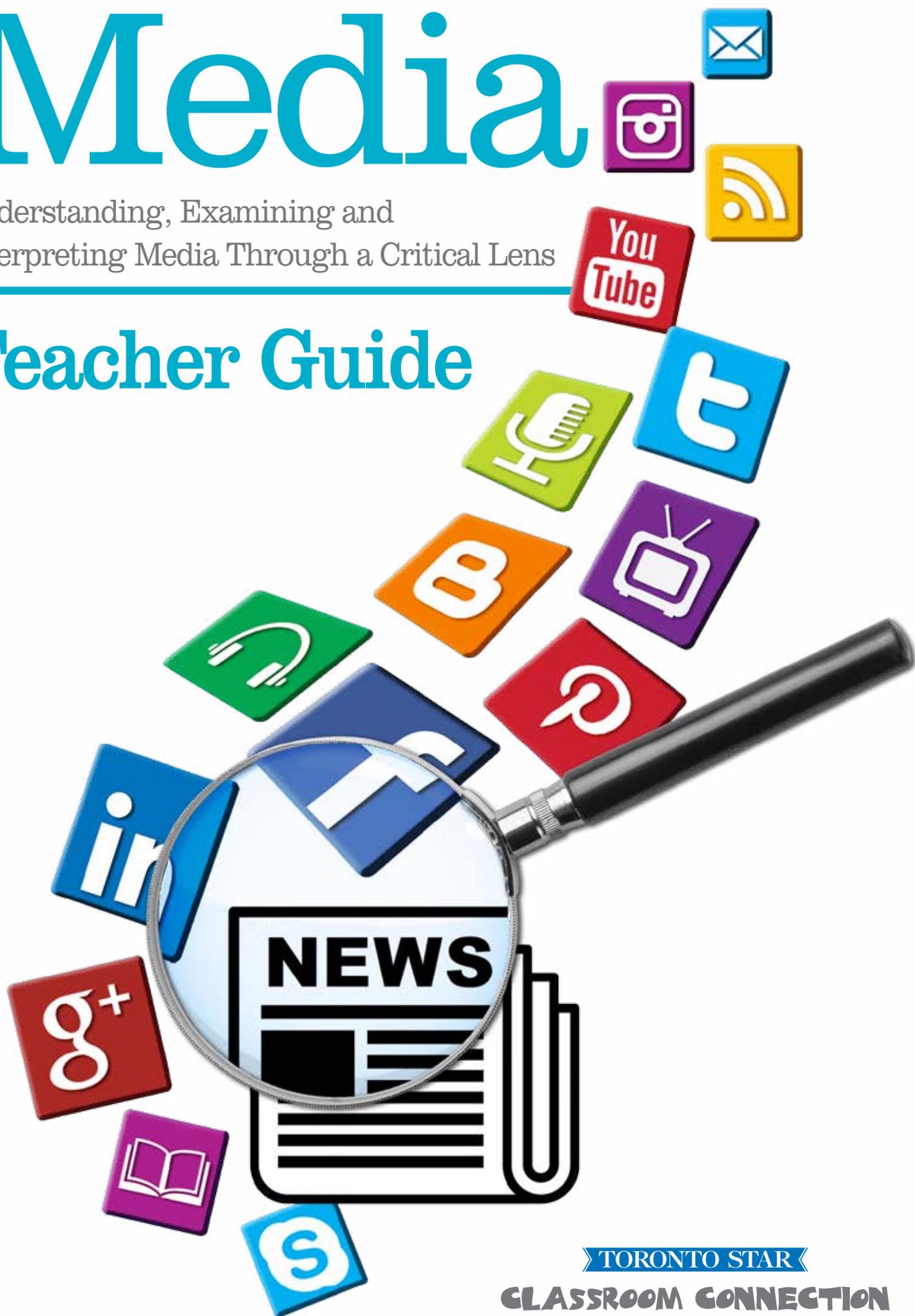


# Media

Understanding, Examining and  
Interpreting Media Through a Critical Lens

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## Teacher Guide



TORONTO STAR

CLASSROOM CONNECTION

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# Introduction:

## Resource Overview

Dear Teachers,

Not long ago, the “3 Rs” – reading, writing and arithmetic – typified learning in schools. Teachers gave their students knowledge and the students were educated, or at the very least, informed. As you know, education today has transformed radically. In fact, students, teachers, and schools barely resemble their earlier counterparts.

Now teachers see their role as to provide their students with the ability and strategies to find answers, not to tell them. Furthermore, students are required to be creative problem solvers, not memorization machines. And today’s schools are often technology hubs, with wifi, cell phones, and computers by the dozen, with rote learning quickly becoming a thing of the past. Accordingly, literacy must also be re-examined. Traditionally, literacy has been defined as decoding and comprehending a text. However, today’s students must also learn how to engage with texts both analytically and critically. By investigating texts, from their inception to publication and reception, students gain a fundamental understanding of their world—a world comprised of messages delivered through the inescapable reach of media.

This student resource is designed to encourage students to engage with, reflect on, and think critically about the media they encounter on a daily basis. Through engaging and hands-on activities, students will learn to deconstruct media and understand the role that media has in shaping their perceptions of the world. In so doing, they will demonstrate 21st century literacy.

Included in the teacher guide are suggestions as to how you can use this resource so it fits with your timetable, teaching style and classroom culture. We hope this resource complements and extends your media literacy program.

Kathleen Tilly and Jonathan Tilly





## How to use this Resource

This resource is designed so you can customize it to your timetable, class structure, students' needs and teaching style.

### The student resource is divided into 5 sections:

- Section 1: Introduction to Media and Media Literacy
- Section 2: Examining our Daily Experiences with Media
- Section 3: The 5 Key Concepts of Media Literacy
- Section 4: Bringing it all Together
- Section 5: Culminating Reflection Questions

The book centers on the 5 Key Concepts of Media Literacy, as identified by the Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat and the Ontario Ministry of Education<sup>1</sup>.

### The 5 Key Concepts are:

1. All texts are constructions
2. Texts contain belief and value messages
3. Audience members interpret the same media messages differently
4. Texts serve different interests
5. Each medium develops its own "language" in order to position viewers in a certain way

Each Key Concept is explored in four parts: *understand, connect, apply/create, reflect*.

