis of Text (#1,2,3,5)
3.5.1	Organization and Focus (#1,2,3)
3.5.3	Revision and Evaluation of Writing (#1-4)
3.5.4	Personal Narrative Writing (all)
3.5.6	Informational Writing (#1,2)
3.5.7	Persuasive Writing (all)
4.5.2	Comprehension and Application of Standard English Language Conventions (#1,2,3)
5.5.1	Active Listening Strategies (all)
5.5.2	Comprehension and Analysis (all)

ELEMENTARY SOCIAL STUDIES**Grade 5 Content Standards**

1.5.7	Describe the difference between a primary and secondary source document and the relationship between them, distinguishing among facts, supported inferences, and opinions.
1.5.11	Develop effective questions to acquire information about people, events, civilizations, and other social studies concepts.



TEACHER NOTES

UNIT 2 | ACTIVITY 2.1 | WHAT TYPE OF MESSAGE IS THIS?

This activity introduces students to some vocabulary words for naming different types of media messages. Students review the vocabulary words and watch a video to identify different types of messages.

Getting Started

This activity works well as a game format. You might hand children the activity sheet or put these vocabulary words on the blackboard or chart paper:

- Fiction
- Comedy
- Drama
- Advertising
- Infomercial
- Talk Show
- News
- Documentary
- Sports

To activate students' prior knowledge, you may want to ask students to define these in their own words. If appropriate, you may wish to have them read aloud the definitions provided on the activity sheet.

You may want to label these words "media genres" or "types" of media messages.

Ask students if they can name a specific TV show that falls into one of these categories. When a student provides the name of a show, write the name of the show next to the category, and ask, "Why does that show fit into this category?"

Involve a number of students in this activity until you are confident that students understand these different media genres.

Using the Videotape

Give students a paper and ask them to number the paper 1 through 7. Show the first segment of Video 2.1. After viewing the short segment, ask students to look at the list of genre names and write down correct answer next to the number 1.

You might want to review children’s answers after each video segment, or roll two or three segments and then review students’ responses.

The goal of this activity is to give students practice in applying the vocabulary words for media genres. You should work with students to help them decide on which of the media genres is the best label to fit the program.

Sometimes, students will use more specific vocabulary words to describe these media messages. This should be encouraged and supported.

Answers:

1. News.
2. Adverting
3. Infomercial.
4. Talk Show.
5. News.
6. Fiction.
7. Fiction.

Extension

Ask students about the media genres for books and movies. See if students can create a list of the different names that are given to these different types of media messages. Students may be familiar with the categories found at the video rental store, for example. The point to emphasize is that there are many different types of messages in books, movies, music, and all media.

Example:

Books	Movies
Romance	Action
Children’s Literature	Animation
Science Fiction	Science Fiction
Biography	Thriller
History	Historical Fiction

Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

UNIT 2 | ACTIVITY 2.1**WHAT TYPE OF MESSAGE IS THIS?**

Instructions: Use these categories to name the different short segments on the videotape.

Fiction

These are media messages that are made-up stories that are imaginary and not true. Some fiction messages are **comedies**—these are stories that make us laugh. Some fiction messages are **dramas**—these are serious and often suspenseful stories about a character and a conflict.

Advertising

These are short media messages that grab your attention and use emotions to persuade you to buy a product.

**Infomercial**

These are media messages that combine advertising with information, showing you how a product works and telling you why you should buy it.

Talk Show

These are media messages that feature people talking about things that interest them or are important in their lives.

News

These are media messages about things that happened recently in our community and around the world.

Documentary

These are media messages that inform and teach about real-life topics and issues in history, nature, and society.

Sports

These are media messages that depict a sports event—a basketball, baseball, or hockey game.





TEACHER NOTES

UNIT 2 | ACTIVITY 2.2 | RIDDLE ME THIS

This activity provides an opportunity for students to apply their knowledge of media genres, practice critical reading skills, and engage in creative writing.

Getting Started

This is an ideal activity for seatwork or as a homework activity. Read the directions aloud to children and review the practice example provided.

Emphasize the point that students should match the riddles to the choices on the bottom of the page. In addition, ask children to write an actual name of a TV show in the margins for each riddle.

Give students enough time to complete the activity. Students may want to try the challenge activity—ask them to write a riddle on the back of the paper to give to a classmate.

When reviewing the answers, discuss the clues that are in the riddle that can be used to make the correct choice.

