



Media and Politics: Media Literacy

	<p><i>The Role of Media in Elections: Helping Students Understand Media's Influence</i></p> <p>by Frank Baker, media educator ©2007 (do you find this resource valuable? let me know: fbaker1346@aol.com</p>	
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Media Literacy

Of all of the [major concepts of media literacy](#), perhaps the one students could examine is: media are businesses and depend on profit to survive. Some topics for discussion and research are:

- millions of dollars are paid to advertising consultants, who design and position TV ads for a specific audience
- candidates raise millions of dollars to pay the consultants AND purchase the ad time on television
- the local stations, their owners, the TV networks and cable systems that air the ads reap profits from the purchase of this time

Another of the concepts worthy of study is: media are constructions. Students can spend time discussing how political spots are constructed using image, language and sound. (See [Objectives/preparing students](#))

At the heart of media literacy, says media educator Elizabeth Thoman, is the concept of critical inquiry; asking questions.

The following questions should help students as they begin to understand the role of media in political campaigns:

- *What type of audience do you think the ad is aimed at? Why?*
- *What do you think the producers want the audience to feel or think about the candidate?*
- *What issue(s) does the ad address? What questions do you still have about the issue(s)? the candidate?*
- *How does the ad make you feel? What about it made you feel that way?*
- *Do you think the ad would influence you to vote for the candidate? Why or why not?*

Read or download: [How to Decode Political Images](#)