Section	How to use it in your class
1. Understand	Information and examples are given to explain each of the 5 Key Concepts independently.
2. Connect	Students are asked to respond to a question that encourages them to connect a specific Key Concept to their own experiences.
3. Apply/Create	<p>Three activities for each concept are included in this section. Activity 1 is the easiest and activity 3 is the most challenging. These activities involve writing, creating or discussing, and they incorporate a variety of media, such as television, video games and YouTube. Questions and activities can be completed independently, in small groups or as a whole class<sup>2</sup>.</p> <p>You are encouraged to use this section in a way that fits your timetable and teaching needs. Below are suggestions as to how to incorporate the student book into your Media Literacy program:</p> <p><b>If you have limited time:</b> Students should complete sections 1 and 2 in order to develop a strong foundational understanding of media and media literacy. In section 3, ask students to complete one activity for each of the Key Concepts. You could assign one specific activity to students, they could pick the activity that they are most interested in, or activities could be completed at centres. Students can then consolidate and reflect on their knowledge in section 4. Section 4 could be completed as homework.</p> <p><b>If you have ample time:</b> Students should first complete sections 1 and 2. Section 3 can be completed in full as time permits. There are 15 activities in total: 3 for each Key Concept. Several class periods could be dedicated to the culminating project in section 4.</p> <p><b>If you have students with different needs and abilities:</b> The three activities are levelled from easiest to hardest. If you have students who require more support, direct them towards activity 1. Students who require a challenge can complete activity 3.</p>
4. Reflect	Questions encourage students to reflect on each Key Concept.

<sup>1</sup>The Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat and The Ontario Ministry of Education [www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/literacynumeracy/inspire/research/critical\\_literacy.pdf](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/literacynumeracy/inspire/research/critical_literacy.pdf)

<sup>2</sup>Internet and computer access is required for some activities so students can view the suggested online media texts.



## Overview of the Student Resource and Explanation of Activities

### Section 1: Introduction to Media and Media Literacy

#### What is Media Literacy?

Before students can do an in-depth exploration of the 5 Key Concepts in Media Literacy, they must first examine the terms: media texts and media literacy. Explanations and examples of these terms are included in this section.

### Section 2: Examining our Daily Experiences with Media

#### Media Literacy Reflection

In this section, students are prompted to reflect on their own experiences with media. They are asked to identify the mediums they see every day and to think of examples of a variety of media texts.

Once students complete these questions on their own, the class can come together to do a whole-class brainstorming session to identify different types of media. A unique way to do this is to create a graffiti wall. To create a graffiti wall, get a large piece of butcher paper and have students use colourful markers, pastels and pens to give examples of media texts using "graffiti-like" writing. This piece of art can be displayed and added to throughout the class' examination of media literacy.

#### Media Literacy Quiz

Before students begin to examine specific types of media, they can take the following quiz to test their media knowledge:

1. Media always communicates a message. **T**
2. The news that you read in the newspaper has a neutral point of view. There is no bias in newspaper articles.  
**F** – Sometimes the inclusion of bias or specific points of view in the news is intentional (such as in an editorial or column) but other times it can be unintentional.
3. Photographs are an example of media. **T**
4. A few companies, such as Disney and Google, own a large portion of the media we see and use. **T**
5. Twitter messages can only be 200 characters in length.  
**F** – Tweets can only be 140 characters.
6. A hashtag is a fried potato patty eaten for breakfast.  
**F** – A hashtag is the # sign which precedes a word or a phrase in a tweet.
7. The first commercial Internet domain name (.com) was registered in 1985 by a computer company called Symbolics Inc.  
**T** - The domain name they registered was symbolics.com
8. In December 2014, there were 890 million active users on Facebook every day. **T**
9. 100 hours of videos are uploaded to YouTube every minute.  
**F** – There are 300 hours of videos uploaded to YouTube every minute.
10. YouTube is available in 75 countries and in 61 languages. **T**

## Section 3: The 5 Key Concepts of Media Literacy

### Introduction to the Five Key Concepts

Students are first introduced to the following 5 Key Concepts of Media Literacy:

1. All texts are constructions
2. Texts contain belief and value messages
3. Audience members interpret the same media messages differently
4. Texts serve different interests
5. Each medium develops its own "language" in order to position viewers in a certain way

### Key Concept 1: All texts are constructions

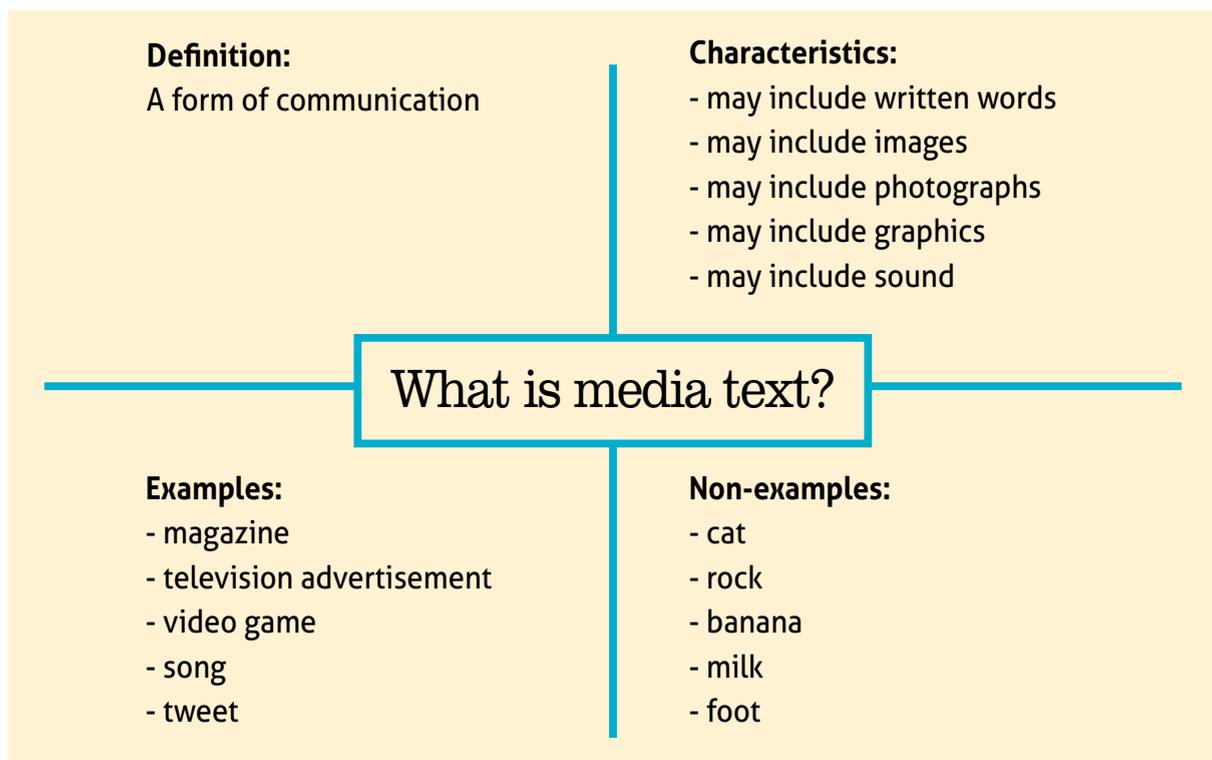
#### *Understand*

Before students are asked to take a deep dive into each of the 5 Key Concepts in Media Literacy, they must first define the term, 'media text', which appears throughout the student resource.

Students are asked to answer the question: what are media texts? Many students might assume that media texts can only be written pieces such as books, magazines or newspapers. While media texts certainly include written works, they also include video games, YouTube videos, tweets, advertisements, photographs, television shows, movies etc.

One way that you can help your students to define media texts is by using a graphic organizer called the Frayer Model. The model, which is included in the student resource, encourages students to think about media texts in a variety of ways.

An example of a completed Frayer Model may look as follows:

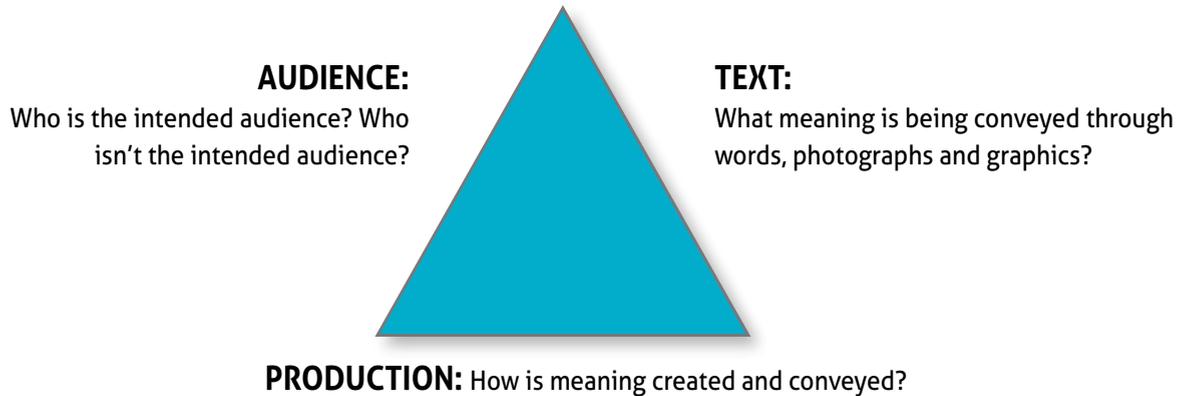


**Connect**

To encourage students to think about Key Concept 1, they are given an example of an advertisement and asked to identify the choices made by the creator of the image. For example, choices had to be made about the font, wording, lighting etc.

As an extension, students could discuss three components of the advertisement: audience, text and production. These three areas are often referred to as the "media triangle" and they can be used to examine any media text.

The chart below could be used to examine the advertisement in further detail.



**Apply/Create**

1. Real or Fake?

For this activity, show your students a YouTube video called *The Spaghetti Tree* <http://tinyurl.com/starmed1>

Show the video first before they read about it in the student resource section. Once the video has been viewed, they can answer questions about whether or not they believe it to be true.

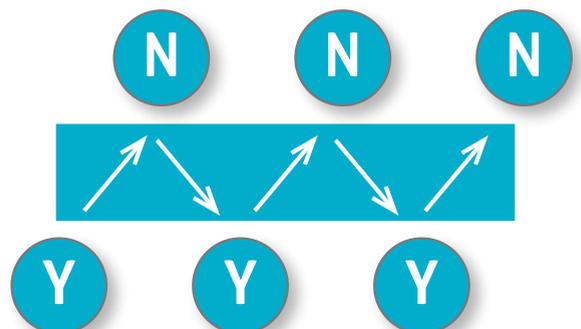
2. Too Good to be True?

Students will read the following article on *Teaching Kids News* (<http://teachingkidsnews.com/2014/03/06/1-tony-hawk-hoverboard-video-likely-hoax/>), about a hoax YouTube video that advertises a hoverboard. Students will respond to the article by answering three questions in their student resource.

Once students answer the questions, organize a debate in your class. A question that students can debate is: Can the Internet be trusted as a reliable source?

Divide the class into two sides – one side will argue that the Internet can be trusted and the other side will argue that it cannot be trusted as a reliable source. You can set up a "Ping-Pong debate" where students volley between the 'yes' side and the 'no' side in order to discuss the question.

Question: Can the internet be trusted as a reliable source?





### 3. Who Makes the News?

In this activity, students will explore the questions: Who makes the news? Who doesn't make the news? They will read an article from the Global Media Monitoring Project (<http://www.i-m-s.dk/who-makes-the-news/>) that documents the lack of women's voices in the world's news media. The questions in the book are designed to get them to think about which stories are told and which stories are silenced. The full *Who Makes the News* story is included on page 13 and 14 of this resource. You may print copies to handout to students.

#### **Reflect**

At the end of this section, students will be asked to reflect on the first Key Concept: All text are constructions. They will be asked to document how their thinking related to this Key Concept has changed since they completed the activities.

### Key Concept 2: Texts contain belief and value messages

#### **Understand**

Students are introduced to Key Concept 2 and why it is important to recognize the beliefs and values that are disseminated through a medium.

#### **Connect**

Students are encouraged to analyse the lyrics of one of their favorite songs to identify value or belief messages.

#### **Apply/Create**

##### 1. Ranting not Raving

Students will explore belief and value messages using rants. To get a better understanding of rants, they can watch Rick Mercer on YouTube. One rant of interest might be "The War on Fun" about banning balls in school playgrounds (<http://tinyurl.com/starmedia3a>). After watching this video, they will answer questions about the belief and value messages in the rant.

Students will then create a rant about a subject that is important to them. To support your students as they write a rant, you can refer to the following wiki page on rant writing: <http://www.wikihow.com/Write-a-Rant>. Once the rants are written, students can record and share them using cell phones or tablets.

##### 2. What do you Believe?

Students often assume that everything they read in a newspaper is neutral and free of bias. As adults, we know this is not true. Therefore, we must teach this knowledge to our students. Editorials are an excellent resource to teach the concept that texts contain beliefs and values. In the student resource, two article links are included that deal with the controversy surrounding vaccinations. One piece is a Toronto Star editorial and one is an article that appeared in the Life section of the Toronto Star. Students are encouraged to read both articles and answer questions. The full text of both articles are included on page 15 to 19 of this teacher guide. You may print these pages and distribute to students.

As an extension, ask your students whose beliefs and values are missing from the articles. They can then conduct online research to find a piece of writing from that point of view.

##### 3. Subtle (and not so Subtle) Suggestions

In this activity, students become acquainted with the different types of propaganda that are used in media. In the student resource, the different types of propaganda – bandwagon, plain folks, card stacking, name-calling, glittering generalities, testimonial and snob appeal – are defined. Students are asked to find examples of each type of propaganda strategy. Magazines, newspapers, Twitter, Facebook and television are excellent resources for this activity.



### **Reflect**

In this section, students are asked to reflect on how they will continue to identify belief and value messages in media texts in the future.

## **Key Concept 3: Audience members interpret the same media messages differently**

### **Understand**

In this section, students will explore how the same media message can be interpreted differently. Students need to understand that their cultural background, gender, age etc. influence how they perceive and understand media texts. The foundation of this Key Concept is that we all have different points of view.

### **Connect**

To illustrate this Key Concept, students are asked to recall a time when they had a different interpretation of a media text than a friend or family member.

### **Apply/Create**

#### 1. What do you see?

Three images are shown and each of them can be interpreted in two different ways. Students are asked to describe each image and compare their impressions with a classmate.

#### 2. A Few Words, So Many Meanings

The phrase "like a girl" is used in a variety of ways, but it is often negative. Students will examine an advertising campaign by *Always* that looks at different ways to interpret the same phrase.

<http://tinyurl.com/starmedia6>.

#### 3. Cartoons Causing a lot of Fuss

In this activity, students will examine political cartoons from the Toronto Star. They will identify the structure and language that is used in this medium and examine the way political cartoons position viewers.

### **Reflect**

In this reflection, students are asked to think about this Key Concept from the perspective of media creators.

## **Key Concept 4: Texts serve different interests**

### **Understand**

Students are asked to step back from a single media text and examine media in general. In particular, they are asked to consider and identify the owners and stakeholders of media.

### **Connect**

In the student book, Disney is provided as an example of a brand that owns many different media outlets. For example, Disney owns dozens of companies, including ABC, ESPN, Pixar etc. Students are asked to reflect on how this could influence the media they see, and why it is important to know who controls and owns the media that is consumed.



### **Apply/Create**

#### 1. Draw It Out

Infographics are used to present and highlight information using graphics. Students will examine the following infographic about junk food, which looks at the harmful effects of soda on the body:

<http://tinyurl.com/starmedia7>.

Students will identify the interests of the creator and then they will identify other interests that are missing.

Then they will pick a topic of interest and create an infographic from that point of view. To show your students more examples of infographics, and excellent site is <http://www.dailyinfographic.com>.

#### 2. Same Game, Different Coverage

Sports broadcasts differ depending on where the coverage takes place. In this activity, students will compare television coverage of the final World Series game in 1993 between the Toronto Blue Jays and the Philadelphia Phillies. They will compare Canadian coverage versus American coverage and identify their interests.

#### 3. What's in your Lunchbox?

Canada's Food Guide has evolved since its first inception in 1942. In this activity, students will examine three permutations of the Food Guide and identify how it has changed. Students are asked to consider the impact of lobby groups, such as the Dairy Bureau of Canada, on the Food Guide.

### **Reflect**

In the reflection section, students are asked to think about why it is important to know who owns the media they consume.

## **Key Concept 5: Each medium develops its own "language" in order to position viewers in a certain way**

### **Understand**

Students are asked to consider the language used in a variety of media texts.

### **Connect**

Students are asked to think about what "language" (handshakes, inside jokes, facial expressions) they use to communicate with their friends.

### **Apply/Create**

#### 1. News, Advertisement or Advertorial?

In this activity, students will examine the subtle and persuasive medium of advertorials. They will examine the format and form of advertorials using an example from the Toronto Star. <http://tinyurl.com/starmedia12>  
The full advertorial is included on pages 20 and 21 of this teacher guide.

As an extension activity, students could create an advertorial for a product that they invent. They could create it for the Toronto Star using their newly acquired knowledge of advertorials, including format, content and design.

#### 2. A Photo is Worth a Thousand Words (or Interpretations)

This activity focuses on photographs as media texts. In particular it looks at the impact that photos can have on viewers. Several photographs of natural disasters are included and students are asked to reflect on how each



photograph makes them think and feel. In addition, students are asked to look closely at photographs in order to observe the content, composition and decisions that go into taking, editing and publishing a photograph.

### 3. Tweet, Tweet

Students will examine the medium of Twitter and the language it uses in order to share a message. In addition to looking at tweets, students will also examine and create hashtags. Students will look at the strengths and weaknesses of Twitter and create their own tweets in order to advertise an upcoming event at their school.

#### **Reflect**

In the reflection section, students are asked to determine why it is important to know the language of a medium before it is created.

## Section 4: Bringing it all Together

### **Culminating Activity**

Students are given an open-ended culminating task where they are asked to create their own media masterpiece using the 5 Key Concepts. Prompts and reflection questions are provided to guide their thinking.

#### **Reflection**

Students are asked to determine what makes a media text successful, and then they are prompted to judge their media creation based on the criteria they identify.

## Section 5: Culminating Reflection Questions

Students are asked to reflect on their learning and identify how their understanding of media and media literacy has changed.

## Curriculum Connections

Media Literacy is a separate strand in the Ontario Language Curriculum. While it can be easily integrated into social studies, science, visual art and language, it is important that it must also be treated as an independent subject.

Below are the Media Literacy Overall Expectations for Grades 5 – 8. These Overall Expectations are incorporated into the activities outlined in the student activity resource.

1. Demonstrate an understanding of a variety of media texts;
2. Identify some media forms and explain how the conventions and techniques associated with them are used to create meaning;
3. Create a variety of media texts for different purposes and audiences, using appropriate forms, conventions, and techniques;
4. Reflect on and identify their strengths as media interpreters and creators, areas for improvement, and the strategies they found most helpful in understanding and creating media texts.



**Glossary** (these definitions are from <http://www.wordsmyth.net>)

<p><b>Critical Thinking</b> disciplined thinking that is clear, rational, open-minded, and informed by evidence</p>
<p><b>Documentary</b> a film or videotape that explores real facts and events, Ex. one that includes footage of the events filmed as they occurred.</p>
<p><b>Hoax</b> an act of deception, Ex. a humorous or mischievous trick.</p>
<p><b>Media</b> newspapers, television, radio, and other means of mass communication collectively</p>
<p><b>Medium</b> any one of the means of mass communication, such as television, radio, newspapers, or the like.</p>
<p><b>Message</b> a communication of information by speech, writing, symbols, or other means.</p>
<p><b>Subtle</b> difficult to detect or define</p>

Thank you for using this resource with your students.



## Appendix – Full News Stories

These stories may be printed and distributed to students as part of the activities in the student resource. The links to these stories are included in the student resource.

### Who makes the news?



Related to Section 3 in the student resource:

*The Five Key Concepts of Media Literacy*

→ Key Concept 1

→ Activity 3 (page 3)

16 Oct. 2012

A young, female participant in Cairo Photo Marathon 2011. In Egypt, only 27% of news subjects – the people who are interviewed, or who the news is about – are female, according to "Who Makes the News?".

PHOTO: RASMUS STEEN/IMS

**Who and what appears in the news and how people and events are portrayed matters. Who is left out and what is not covered are equally important.**

By Anna Maria Mosekilde, IMS

Since 1995 the Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP) has been documenting the denial of women's voices in the world's news media. Until the project started, there was no global overview charting the systematic nature of women's exclusion in new media. A number of organisations such as UNIFEM and the WACC are behind the project.

"The lack of women's representation in media is an issue for democracy," said Ms. Anita Frank Goth, project manager of the Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP) and editor at the Danish NGO KVININFO when speaking to staff at International Media Support (IMS) in early October. Her presentation focussed on the issue of gender balance in media and media development projects. Without gender balance in media concerning stories by and for women and the use of female journalists and sources, the news content and media products is skewed towards only 50 per cent of populations.

#### A global problem

As witnessed during the Arab Spring, women stood side by side with men during the uprisings. However, as the uprisings dwindled, the visibility of women in the public sphere also decreased as transition towards government reform and power transfer began. This was mirrored in the media coverage of events carried out by or about women.

The issue of the lack of coverage of articles by and about women and use of female sources in media is not a problem restricted to certain countries and regions. It is a global phenomenon and plenty of examples can be found across the world on the low representation of women in media.



Anita Frank Goth provided a telling example from Denmark, a country which usually ranks high in global gender equality surveys. Yet the media portrays another reality. Despite the fact that 42% of government ministers and 37% of members of parliament were women at the time of the study of the GMMP (2010), only 28% of all of the political sources in the media were women.

On a global scale, only 24% of the people heard or read about in print, radio and television news are female. In contrast, 76% – more than 3 out of 4 – of the people in the news are male.

### **Men and women assigned different roles**

Multiple figures and statistics from the GMMP verify that media treat male and female news subjects differently. Journalists are almost twice as likely to mention the age of their female news subjects as they are that of their male equivalents. Also, female news subjects are identified by their family status four times more than male news subjects.

On the role that men and women fulfill in the media in general, the GMMP disclosed that 72 per cent of so-called “experts” quoted and used in media, women thus being particularly underrepresented in this category. When it comes to popular opinion, 44% of sources interviewed for this particular purpose are women. According to Anita Frank Goth, some could conclude from these figures that women have a better chance of appearing in media when focus is not on her professional abilities.

### **The way forward**

Many working tools have been developed by organisations in the field of media and development that aim to even out the gender balance in media production and media content. One important tool is UNESCO's gender sensitive media indicators, which is an easy tool to apply in media development.

However, every country requires an assessment of the specific cultural context and situation of women before for example introducing quotas for male/female participation in certain media development programmes, according to Anita Frank Goth.

“One has to assess the general attitude towards quotas in a specific country, before including quota requirements in projects,” she advised.

In certain countries such as Denmark the stance is very negative towards quotas for gender balance purposes as in Denmark, whereas many countries in Africa are in favour of supporting the advancement of women through quotas.

## Measles is deadly serious and should be stopped by immunization: Editorial



*Related to Section 3 in the student resource: The Five Key Concepts of Media Literacy*

→ Key Concept 2

→ Activity 2 (page 4)

*New outbreaks of measles in Toronto and in the United States underline the importance of protecting children through immunization.*

*DAMIAN DOVARGANES  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS*

*Published on Wed Feb 04 2015*

Four cases of measles in Toronto, a city of 2.8 million people, may not seem much to worry about but two things make this particularly distressing.

First, public health officials can't trace a link among the four. They aren't from the same family, there's no source case, and none recently travelled outside Canada.

Yet these individuals must have contracted the measles virus from someone. And that means there are almost certainly more people with the disease circulating in Canada's largest city.

The second troubling aspect is that measles is highly contagious and potentially deadly. It mustn't be brushed aside as something not worth vaccinating against.

Quite the contrary. Children hit by measles face very real danger. Most typically endure a blotchy rash, puffy eyes, a sore throat, fever and then go on to recover. But some suffer serious complications including pneumonia, ear infections that can result in hearing loss, and an inflammation of the brain causing permanent damage and even death.

The good news is that this scourge is highly preventable through immunization. Indeed, measles was once considered virtually eliminated in this country. But it has roared back in recent years as significant elements of the population choose to skip vaccination on religious grounds, a mistaken belief that immunization is harmful, or through simple complacency and neglect.

It's telling that three of the four laboratory-confirmed cases of measles now being investigated by Toronto Public Health officials involve individuals who had not been vaccinated against the virus. And in the fourth case the patient received only one dose of vaccine instead of the requisite double dose.

The overall immunization rate against measles in Toronto remains fairly high, with well over 90 per cent of the population protected. One reason is Ontario's requirement of an up-to-date immunization record in order for children to attend school. Unfortunately, parents can easily bypass that prerequisite by signing a Statement of Conscience or Religious Belief exemption form.

As a result, there are distressing gaps in immunization coverage in Toronto's education system. Some



centres, such as Alpha Alternative Junior School, have exemption rates approaching 40 per cent. A similar hole in society's armour against measles was responsible for hundreds of cases in British Columbia last year. It was centred on a fundamentalist Christian school. And gaps in coverage are helping to fuel a measles outbreak in the United States that has so far infected more than 100 people, with most cases linked to Disneyland in California.

No wonder public health officials here, and south of the border, are redoubling their call to have children immunized against the virus. Each unvaccinated person puts others at potential risk.

One possible response would be for Ontario to tighten provisions allowing parents to opt out of immunization and still have their children attend school. The exemption system could be made more rigorous, perhaps by requiring proof of religious affiliation.

Before going that far, however, the province should carefully monitor the response to public health agency efforts at boosting vaccination. If enough parents can be convinced to protect their children willingly, there should be no need for tougher measures.



## Inside the mind of anti-vaxxers



*Related to Section 3 in the student resource: The Five Key Concepts of Media Literacy*  
→ Key Concept 2  
→ Activity 2 (page 4)

*"Because vaccines are so successful, a lot of people don't see why we should get them," says psychologist Nicolas DiFonzo, who himself is deaf in one ear from getting the measles as a child.*

DAMIAN DOVARGANES  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

*By: Robin Levinson King Staff Reporter, Published on Mon Feb 23 2015*

### **Anti-vaccination myths go back . . . way back . . . and they aren't just about autism fears.**

The resilience of anti-vaccination myths in the face of overwhelming scientific evidence is troubling, but it's not new.

With a total of 10 cases in the city of Toronto, the once-dead measles virus has come back to life. While many of the outbreaks across North America have been traced to one case at Disneyland, Toronto's cases are unusual, said Dr. Elizabeth Rea of Toronto Public Health.

While every case in Toronto comes from the same strain, Rea said, the people who have been infected have nothing in common.

"None of our cases seem to have been in the same place at the same time," she said. So whoever came to Toronto must have infected a lot of people in many different locations, she said.

The resurgence of the virus has led many to deride these "anti-vaxxers" for being overprivileged nincompoops who falsely believe that vaccines cause autism. But attributing the rise of the anti-vaccination movement to a single fear or social class ignores the persistent lure of anti-vaccination mythology throughout history, experts say.

### **Anti-vax myths go back . . . way back**

Most of the press about the anti-vaccination movement has focused on a single paper published in 1998 by Andrew Wakefield in the scientific journal the Lancet on the connection between the MMR vaccine and autism. The paper was eventually retracted and Wakefield was disgraced and lost his medical license in 2010.

But the damage was done, and vaccination rates in the U.K., where the paper was published, fell. But, said Brendan Nyhan, a political scientist at Dartmouth College in the U.S., the autism myth is only "one piece of the puzzle" of why the anti-vaccination movement took off in the new millennium.

"People have had misgivings about vaccines for hundreds of years," he said.

Vaccines have been around since the 1790s when Edward Jenner created the first vaccine for smallpox. Between 1840-1867, a series of acts made smallpox vaccination in England compulsory and free for



children, and these laws helped become the basis for Ontario's own Vaccination Act of 1887.

And as long as there have been vaccines, there have been anti-vaxxers. Critics expressed concern about negative side effects, as well as unease about putting animal material in their body (early smallpox vaccines used cowpox).

Rumour psychologist Nicolas DiFonzo (who himself is deaf in one ear from getting the measles as a child) said the common narrative shared by anti-vaxxers is "opposition to officialdom" or a deep mistrust of authority. DiFonzo said there is a correlation between believing anti-vaccination myths and higher education, and suggested it exists because university and college education encourages skepticism, independent thinking and a distrust of authority.

While many have used this correlation to conclude that anti-vaxxers are largely rich, white and liberal, Nyhan said they're not so easy to pigeonhole. Although it's true some measles outbreaks have occurred in hippy bastions Oregon and California, other outbreaks have occurred in Indiana and amongst the Amish in Ohio, Nyhan said.

"It's not something that can be easily reduced to it's liberals that aren't vaccinating, it's rich people that aren't vaccinating," he said.

### **You can't fight myth with fact**

Both Nyhan and DiFonzo agree that the Wakefield study is more of a symptom and contributing factor to the anti-vaccination movement — not a root cause.

Nyhan said that evidence alone will not convince anti-vaxxers they are wrong. In a study published in *Pediatrics* in March 2014, Nyhan showed how refuting the MMR/autism link actually strengthened a parent's intent not to vaccinate their child.

"Throwing facts and evidence at people rarely changes their minds, particularly when it comes to issues we care about," he said.

Instead, challenging a predisposed belief can actually help a person strengthen their resolve, something psychologists call disconfirmation bias.

We've all seen this scenario, too often at the family dinner table when a political discussion gets heated. Everyone walks away from the ruined meal feeling assured of their brilliance and their opponent's stupidity.

"When you have a preference for one side or the other of a debate, you're not evaluating the information dispassionately, he said. "You're more like a sports fan than a judge weighing the evidence."

If someone already buys into the anti-vaccination myth, trashing Wakefield's study won't change their mind. In fact, Nyhan said, anti-vaxxers have already moved on to new claims.

Concerns about thimerosal, an organic mercury compound that has been proven safe, is a newer reason some people oppose vaccination.

Nyhan said it's important to note that the vast majority of parents believe in vaccination. The goal then is not to convince the few hardcore anti-vaxxers to change their mind, but to make sure people on the fence don't fall down the rabbit hole.

### **Viral rumours**

In the age of social media, it sometimes feels like lies spread faster than truth.

While anti-vaccination myths have been around for hundreds of years, rumour psychologist DiFonzo said they have taken on new life in the age of the Internet, where parent forums can create a bubble-effect. It's easy for like-minded people to bounce the same legends off each other, "confirming" the rumours.

"The Internet has greatly magnified the ability of like-minded people to get together," he said, noting that many anti-vaxx messages were circulated on online parent forums.



Part of the reason why these anti-vaccination myths have such hold is that they latch onto our own uncertainty, DiFonzo said.

The Wakefield paper provided what seemed like a solid explanation for an often misunderstood illness. Although it is not the only cause of anti-vaccination myths, DiFonzo and Nyhan said it helped fuel the fire by giving credibility to credulous claims.

The autism myth especially was difficult to disprove in part because the causes of autism are still largely unknown, and also because the effects are so emotional. Jenny McCarthy's many tearful recollections of how the MMR vaccine caused her son's autism fuelled many parents struggling to understand their own child's situation.

DiFonzo said that in addition to autism, vaccines have been speciously linked to allergies, which are also a mysterious and serious source of concern for many parents.

### **But if facts can't fight anti-vaccination myths, then what can?**

While the Internet may be one of the causes of our recent bout with anti-vaccination, it may also hold the cure. For years, there were no pro-vaccine stories to share because, well, it's hard to tell a story about something you didn't get.

"Because vaccines are so successful, a lot of people don't see why we should get them," DiFonzo said. But that's starting to change. A Pickering mom's anguished Facebook post after her newborn may have contacted the measles was shared more than 300,000 times.

And deceased children's author Roald Dahl got new life after the Guardian unearthed an old pamphlet he had written in favour of the MMR vaccine. In simple prose lacking his characteristic dark humour, Dahl described the heartbreak of losing his daughter Olivia to the measles.

"It is not generally accepted that measles can be a dangerous illness. Believe me, it is. In my opinion parents who now refuse to have their children immunized are putting the lives of those children at risk."

Nyhan said convincing parents to vaccinate their children will take more than just online rants about anti-vaxxers.

"Most of the messages I've seen proceed under the assumption that everyone they know agrees with them, and aren't those anti-vaccine people terrible," he said.

Instead, he said pro-vaccine messages delivered by respected community members, such as teachers, pastors and doctors, can go a long way.

"If it's another member of your community and you're having a face-to-face conversation with them, then hopefully you can engage in a more constructive way.



# Texts serve different interests

This is Canada's Food Guide now. Have students view it online for a better look at the content. <http://tinyurl.com/starmedia11>

Related to Section 3 in the student resource: **The Five Key Concepts of Media Literacy**  
 → Key Concept 4  
 → Activity 3 (page 6)

### Recommended Number of Food Guide Servings per Day

Age in Years	Children			Teens			Adults		
	2-3	4-8	9-13	14-18	19-50	51+	14-18	19-50	51+
Sex	Girls and Boys			Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males
<b>Vegetables and Fruit</b>	4	5	6	7	8	7-8	8-10	7	7
<b>Grain Products</b>	3	4	6	6	7	6-7	8	6	7
<b>Milk and Alternatives</b>	2	2	3-4	3-4	3-4	2	2	3	3
<b>Meat and Alternatives</b>	1	1	1-2	2	3	2	3	2	3

The chart above shows how many Food Guide Servings you need from each of the four food groups every day.

Having the amount and type of food recommended and following the tips in Canada's Food Guide will help:

- Meet your needs for vitamins, minerals and other nutrients.
- Reduce your risk of obesity, type 2 diabetes, heart disease, certain types of cancer and osteoporosis.
- Contribute to your overall health and vitality.

### What is One Food Guide Serving? Look at the examples below.

**Fresh, frozen or canned vegetables**  
125 mL (1/2 cup)

**Leafy vegetables**  
Cooked: 125 mL (1/2 cup)  
Raw: 250 mL (1 cup)

**Fresh, frozen or canned fruits**  
1 fruit or 125 mL (1/2 cup)

**100% Juice**  
125 mL (1/2 cup)

**Bread**  
1 slice (35g)

**Bagel**  
1/2 bagel (45 g)

**Flat breads, bulgur or quinoa**  
1/2 pita or 1/2 tortilla (35 g)

**Cooked rice, bulgur or quinoa**  
125 mL (1/2 cup)

**Cereal**  
Cold: 30 g  
Hot: 175 mL (1/2 cup)

**Cooked pasta or couscous**  
125 mL (1/2 cup)

**Milk or powdered milk (reconstituted)**  
250 mL (1 cup)

**Canned milk (evaporated)**  
125 mL (1/2 cup)

**Fortified soy beverage**  
250 mL (1 cup)

**Yogurt**  
175 g (1/2 cup)

**Kefir**  
175 g (1/2 cup)

**Cheese**  
50 g (1 1/2 oz.)

**Cooked fish, shellfish, poultry, lean meat**  
75 g (2 1/2 oz.) / 125 mL (1/2 cup)

**Cooked legumes**  
175 mL (1/2 cup)

**Tofu**  
175 g (1/2 cup)

**Eggs**  
2 eggs

**Peanut or nut butters**  
30 mL (2 Tbsp)

**Shelled nuts and seeds**  
60 mL (1/2 cup)

### Make each Food Guide Serving count... wherever you are - at home, at school, at work or when eating out!

- Eat at least one dark green and one orange vegetable each day.**
  - Go for dark green vegetables such as broccoli, romaine lettuce and spinach.
  - Go for orange vegetables such as carrots, sweet potatoes and winter squash.
- Choose vegetables and fruit prepared with little or no added fat, sugar or salt.**
  - Enjoy vegetables steamed, baked or stir-fried instead of deep-fried.
- Have vegetables and fruit more often than juice.**

- Make at least half of your grain products whole grain each day.**
  - Eat a variety of whole grains such as barley, brown rice, oats, quinoa and wild rice.
  - Enjoy whole grain breads, oatmeal or whole-wheat pasta.
- Choose grain products that are lower in fat, sugar or salt.**
  - Compare the Nutrition Facts table on labels to make wise choices.
  - Enjoy the true taste of grain products. When adding sauces or spreads, use small amounts.

- Drink skim, 1%, or 2% milk each day.**
  - Have 500 mL (2 cups) of milk every day for adequate vitamin D.
  - Drink fortified soy beverages if you do not drink milk.
- Select lower fat milk alternatives.**
  - Compare the Nutrition Facts table on yogurts or cheeses to make wise choices.

- Have meat alternatives such as beans, lentils and tofu often.**
- Eat at least two Food Guide Servings of fish each week.\***
  - Choose fish such as cod, herring, mackerel, salmon, catfish and trout.
- Select lean meat and alternatives prepared with little or no added fat or salt.**
  - Trim the visible fat from meats. Remove the skin on poultry.
  - Use cooking methods such as roasting, baking or poaching that require little or no added fat.
  - If you eat lunchmeats, sausages or prepackaged meats, choose those lower in salt (sodium) and fat.

### Oils and Fats

- Include a small amount - 30 to 45 mL (2 to 3 Tbsp) - of unsaturated fat each day. This includes oil used for cooking, salad dressings, margarine and mayonnaise.
- Use vegetable oils such as canola, olive and soybean.
- Choose soft margarines that are low in saturated and trans fats.
- Limit butter, hard margarine, lard and shortening.

### Enjoy a variety of foods from the four food groups.

Satisfy your thirst with water! Drink water regularly. It's a calorie-free way to quench your thirst. Drink more water in hot weather or when you are very active.

## Advice for different ages and stages...

### Children

Following Canada's Food Guide helps children grow and thrive.

Young children have small appetites and need calories for growth and development.

- Serve small nutritious meals and snacks each day.
- Do not restrict nutritious foods because of their fat content. Offer a variety of foods from the four food groups.
- Most of all... be a good role model.

### Women of childbearing age

All women who could become pregnant and those who are pregnant or breastfeeding need a multivitamin containing **folic acid** every day.

Pregnant women need to ensure that their multivitamin also contains **iron**. A health care professional can help you find the multivitamin that's right for you.

Pregnant and breastfeeding women need most calories. Include an extra 2 to 3 Food Guide Servings each day.

**Here are two examples:**

- Have fruit and yogurt for a snack, or
- Have an extra slice of toast at breakfast and an extra glass of milk at supper.

### Men and women over 50

The need for **vitamin D** increases after the age of 50.

In addition to following Canada's Food Guide, everyone over the age of 50 should take a daily vitamin D supplement of 10 µg (400 IU).

## How do I count Food Guide Servings in a meal?

**Here is an example:**

250 mL (1 cup) mixed broccoli, carrot and sweet red pepper	= 2 <b>Vegetables and Fruit</b> Food Guide Servings
75 g (2 1/2 oz.) lean beef	= 1 <b>Meat and Alternatives</b> Food Guide Serving
250 mL (1 cup) brown rice	= 2 <b>Grain Products</b> Food Guide Servings
5 mL (1 tsp) canola oil	= part of your <b>Oils and Fats</b> intake for the day
250 mL (1 cup) 1% milk	= 1 <b>Milk and Alternatives</b> Food Guide Serving
1 apple	= 1 <b>Vegetables and Fruit</b> Food Guide Serving

## Eat well and be active today and every day!

**The benefits of eating well and being active include:**

- Better overall health.
- Lower risk of disease.
- A healthy body weight.
- Feeling and looking better.
- More energy.
- Stronger muscles and bones.

**Be active**

To be active every day is a step towards better health and a healthy body weight.

It is recommended that adults accumulate at least 2 1/2 hours of moderate to vigorous physical activity each week and that children and youth accumulate at least 60 minutes per day. You don't have to do it all at once. Choose a variety of activities spread throughout the week.

**Start slowly and build up.**

**Eat well**

Another important step towards better health and a healthy body weight is to follow Canada's Food Guide by:

- Eating the recommended amount and type of food each day.
- Limiting foods and beverages high in calories, fat, sugar or salt (sodium) such as cakes and pastries, chocolate and candies, cookies and granola bars, doughnuts and muffins, ice cream and frozen desserts, french fries, potato chips, nachos and other salty snacks, alcohol, fruit-flavoured drinks, soft drinks, sports and energy drinks, and sweetened hot or cold drinks.

**Read the label**

Compare the Nutrition Facts table on food labels to choose products that contain less fat, saturated fat, trans fat, sugar and sodium.

Keep in mind that the calories and nutrients listed are for the amount of food found at the top of the Nutrition Facts table.

**Limit trans fat**

When a Nutrition Facts table is not available, ask for nutrition information to choose foods lower in trans and saturated fats.

**Nutrition Facts**

Per 100 mL (100 g)

Amount	% Daily Value
Calories 0	
Fat 0 g	0 %
Saturated 0 g	0 %
Cholesterol 0 mg	0 %
Sodium 0 mg	0 %
Carbohydrate 0 g	0 %
Fibre 0 g	0 %
Protein 0 g	0 %
Vitamin A 0 %	Vitamin C 0 %
Calcium 0 %	Iron 0 %

**For more information, interactive tools, or additional copies visit Canada's Food Guide on-line at: [www.healthcanada.gc.ca/foodguide](http://www.healthcanada.gc.ca/foodguide)**

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# Save Money (and Time!) Buying Appliances and Home Furnishings Direct from Manufacturers and Their Authorized Suppliers



*Related to Section 3 in the student resource: The Five Key Concepts of Media Literacy*

*→ Key Concept 5*

*→ Activity 1 (page 7)*

*Savvy consumers know that the best way to save money on products is to buy them directly from the manufacturers and their authorized suppliers to avoid paying hidden retail markup.*

*Published on Mon Nov 11 2013*

Savvy consumers know that the best way to save money on products is to buy them directly from the manufacturers and their authorized suppliers to avoid paying hidden retail markup.

But, unless you're lucky enough to "know someone", buying direct is difficult, if not impossible.

Well, not anymore!

Today, thanks to buying clubs such as DirectBuy Canada, consumers across the country can enjoy the rock-bottom prices that used to be available only to the privileged few.

## **How It Works**

DirectBuy Canada members get access to the members-only Showroom, where they can view thousands of products, including hundreds of top brands, all at confidential dealer prices – the exact same prices retail stores pay!

Then, they simply tell DirectBuy what they want to purchase, the club places the order, and the products are delivered to the members' club for pick up or directly to their home.

## **The Savings**

According to DirectBuy members Kevin and Annamarie Klippenstein, the saving can be significant.

"All our barstools, our end tables, our chairs, 61-inch TV, the stereo – pretty well everything came from DirectBuy. At DirectBuy, we're getting things that normally we couldn't afford. It's amazing, the savings that you get!"

## **Top Brand Names**

Members also appreciate the incredible selection. According to Mike and Vesna K., it's better than retail.

"DirectBuy opened a whole new door of possibilities that would never have been imaginable in the retail world."

Whether you're shopping for cabinets and vanities, countertops, sinks, faucets, tubs, flooring, lighting or major appliances, you can probably find it at DirectBuy.

DirectBuy members also have access to design specialists, contractors, installers, and other service



providers to make sure their renovation or remodeling project runs smoothly.

### **One Stop Shopping**

With DirectBuy, you can get virtually everything you need for your home, right at your club, including cabinetry, flooring, windows, electronics, marble, granite, furniture and electronics, even accessories like art work and carpets. It will save you time and effort. And when you're doing a renovation, you need every second you can get.

Still, the big reason more and more Canadians are joining DirectBuy Canada is savings, which can be significant.

DirectBuy member John Gonsalves sums it up well.

"After years of listening to our close friends and relatives about DirectBuy, my wife and I finally became members in early 2005. Shopping and ordering through the club is easy. Once you pay cost, you'll never want to pay retail again."

### **Becoming a Member**

The savings, the selection and the convenience make DirectBuy extremely attractive to people who are renovating, remodeling or simply want to spruce up their home with new furniture and accessories without breaking the bank.

*If that sounds like you, visit [www.directbuycanada.ca](http://www.directbuycanada.ca) today and get your FREE information package, including a FREE Visitor's Pass to an Open House.*

*You probably have a lot of questions, like, "How does it work?" and, "How much does it cost?" The Open House is where you can get answers to all your questions and see first-hand how DirectBuy membership works. At the Open House, information about the savings, member services, and extensive selection of brand-name merchandise is described in great detail, so you can make the most informed decision about whether DirectBuy Canada is right for you. Visit [www.directbuycanada.ca](http://www.directbuycanada.ca)*