Answers:

You play along at home
To guess the answers or get them right
Like the real people who appear here

Game Show

Drawings that seem to move
Target kids on Saturday mornings
With funny people, animals, and action

Cartoon

The characters seem realistic
The situations may be suspenseful
It's a story that's serious

Drama

There is usually an alien or two
And worlds to explore
With characters, action, and suspense

Science Fiction

Important things are reported
In Washington, D.C. and around
The world is on your screen

National News

UNIT 2 | ACTIVITY 2.2

RIDDLE ME THIS

Instructions: Match the riddles about different types of television programs to the genre names provided at the bottom of the page. In the margin, write the name of an actual show title that falls into this TV program category.

Example:

Designed to provide amusement,
There's plenty of jokes and
The characters get into unusual situations

What type of message am I?
situation comedy

1. You play along at home
To guess the answers or get them right
Like the real people who appear here

What type of message am I?

2. Drawings that seem to move
Target kids on Saturday mornings
With funny people, animals, and action

What type of message am I?

3. The characters seem realistic
The situations may be suspenseful
It's a story that's serious

What type of message am I?

4. There is usually an alien or two
And worlds to explore
With characters, action, and suspense

What type of message am I?

5. Important things are reported
In Washington, D.C. and around
The world is on your screen

What type of message am I?

Choices:

National News
Talk Show
Cartoon
Game Show

Local News
Drama
Advertising
Comedy

Documentary
Science Fiction
Action-Adventure
Infomercial

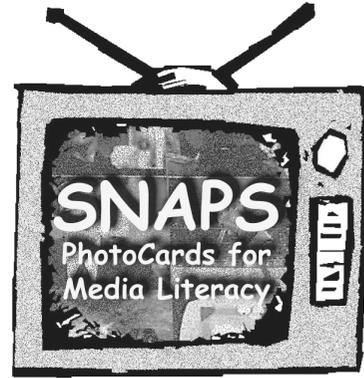
CHALLENGE: Write your own riddle for a TV program on the back of this page. Then share it with friends and see if they can guess the answer!



TEACHER NOTES

UNIT 2 | ACTIVITY 2.3 | CLASSIFY IT!

This activity uses the SNAPS Photo Cards provided in the curriculum to explore language arts concepts of purpose and audience and genre using different types of TV programs.



Getting Started

Students like to handle and look at the SNAPS Photo Cards. You may want to review the curriculum booklet, provided in the plastic envelope, to get ideas about how to work with children using the SNAPS cards.

Provide an opportunity for children to look at the photo cards. You may do this by asking children to take and hold a card while they are sitting in a circle. This is an easy way to get children to look at each card.

To build language skills, go around the circle and ask each child to describe another child's photo card. For example, one child describes what she sees on the card held by the child sitting to her left.

Exploring the Concept of Purpose

Ask children to hold up their card if they think its purpose is **to inform**. Ask children to explain why their media message may be informative.

Then, ask children to hold up their card if they think its purpose is **to entertain**. Ask children to explain why their media message may be entertaining.

Finally, ask children to hold up their card if they think its purpose is **to persuade**. Ask children to explain why their media message may be persuasive.

You might want to note that one TV program may have more than one of these purposes. Which cards have multiple purposes?

Exploring the Concept of Target Audience

You can use the circle method to explore the concept of target audience, or you may want to try a demonstration activity.

Place a group of ten to twelve SNAPS Photo Cards on a flat surface so that all cards are visible and easy to reach for children.

Ask four children to come stand near where the cards are placed. Give each student a target audience. One child will be asked to select the cards that represent TV shows that **young children** aged 2 to 7 might like to watch. Another child will select cards for **older children** aged 8 to 12 and so on using the target audiences for age identified on the worksheet.

Ask children to select their cards and then display their choices in front of the whole class. Students should give reasons for their choices. Here is an example:

“I think this show is a show for young children ages 2 to 7 because it is a cartoon and uses bright colors.”

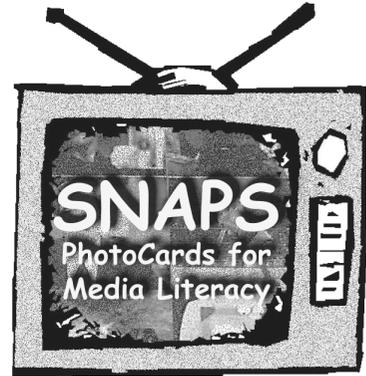
Continue to play this game with all the concepts on the activity sheet. Point out to children that there are no right or wrong answers and that it is the quality of the reason that matters most.

Be sure everybody in the class gets a chance to touch and use the SNAPS Photo Cards. You can order additional sets by calling the Center for Media Literacy at 1-800-226-9494.

UNIT 2 | ACTIVITY 2.3

CLASSIFY IT!

Instructions: Using the SNAPS cards, sort the cards into one of the categories shown below.



PURPOSE

- to inform
- to persuade
- to entertain

TARGET AUDIENCE: AGE

small children 2–7
children 8–12
teens 13–17
young adults 18–25
adults 26–55
older adults 56+

TARGET AUDIENCE: GENDER

females
males

GENRE

- News
- Advertising
- Comedy
- Cartoon
- Documentary
- Drama



TEACHER NOTES

UNIT 2 | ACTIVITY 2.4 | MAKE THE MATCH

This critical reading activity involves students in reading a TV program description and identifying the appropriate media genre.

Getting Started

This activity can be effectively used as seatwork for individual students or as a homework activity.

Pass out copies of activity sheet 2.4. Read the directions aloud and ask students to draw a line between the show title and the genre name. Students should identify *Happy Days* as a comedy.

When students are finished, you can use the answer key below to review the correct answers.

Ask children, “Which of the shows on this list looks like the one you might watch?” Invite children to respond and give reasons for their different choices.

In introducing the challenge activity, you might want to refer to Activity 2.3, which identifies a number of other TV genres that children could use in making their own match game. Since children love making up games and puzzles, be sure to let children who complete the Challenge share their game with others, who can try to solve it.

Answers:

Happy Days
The Frog Princess
A Monster’s Tale
Higher Ground
The Tyler Show
Monday Night Football

Comedy
Animation
Documentary
Drama
Animation
Sports

UNIT 2 | ACTIVITY 2.4

MAKE THE MATCH

Instructions: Draw a line between the show title and the type of TV show. If you are unfamiliar with the show, read the description and look at the time and channel to guess the answer.

Happy Days

Richie and Potsie are excited when they get tickets for the rock concert. Saturday 12:30 p.m. NICK

Documentary

The Frog Princess

A prince must convince his lady love to kiss him. Monday 7:30 p.m. HBO

Drama

A Monster's Tale

Travel to Indonesia in search of Komodo dragons, which may hold the key to scientific discoveries. Wednesday 8 p.m. Discovery Channel

Comedy

Higher Ground

Troubled teens attempt to glue their lives back together at rustic Mt. Horizon High. Friday 9 p.m. FOX

Sports

The Tyler Show

Tyler interviews children's author Louis Sachar, author of *Holes*. Wednesday 9:30 p.m. C-SPAN

Animation

Monday Night Football

The Green Bay Packers fight the Detroit Lions. Thursday 9 p.m. CBS

Talk Show

CHALLENGE: Make up your own match game using four different TV shows on the back of this page. See if a friend can figure out the answers.



TEACHER NOTES



UNIT 2

PREDICT WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

Using a SNAPS Photo Card and your imagination, write a story explaining what has just happened in the scene and what will happen next.

Background

This activity provides students with the opportunity to use their imaginations in response to visual information.

Try placing the cards on the ledge of the blackboard and asking children to come up to the board and select a card to write a story about. If you like, you may want to motivate students by making this writing activity into a meeting of the Hollywood Writers' Club. Students can pretend that they are famous scriptwriters while they complete this activity.

Pre-Writing Activity

Encourage children to use the three writing prompts on the Production Activity page to get started. Explain that before writers write stories for TV or film, they make notes to develop their ideas. This activity sheet encourages students to look carefully at the visual information on the card, and imagine what has just happened in this scene and what could happen next.

Writing

Provide the evaluation rubric so that students can see how this writing will be evaluated. Provide a separate blank page after students have completed their pre-writing so students can complete a finished draft.

Evaluation

You might want students to evaluate each other's work using this evaluation sheet or you might want to use this as an evaluation tool yourself.

Publishing Student Work on www.AssignmentMediaLit.com

See the Resources section on page 151 to learn how you or your students can send students' stories to be published on the *Assignment: Media Literacy* website.

ASSIGNMENT



UNIT 2

PREDICT WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

(**ASSIGNMENT:** *COMING UP NEXT!* Using a SNAPS photocard and using your imagination, write a story explaining what has just happened in this scene and what will happen next.

What do I see on this card?

What has happened before this scene?

What will happen next?

EVALUATION



UNIT 2

PREDICT WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

Student Name: _____

Sentences use description and details.

4	Sentences use details and description in answering the questions.
3	Some sentences use details and description.
2	Sentences lack details and description.
1	Sentences don't provide meaningful answers to the questions.

Sentences are well written.

4	The writer uses correct sentence structure with no spelling errors.
3	The writing has some spelling errors.
2	The writer has not edited the document to correct spelling errors.
1	The writing is hard to understand and confusing to read.

Ideas are creative and imaginative.

4	The writing predicts "what will happen next" in a creative and interesting way.
3	The writing predicts "what will happen next" in an unusual or weird way.
2	The writing needs to be more creative.
1	Writing is hard for the reader to understand.

Comments:

Grade:

