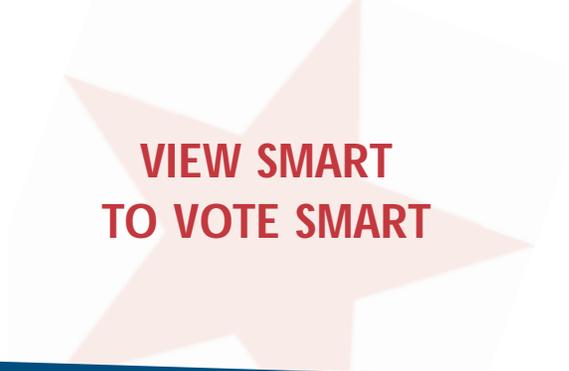
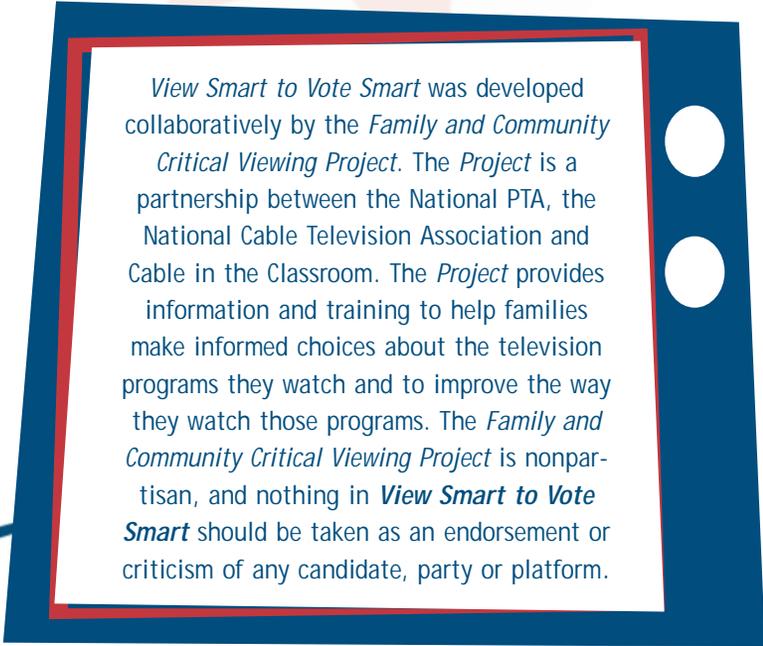




✓ View
Smart
to
✓ Vote
Smart



VIEW SMART TO VOTE SMART



View Smart to Vote Smart was developed collaboratively by the *Family and Community Critical Viewing Project*. The *Project* is a partnership between the National PTA, the National Cable Television Association and Cable in the Classroom. The *Project* provides information and training to help families make informed choices about the television programs they watch and to improve the way they watch those programs. The *Family and Community Critical Viewing Project* is nonpartisan, and nothing in *View Smart to Vote Smart* should be taken as an endorsement or criticism of any candidate, party or platform.



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**VIEW SMART
TO VOTE SMART**

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CAMPAIGN EVENTS AND
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How Campaign Events Are Staged and Edited

1988 Democratic Convention

1996 Republican Iowa Straw Poll

C-SPAN Editor

Segment B:

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1988 Democratic Convention

1996 Republican Iowa Straw Poll

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How Campaign Advertising Works

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1984 Morning in America–Ronald Reagan (R)

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INTRODUCTION

Television is the most pervasive form of media in the United States. Most Americans get the majority of their news and entertainment from it. Television news and political advertisements are also the primary source of information about candidates and issues for most voters. In a recent study, 75 percent of respondents said that television was their main source of campaign news.²

Another study found that voters were ten times more likely to see a campaign ad than a campaign news story on TV. Furthermore, campaign news reports tended to focus on electoral strategies rather than a candidate's beliefs or positions on issues.³ As a result, voters may enter the ballot booth with little substantive information on which to make informed choices. Since the votes we cast will help shape our future, we need to become informed viewers. We must understand how candidates use the television to deliver their messages and how television, in turn, shapes and changes those messages. We should gather information from newspapers, magazines and other sources. Only then, can we become informed voters.

Media literacy is the ability to access, understand, analyze, evaluate and create media messages on television, radio, the Internet, in newspapers and maga-

The preservation of our liberties depends on an enlightened citizenry. Those who get most of their news from television probably are not getting enough information to intelligently exercise their voting franchise in a democratic system. As Thomas Jefferson said, the nation that expects to be ignorant and free expects what never can and never will be.

—Walter Cronkite, former television journalist and anchor of CBS Evening News¹

zines. It can help us knowledgeably interpret the many messages we receive each day from these sources. In essence, the media-literate individual applies the same thinking skills used in reading and writing to other forms of media. *View Smart to Vote Smart* contains activities to help you understand, analyze and evaluate the campaign coverage and political advertising you see on television. The underlying idea is to actively question the media messages you receive, rather than to passively accept or cynically reject them.

Some people feel disconnected from politics and about half of eligible American voters don't vote.⁴ *View Smart to Vote Smart* is a positive and proactive program to discover ways that we can make sense of all the political messages coming at us during an election season. Although *View Smart to Vote Smart* focuses on television, many of the concepts, examples and activities could be used with the Internet, radio, newspapers and magazines. We hope that, through the activities that follow, you will be encouraged to learn more about the candidates and issues. Your vote can make a difference!

HOW YOU CAN USE VIEW SMART TO VOTE SMART

This guide is intended for parents, workshop leaders and teachers. It provides background information, a description of the *View Smart to Vote Smart* video and activities that illustrate the video's key points. The activities and video can be used together or independently, in whole or in part—choose what works best for your family or curriculum.

The video is hosted by University of Maryland professor Dr. John Splaine. A recognized media literacy authority and long-time C-SPAN consultant, Dr. Splaine analyzes past campaign coverage and ads with a group of students, parents and teachers.

The *View Smart to Vote Smart* video has two parts. The first demonstrates how campaign coverage is constructed by the candidates and, through editing, by television. The second analyzes political advertising techniques. Each part consists of (a) a section exploring the concepts with Dr. Splaine, followed by (b) a selection of clips for your family, students or workshop participants to analyze.

ACADEMIC STANDARDS

View Smart to Vote Smart matches social studies standards for civics and government such as McREL Civics Standard 19: understanding “the ways in which television, radio, the press, newsletters, and emerging means of communication influence American politics” and “how citizens can evaluate information and arguments received from various sources so that they can make reasonable choices on public issues and among candidates for political office.”⁵

Sometimes, kids don't see the connection between the political process and their own lives. To make the video and activities more relevant and interesting to your students or children, you might wish to relate the exercises to a fictional scenario where a local ordinance is passed to establish a youth curfew or to ban skateboarding in public spaces. How would your kids get their side of the story heard? How can they influence public policy? If children understand that these same construction and advertising techniques can be used to attract media attention to *their* issues and can help them get *their* message to the community, then they may have a more personal interest in the activities.

View Smart to Vote Smart builds on knowledge developed in *Taking Charge of Your TV* workshops. These interactive workshops, introduced and sponsored by the *Family and Community Critical Viewing Project*, focus on four key points:

- ⌘ TV programs and their messages are created to achieve specific results;
- ⌘ Each person interprets programs and messages differently;
- ⌘ Television violence takes many forms, and
- ⌘ All TV programs have an underlying economic purpose.

View Smart to Vote Smart concentrates on the first and last of these key points. It is designed to be a resource that you can use with your existing workshops or lessons rather than as a separate, comprehensive curriculum.



PART ONE: CAMPAIGN EVENTS AND TELEVISION COVERAGE

A key concept of media literacy is that all messages are **constructions**. Each different element of a television show, newspaper article, advertisement or Web site has been selected and assembled, or “constructed,” to create a particular result.

Television programs and commercials are carefully crafted to achieve specific effects—making us laugh, frightening us or persuading us to make a purchase. Script, direction, editing, special effects, music, lighting and camera angles are common construction techniques (see Appendix for brief descriptions of these and other techniques).

Excitement is the great unwritten imperative of television.

—Theodore H. White, presidential historian.⁶

Candidates must have razzle-dazzle. Boring is the fatal label. Programs and concepts that cannot be collapsed into a slogan or a thirty-second sound bite go largely unheard and unremembered, for what the modern campaign offers in length, it lacks in depth.

—Hedrick Smith, political reporter/columnist.⁷

As a visual medium, television relies on action, conflict and emotion-laden images to tell a story. Time constraints prevent long explanations: complex issues and potential solutions have to be simplified. Symbols and stereotypes are used as a visual shorthand to quickly establish a character or setting. Sound bites—memorable phrases that encapsulate an idea—serve as a spoken shorthand that fits television’s need for brevity and simplicity.

Most people understand this. What may not be apparent is that these same rules apply to political events and news programs, as well as to advertising and entertainment programs. It is especially important to realize this during elections.

KEY CONCEPT:

What you see on TV is an edited version of the day's events that has already been shaped twice: first, by the campaign to make the candidate look good and, second, by television to make the story interesting enough to attract viewers and brief enough to fit within a program.

Television news and political campaigns depend on each other. The reporters and producers rely on campaigns for stories to report, and candidates rely on television to relay the campaign's messages. Both use construction techniques to modify a story to fit their individual needs.

Naturally, candidates want to look their best on television. They are aware of the rules, language and practices of the medium and use these to their advantage whenever possible. Most candidates employ media consultants, who help craft campaign appearances, sound bites, advertising and messages to take maximum advantage of television and other media. Through the use of construction techniques, these appearances and campaign events will be composed and arranged so that the candidate's message will be part of the story viewers see that night on the news.

On the other side of the camera, television reporters and producers make many decisions that affect how we, as viewers, experience the event. Reporters and

producers, working on deadline and with limited air time to present a story, have to decide what to include and what to omit. They must pick and choose which ideas, sights and sounds best convey their understanding of the event and its importance. Sitting in our living rooms, our perception of a story is influenced by the decisions they have made about editing, narration, camera angles and lighting (see Appendix for brief descriptions of these and other techniques).

When you watch *View Smart to Vote Smart*, you're seeing an edited version of a staged event. During the production of *View Smart to Vote Smart*, we STAGED a workshop with Dr. Splaine. We invited the audience, arranged the set, controlled the lighting and camera angles and worked from a script. We then EDITED the event for this tape. From more than six hours of videotape (two hours, each, from three different cameras), we selected and used about 15 minutes.



WHAT TO LOOK FOR

When we are watching television coverage of political events—whether it’s a debate, a speech, or a brief report on the evening news—we need to ask ourselves:

- ⌘ What are the campaign and the TV coverage doing to attract my attention?
- ⌘ What’s been omitted from this story?
- ⌘ What’s accurate, what isn’t and how can I tell the difference?
- ⌘ What do I believe and why?

VIEW SMART TO VOTE SMART VIDEO

PART ONE:

CAMPAIGN EVENTS AND TELEVISION COVERAGE

“Segment A: How Campaign Events are Staged and Edited” revolves around three short video clips. The first is Michael Dukakis at the Democratic Convention in 1988. The second shows Republican candidates at the 1996 Iowa Straw Poll. Both clips are examined to spot the ways candidates construct, or stage, events for television. The third is a short segment from C-SPAN which shows how an editorial decision made by a television producer could influence viewers’ perceptions.

“Segment B: Events for You to Analyze” contains scenes that your workshop audience, family or class can view and analyze. We have included longer versions of the Dukakis and Iowa Straw Poll video clips, presented without commentary, for you to explore in more depth. These are followed by a *CNN Newsroom* story from 1996. As you watch, look for the ways the candidate staged the event and the ways television edited the event for the news.

In the video, Dr. Splaine uses the word STAGE to help viewers analyze campaign events on television by looking for:

SYMBOLS

What symbols are used to convey the candidate’s message (flags, monuments, etc.)?

What meanings do the symbols have?

TECHNIQUES

What type of lighting is used?

What is the setting (scenery, people, background, etc.)?

How does the camera work affect the way viewers see the event?

How are music, lighting, backgrounds, symbols and movement used by candidates and campaigns?

ACTION

What action does this staged political event provide to hold people's interest?

GROUPS

At what target group is the staged event aimed?

How can you determine who is the targeted group?

Are representatives of that group used in the staged political event?

ENGAGED

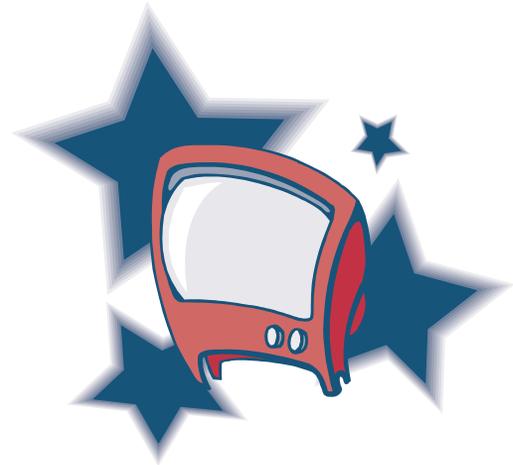
How does the staged event engage, or involve, the audience?

Is it an issue that engages the audience or the way the event is conducted that is engaging?

ACTIVITIES

You might consider dividing your class or workshop audience into groups. Some groups would look for ways a candidate can shape an event, while others look at how television coverage can shape viewers' perceptions.

1). In the video, Dr. Splaine used the word STAGE as a tool for analyzing political events. Have your family, audience or students use the chart to record their impressions when viewing television coverage of political events on this or another tape or on TV.



Event title	Symbols Used	Techniques Used	Actions Shown	Groups Targeted	How are You Engaged

2). Have your students, family or audience create their own list of construction techniques or discuss the list given in the Appendix. Then, carefully watch “Segment B: Clips for You to Analyze” and see if they can answer the following questions. You might also try this activity with videotape you make of a campaign event (such as a debate, speech or personal appearance) on C-SPAN, CNN, MSNBC or FOX News. Using the STAGE chart may be helpful.

- ⌘ What are the campaign and the TV coverage doing to attract my attention?
- ⌘ Can I tell if anything has been omitted from this story?
- ⌘ Is the news report of the event accurate? How can I tell?
- ⌘ What sound bite does the campaign hope will be in news stories?

- ⌘ What are the candidates' main ideas and what message are they trying to convey?
- ⌘ Write your own summary of the event.

3). Use your VCR to tape a campaign event. Candidate debates are a good source for this activity. Compare and contrast how the same event is covered on television news, on radio, in the newspaper and on the Internet.

- ⌘ What words or phrases are used to get your attention?
- ⌘ What sound bites and quotes are used?
- ⌘ What kinds of images and graphics are used?
- ⌘ How are opinions presented by candidates and reporters?

4). Track campaign coverage for one week on a variety of television news programs. For example, you may watch a Sunday morning program (*Meet the Press*), the evening news (network and local), a news magazine (*Dateline* or *60 Minutes*), a news network (CNN or MSNBC) and a public affairs network (C-SPAN). Use the table below or have your students, family or audience create one of their own. Compare the way these different kinds of television news programs cover elections. You might also wish to include newspapers, magazines and Web sites.

- ⌘ What do you think are the strengths and weaknesses of each type of program?
- ⌘ Is one candidate getting more coverage? More favorable coverage? Why?
- ⌘ Is one candidate getting a consistent message out?
- ⌘ Are any candidates being excluded? Why?

	Date	Time length of story	Story is about an issue, personality or strategy	Positive or negative for the candidate	Candidate's main message	Includes opposing views	Editing techniques used
Evening News							
Local News							
News magazine							
Sunday morning							
All-news network							
C-SPAN							

5). Make a list of the issues that were addressed in the news stories you have reviewed (in #4 or elsewhere). Determine which audience is the target for each issue message. For example, senior citizens may be the primary target of Social Security and Medicare issue messages.

6). Are any of the issues that were listed (in #5) targeting young voters? If not, why not? What can be done to encourage candidates to pay attention to the issues that concern young voters?

Note: If candidates are not addressing the concerns of young citizens, perhaps that is because of relatively low voting rates among 18-24 year olds. Less than one-third of eligible young voters went to the polls in 1996, the lowest turnout of any age group.⁸ Have students look up the voting rates in your state (use the U.S. Census Bureau data referenced in endnote #4). Compare this data with the target audience of candidates' messages. Is there a correlation?

HANDS-ON ACTIVITIES

It's easy to be an armchair quarterback if you've never played the position. Political communication is an art form. Selecting the right words, symbols and setting is not a simple task. Nor is it easy to distill a complex story into a one-minute television news story. Some hands-on activities will give your family, students or workshop participants a taste of how challenging and interesting this can be. If you are working with kids, these activities would be good places to use the curfew or skateboard examples mentioned on page 11.

Have your students, family or workshop audience:

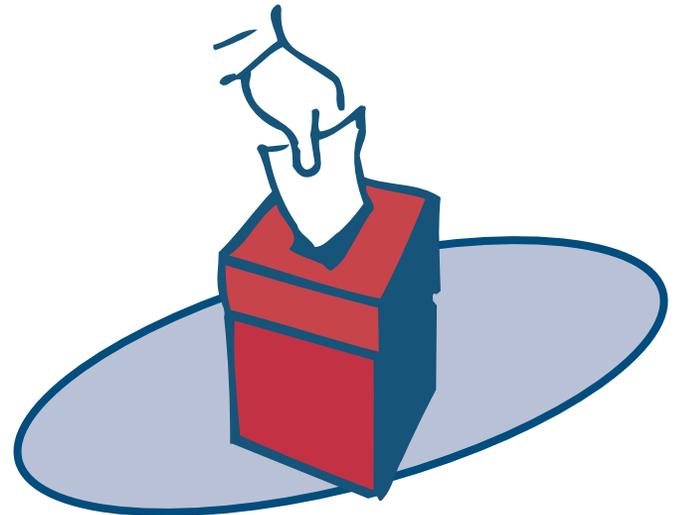
1). Create a slogan or a sound bite that describes their position on an issue or their solution to a problem. The issue or problem can be part of the election campaign, a topic at school or something in the neighborhood.

- ⌘ What is the sound bite?
- ⌘ What message does it deliver?
- ⌘ Is it a good way to get that message to a large number of people?

2). Plan their own campaign event. This could be for an existing or fictional candidate, for a local issue or for a student government election at school.

- ⌘ What kind of event would they plan?
- ⌘ What construction techniques would they use (and which would they not use) to make their event interesting to the audience and to television producers?

Students could create a setting, a diorama or a shoe-box model of a setting for their event and have a parent or teacher videotape the event. Another student could pretend to be a reporter and create a 30-second news story about the event.



3). Pretend they are reporters or a news team (reporter, editor, photographer) preparing to do a story on a campaign event. The event could be one from *View Smart to Vote Smart* or one from the current campaign that you have taped from C-SPAN.

- ⌘ What is the focus of their story?
- ⌘ What is the statement or image that captures or defines the story?
- ⌘ Which images or video segments would they include in their story and why?
- ⌘ What would they choose to leave out and why?
- ⌘ Write a 30-second or one-minute narration for a television news story about the event. Write a newspaper story about the event. How are the stories different and why?



QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- 1). Do candidates have a right to expect that reporters will present what they said as they said it, or does the news person have the professional obligation to choose what he or she thinks is important? Why?
- 2). Some people say that it isn't what you say on TV that's important; it's how you look while you're saying it. Do images matter more than the words and ideas on television?
- 3). Can sound bites, 30-second ads or one-minute news stories give voters enough information to choose a candidate or understand an issue? If not, where should one go to get more information?



PART TWO: CAMPAIGN ADVERTISING

Political ads affirm that the country is great, has a future, is respected. The contest they reflect is over who should be elected, not over whether there should be an election. The very existence of the contest suggests that there is a choice, that the voters' selection of one candidate over the other will make a difference.

—Kathleen Hall Jamieson, scholar of media and politics.⁹

Another key concept in media literacy is that television programs exist to bring viewers to advertisers. Love them or hate them, commercials pay the bills for television and they have a big price tag. The stories on a television news program must not only inform the public, but also attract viewers for the advertisements. This can affect the kind of story that is shown and the way in which it is presented. We have examined some of the ways news producers and reporters use construction techniques to grab the attention of viewers. Now we will look at political advertising.

Effective advertising is backed by mountains of research, created by talented professionals using the highest production values and shown during popular shows viewed by a targeted audience. This all means that advertising is expensive, and candidates have to raise large amounts of money to get their message out. By some estimates, more than \$600 million will be spent on television advertising during the 2000 election campaign.¹⁰

KEY CONCEPT

Whether businesses are using advertising to sell things, or candidates are using advertising to sell themselves and their positions, the techniques are similar. Just as we need to be aware of the ways advertisers attempt to convince us to purchase their products or services, we should also be aware of the ways ads are used to convince us to vote for candidates or policies.

Like businesses, candidates use advertising to achieve specific results: creating name recognition, convincing the uncommitted or presenting a consistent, positive image that keeps supporters enthusiastic. While most people can identify some of the methods advertisers use, it may not be apparent that political commercials use the same kinds of techniques (see Appendix for brief descriptions of these and other techniques). Children are often adept at taking apart and analyzing, or “deconstructing” ads. They may be able to deconstruct political ads with only a little guidance.

The power of television advertising lies in its reach. Through advertising, candidates can get their message to millions of people at once. More people will see an advertisement during a highly rated, prime-time program than will ever see a candidate in person. During the 1896 presidential campaign, candidate William Jennings Bryan traveled over 18,000 miles, made over 600 speeches in 27 states and reached about 5 million people.¹¹ A single ad shown during a top-rated

television program may reach 25 million viewers.¹² No other medium has that much bang for the buck. And viewers are less likely to change the channel to avoid a 15- or 30-second ad than they are for a 30-minute speech.¹³

Television also lets a campaign target its advertising. By placing ads on programs that are watched by a specific audience, candidates can tailor their appeals to the interests and concerns of that audience.

A well-designed ad campaign can give a clear picture of a candidate's beliefs, values and proposals. It can also present a distorted or misleading view of a candidate or his opponent.

Candidates aren't the only ones running advertisements. Political parties may pay for ads supporting their candidates and criticizing opponents. Interest groups frequently fund commercials supporting their causes and the candidates who favor them, or attacking those who oppose them. In evaluating the information contained in an advertisement, it is important to know who paid for it and their point of view.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

When we view political ads, we can ask ourselves:

- ⌘ Who paid for this advertisement?
- ⌘ What is the purpose of the ad?
- ⌘ What is being done in the commercial to hold my attention?
- ⌘ How does the ad try to convince me?
- ⌘ What do I believe and why?

VIEW SMART TO VOTE SMART VIDEO

PART TWO: CAMPAIGN ADVERTISING

“Segment A: How Campaign Advertising Works” analyzes two ads from the 1984 presidential campaign. The first is one of a series of “Morning in America” commercials run by and for the Reagan campaign. The second is a Mondale ad that first aired against Gary Hart, an opponent in the Democratic primaries, and then against Reagan in the general election. Both ads are “deconstructed” to illuminate which advertising techniques were used and how those techniques emotionally affect the viewer.

“Segment B: Ads for You to Analyze” includes the Reagan and Mondale ads in their entirety, followed by four other campaign ads. These are presented without commentary, so that your workshop audience, family or class can analyze them in detail.

In the video, Dr. Splaine uses the word SNAILS to help viewers analyze campaign ads by looking for:

SYMBOLS

What symbols are being used to convey the candidate's message (flags, monuments, etc.)?

What meanings do the symbols have?

NARRATION

What is the narration?

What qualities does the narrator's voice have?

What effect does that voice have on your perception?

What effect do the words have?



ANGLES

What camera angles are used in the ad?

What effect do they have?

IMPLIED

Sometimes the most important message is not openly stated. Instead, it is implied. Is there an implied message? If so, what?

Is the implied message so clear that you can't miss it or do you have to look for it?

Do the individuals or groups that appear in the ad represent an implied message?

LIGHTING

What kinds of lighting are used?

What effect does the lighting in the ad have on your perception and emotions?

Is anyone or anything spotlighted? If so, how does this affect what you feel?

SCARE TACTICS

When a commercial is negative, is it trying to scare you?

How does it attempt to scare you (what scare tactics are used)?

Were the scare tactics obvious or did you have to look for them?

ACTIVITIES

You might consider dividing a class or workshop audience into groups. Some groups can look at ads using the SNAILS model (Activity 1) while other groups look at ads using the TAPPER model (Activity 2). Have the groups compare their conclusions.

1). In the video, Dr. Splaine used the word SNAILS as a memory tool. Have your students, audience or family use this chart to record their impressions when viewing television coverage of political events on this or another tape or on TV.

AD	Symbols Used	Narration Used	Angles Used	Implied Messages	Lighting Techniques	Scare Tactics

2). Use the TAPPER model¹⁴ to analyze a political commercial:

- ⌘ Target—Who is the target audience?
- ⌘ Affect—How do viewers respond to the ad emotionally?
- ⌘ Proof—Was any proof offered for the claims in the ad?
- ⌘ Pictures—What did pictures convey? Images? Symbols? Music? Do these elements work together to support the central message of the ad?

- ⌘ Errors—Are there any errors of fact or omissions? How can you find out?
- ⌘ Remain—How many different images did you see and how long did those images remain on the screen? Was the ad fast-paced or slow?

	Ad 1	Ad 2	Ad 3	Ad 4	Ad 5
Target					
Affect					
Proof					
Pictures					
Errors					
Remain					

3). Have your audience, family or students create their own list of advertising techniques or discuss the list given in the Appendix. Carefully watch “Segment B: Ads for You to Analyze” and answer the following questions. Use the chart below. (You may also want to tape a selection of current campaign ads to use in this and other activities.)

- ⌘ Who paid for this advertisement? How can you tell? Does it matter?
- ⌘ What is the purpose of the ad?
- ⌘ What is being done in the commercial to hold my attention?
- ⌘ How does the ad try to convince me?
- ⌘ What is being left out or omitted?
- ⌘ Does the ad outline a position or does it revolve around a slogan that expresses (or evokes) an emotional response or does it do both?

Date	Candidate or Issue	Program & Network	Main Message	Issue Ad or Personality Ad	Positive or Negative	Techniques Used

4). Track the campaign ads seen during the course of a week using the chart from activity #1, 2 or 3.

- ⌘ What is the overall message of each campaign?
- ⌘ Are the ads targeted to the audiences watching particular shows?
- ⌘ Are the candidates running issue ads, personality ads or both?
- ⌘ Positive or negative?

5). Do any of the political ads target young voters? If yes, how? If no, why? (See Activity #6 in Part One).

HANDS-ON ACTIVITY

It's easy to analyze and critique advertising, but difficult to produce an effective advertisement. Try this exercise and your students, family or workshop audience will see how hard it is to get a clear message across in half a minute. This is also a good opportunity to make this activity more relevant to students or children by making the ad about an issue that concerns kids, such as the skateboard or curfew laws mentioned on page 11.

1). Have your audience, students or family create their own 30-second campaign ad. This could be for an existing or fictional candidate or for a student

government election at school.

- ⌘ What kind of ad would they create?
- ⌘ What is their message? Their target audience?

What construction and advertising techniques would they use (and which wouldn't they use) to make their ad interesting to the audience and television. Why did they choose those techniques and not others?

Families or students can write a script and a storyboard and create a set (or a shoebox model of a set) for an ad. Then have a parent or teacher film the ad.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1). One proposal is to limit political advertising to



head shots of candidates talking about their beliefs and policies.¹⁵ No special effects, music, gimmicks or attack ads allowed. Is that a realistic possibility? What are the pros and cons?

2). Should anyone be able to buy time for a political or an issue ad? How about an extremist hate group?

3). Should there be standards that television networks and stations apply to political ads? For instance, should they check ads for accuracy before airing them? Should the media be commenting on or rating the truthfulness of campaign ads or should networks and stations just deliver them?

4). Should the media—television, newspapers, radio, the Internet—be required to provide free and unedited coverage for candidates to explain their ideas, positions and proposals? Why or why not? Should your decision apply equally to all major and minor party candidates? To all forms of media?

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*The TAPPER model has been slightly modified for **View Smart to Vote Smart**.*
- 15). Kilbourne, Jean (1999). *Deadly Persuasions*. New York: The Free Press, p. 309.

APPENDIX CONSTRUCTION TECHNIQUES

Construction techniques are important tools used to enhance the impact of a media message. These techniques have two main goals: grabbing your attention and associating a program, product or person with specific feelings and emotions. For example, an ad for a soft drink that features skateboards, bungee jumping and hang gliding may capture your interest while linking the soda, in your mind, with feelings of excitement and fun.

If time permits, you might have your class, audience or family develop a list on their own. Then compare your list to the one below which includes some, but not all, of the common construction techniques of television and the results they are intended to produce.

These techniques are not the exclusive province of campaigns, advertisers or TV crews. Sometimes television controls the setting, while sometimes a campaign can control the camera positions and advertisers use settings and music.

CONSTRUCTION TECHNIQUES USED BY CAMPAIGNS

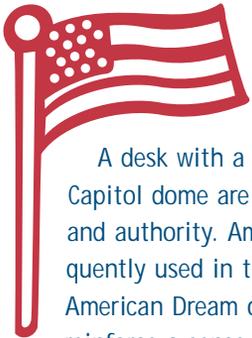
Setting: The background, the audience, the costumes and props all add great emotional impact to television shows and movies. An enthusiastic, cheering audience leaves viewers with a significantly different feeling than does a somber crowd. An outdoor setting creates a different mood than an indoor stage. The President in the Oval Office conveys a feeling of history, formality and power. The President playing golf and taking questions gives a more informal, relaxed and less intimidating feel.

Sounds & Music: The soundtrack of an event underscores important points and conveys a subtle mood. Upbeat music leads to a sense of optimism while jarring, discordant music gives a sense of unease and mistrust. A solemn, newscaster-style voice may lend authority to a narration and inspire confidence and trust. Other voice styles can make the narration seem silly or scary. A narrator might use leading phrases or words with positive or negative associations to influence the way viewers feel.

Movement: Motion can make a person appear dynamic and energetic and suggest leadership and direction. Even when giving a speech, a person who moves around or gestures can seem more forceful and decisive than one who is still, though too much movement can make one appear nervous and jittery.

Spotlight: Clever use of lighting, movement and sound by an event coordinator can subtly lead a camera operator or director to focus on what the campaign wants viewers to see.

Color: Together, red, white and blue evoke patriotism. By itself, red signifies alarm or danger and blue is cool and calm. Warm colors, like yellow and orange, can be inviting, while earth tones are peaceful and relaxing.



Symbols and Mythology: Flags, eagles, historic sites and other symbols of America are often used to evoke patriotic feelings.

A desk with a bookcase and U.S. flag or the U.S. Capitol dome are symbols of office that imply power and authority. American cultural images are frequently used in television. References to the American Dream or the Old West are often used to reinforce a sense of pride and patriotism and to associate a person or idea with the virtues embodied in these legends and myths.

Dress: Appearing in a business suit signifies legitimacy, competence and seriousness. On the other hand, less formal attire indicates a connection to ordinary people. Campaigns may even hire clothing consultants to suggest the styles, fabrics and colors that will help convey the desired feelings.

CONSTRUCTION TECHNIQUES USED BY TELEVISION NEWS

Camera angles: A person who looks straight at the camera and maintains eye contact with the viewer is perceived as being more honest and sincere. If someone is shown in profile or at an angle he or she is more likely to be perceived as dishonest or insincere. A camera placed below a person, looking up, gives a feeling of power and authority, while a camera looking down on that person makes him or her look small and insignificant.

Camera positions: Close-ups show relatively little of what is happening and may sometimes give a false sense of an event. A close shot can make a small crowd seem larger or, by focusing on only one type of reaction (yawning, for example) in a crowd, make it seem as if the whole audience reacted in the same way. A long shot can make a crowd or a person seem small and insignificant.

Lighting: Lighting can profoundly alter the viewer's perception of the person in front of the camera. Harsh lighting and deep shadows can make a person appear mysterious or evil. Soft lighting can make people seem more appealing.

Editing: Television's restrictive time frame and need for compelling visuals dictate many editing decisions. Still, the choice of which images to show, which words and sounds to use and the order in which they

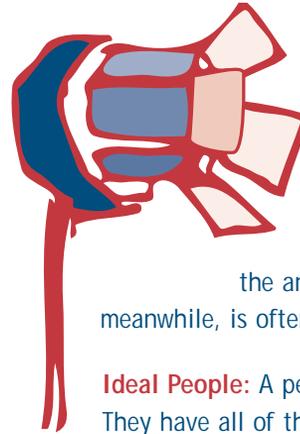
appear can dramatically change viewers' perceptions of an event. The narrator's choice of words, a facial expression or a tone of voice can also influence viewers' feelings. Zooms, cuts and special effects can also be used to interpret a story.

CONSTRUCTION TECHNIQUES USED IN CAMPAIGN ADVERTISING

Advertisers use all of the techniques described in the previous sections. Those construction techniques work hand-in-hand with the following advertising techniques to create powerful commercials that can influence voting decisions. You may wish to have your class, workshop or family generate a list of advertising techniques and compare your results to the following list. Advertisers have many, many tools in their bag of tricks. Here are just a few.

Appeals to Emotion: Some of the most effective ads appeal to emotions. Advertisements try to inspire hope, reach out to a viewer's sense of patriotism, or play off a viewer's frustration, anger or fear. Images are often used which evoke national myths and ideals, like the American West, idyllic small towns and the American Dream, to emotionally associate a person or product with the values embodied in a myth. Images of children and families carry powerful emotional associations.

Endorsements: Famous athletes, movie stars and public figures from all walks of life are often seen endorsing people, products or ideas. Man-in-the-street interviews or testimonials are another form of endorsement.



Best Light: People, like products, are usually shown in their best light. They'll be attractive, polished and at ease. The crowds will be cheering for them and they'll seem to have all the answers. The competition, meanwhile, is often shown in unflattering ways.

Ideal People: A person looks and acts perfect. They have all of the answers but no flaws. They are portrayed as the types of people that most Americans would look up to and want to emulate. Conversely, a person may be portrayed as being just like us, sympathetic to our worries and dreams, someone who cares about us. That person is down to earth, knows just how you feel and, according to the ad, can be trusted to do what's right for you.

DR. JOHN SPLAINE, MODERATOR

Dr. John Splaine teaches in the College of Education at the University of Maryland. He is a co-author of *Critical Viewing: Stimulant to Critical Thinking*, and *Educating the Consumer of Television: An Interactive Approach*. Since 1987 he has served as a consultant to C-SPAN; and was the consultant to C-SPAN's *American Presidents* series that won a Peabody Award in 1999. In 1994, Dr. Splaine co-authored the CD-ROM, *A House Divided: The Lincoln-Douglas Debates*, which received five national awards. His *Road to the White House Since Television* was published in 1995. In 1999, Dr. Splaine received the "Award of Excellence" from the Iota Upsilon Chapter of Kappa Delta Pi, an international honor society in education. He has been teaching about visual literacy for more than three decades.

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THE FAMILY & COMMUNITY CRITICAL VIEWING PROJECT

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The *Family and Community Critical Viewing Project* is a first-of-its kind partnership of the National PTA, National Cable Television Association and Cable in the Classroom, launched in 1994 to address concerns about television and the impact of television violence and commercialism on children.

The *Project* trains cable and PTA leaders nationwide in the key elements of critical viewing, also known as media literacy, and how to present *Taking Charge of Your TV* workshops for parents, educators, and organizations in their communities. The goal is to help families make informed choices in the TV programs they watch and to improve the way they watch those programs.

The *Critical Viewing Project* teaches techniques to:

- ⌘ Set rules for television viewing.
- ⌘ How to stick to those rules.
- ⌘ Recognize the ways in which television can be used to manipulate viewers.
- ⌘ Talk to children about violence on television.
- ⌘ Turn what we see on television into positive and educational family discussions.

Using these techniques and strategies, parents open an important family dialogue, determine the strategies that make sense in their family settings, and teach their children to watch television carefully and critically.

NATIONAL PTA

www.pta.org

National PTA is the largest volunteer child advocacy organization in the United States. A not-for-profit association of parents, educators, students, and other citizens active in their schools and communities, PTA is a leader in reminding our nation of its obligations to children. PTA has nearly 6.5 million members working in 26,000 local chapters in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and in the Department of Defense schools in the Pacific and Europe.

CABLE IN THE CLASSROOM

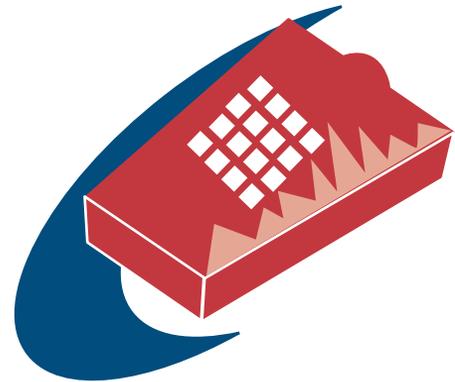
www.ciconline.org

Cable in the Classroom is a \$2 million per week public-service initiative supported by 40 national cable networks and over 8,500 local cable companies. These networks and local cable companies act as a partner in learning with teachers and parents by providing a free cable connection and over 540 hours per month of commercial-free, educational programming to schools across the country.

THE NATIONAL CABLE TELEVISION ASSOCIATION

www.ncta.com

The National Cable Television Association is the cable industry's major trade association. Founded in 1952, NCTA's primary mission is to represent its members with a strong national presence by providing a single, unified voice on issues affecting the cable industry. NCTA represents cable systems serving more than 80 percent of the nation's approximately 67 million cable subscribers. It also represents over 100 cable program networks and the hardware suppliers and providers of other services to the industry.



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ELECTION RESOURCES AND WEB SITES

Follow the ups and downs, ins and outs of any election campaign on television or online.

C-SPAN
www.c-span.org

CNBC
www.cnbc.com

CNN
www.cnn.com

MSNBC
www.msnbc.com

The following Web sites and organizations were correct as of August 21, 2000. Look for these or similar organizations and initiatives in future elections.

BEST PRACTICES 2000

www.bp2k.org

The goal of Best Practices 2000 is to help local television stations develop innovative election coverage. The “Ad Watches” section is especially useful, with lots of background information, video clips of campaign coverage and political ads to analyze.

CABLE IN THE CLASSROOM

www.ciconline.org

Pick up a copy of *Cable in the Classroom* magazine and read about special commercial-free, educational programming airing during the election season. Use the magazine or Web site to search the listings for programs that fit your needs.

C-SPAN'S CAMPAIGN 2000

www.c-span.org

A great resource for complete coverage of elections. Check their current schedule of campaign coverage plus their archived coverage. The site also features a section for teachers, with election-related lesson plans and activities.

CNN NEWSROOM

www.turnerlearning.com

Part of Cable in the Classroom, this commercial-free news program for schools will keep students informed about elections and current events.

CNN'S YOUR CHOICE, YOUR VOICE

A six-part, Internet-based educational program about the electoral process. Contact your local cable company or Cable in the Classroom (800-743-5355) for more information.

THE COMMISSION ON PRESIDENTIAL DEBATES

www.debates.org

The Commission sponsors and produces debates for the leading presidential and vice presidential candidates and undertakes research and educational activities relating to the debates.

DEMOCRACY NET

www.democracynet.org/

A nonprofit, nonpartisan election information guide for local communities. Excellent content on issues, ballot measures, candidates' information, campaign finance information, media coverage, debates, and more.

ELECTION SEARCH

www.electionsearch2000.org/

Enables you to search all the presidential candidates' Web sites for their statements on issues. You can search for all Democrat or Republican candidates, or search for specific candidates.

FREEDOM FORUM

www.freedomforum.org

The Freedom Forum is a nonpartisan, international foundation that makes available a wide range of conference reports, studies, speeches, other publications and videos related to the media, journalism, education and the First Amendment.

KIDS VOTING USA

www.kidsvotingusa.org

The only program of its kind that enables students to visit official polling sites on election day and, accompanied by parent or guardian, to cast a ballot similar in content to the official ballot. Kids Voting USA teaches youth—through a special curriculum, family participation and community involvement—the importance of being informed and the responsibilities of voting.

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

www.lww.org

Nonpartisan organization encouraging the informed and active participation of citizens in government.

MTV'S CHOOSE OR LOSE – YOUTH VOTE 2000

www.mtv.com/nav/intro_chooseorlose.html

The site is the largest non-partisan coalition for youth in the 2000 election. It provides a forum for sharing opinions on candidates and issues, and contains news reports, voter registration information and links to other organizations encouraging youth voting. Look for occasional special programs related to candidates, voting and the election.

NICKELODEON'S KIDS PICK THE PRESIDENT

www.teachers.nick.com

Informs kids about the electoral process, while providing a forum in which kids identify the issues which are important to them during this election year. Highlights include an on-air election in late October. The Kids Pick the President teacher's guide offers suggestions on how to use Kids Pick the President programming in the classroom.

POLITICS ONE

www.politics1.com/

A comprehensive list of links to all the presidential, gubernatorial, U.S. senate & congressional candidates and political parties which includes links to third party and third-party candidates' Web sites.

TIME FOR KIDS

www.timeforkids.com/TFK/electconnect/

A Web site designed especially for kids that informs them about campaign news, the candidates, the issues and the path to the presidency.

MEDIA LITERACY ORGANIZATIONS & WEB SITES

CENTER FOR MEDIA AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS

www.cmpa.com

The Center for Media and Public Affairs (CMPA) is a nonpartisan research and educational organization which conducts scientific studies of the news and entertainment media.

2100 L St. NW, Suite 300
Washington, DC 20037
(202) 223-2942

CENTER FOR MEDIA EDUCATION

www.cme.org

A nonprofit organization whose primary goal is to improve the quality of the electronic media.

2020 L St. NW, Suite 200
Washington, DC 20005
(202) 331-7833

VOTE SMART

www.vote-smart.org/

Tracks the performance of around 13,000 political leaders including voting records, issues information, biographies of all the members of the current Congress, organizations, educational reference materials, political humor, and other directories of political information. A great feature is the ability to type in your zip code and get back information on all your representatives, state and federal, including biographical, address, committee assignments, etc.

YOUTH – E – VOTE

www.youthevote.org

Free, nationwide, online, mock election. Web site includes lesson plans, materials for teachers and a forum for students to debate issues.

CENTER FOR MEDIA LITERACY

www.medialit.org

Largest producer and distributor of media literacy resources in the U.S. Site features a comprehensive online catalog of media literacy books and products, along with workshop information and a “reading room” of articles.

4727 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 403
Los Angeles, CA 90010
(800) 226-9494

KIDSNET

www.kidsnet.org

Clearinghouse devoted to children’s media.

6856 Eastern Ave. NW, Suite 208
Washington, DC 20012
(202) 291-1400

MEDIA AWARENESS NETWORK

www.media-awareness.ca

Canadian site full of media literacy information and activities for parents, teachers and children.

1500 Merivale Road, Third Floor
Nepean, ON K2E 6Z5
CANADA
(800) 896-3342

MEDIA LITERACY CLEARINGHOUSE

www.med.sc.edu:81/medialit/

Rich source of links for media literacy information and activities.

MEDIA LITERACY ONLINE PROJECT

www.interact.uoregon.edu/MediaLit/HomePage

Comprehensive media literacy resource collection that provides a support service for teachers, and others, concerned with the influence of media in the lives of children and youth.

THE MEDIA LITERACY PROJECT

www.babson.edu/medialiteracyproject/index.html

The Media Literacy Project develops media education curriculum materials, provides innovative and high quality teacher education programs, develops parent and community outreach programs, and initiates research to help build a systematic understanding of how an expanded conceptualization of literacy can improve education.



NATIONAL INSTITUTE ON MEDIA AND FAMILY

www.mediaandthefamily.org

Provides research, information and resources about the impact of media on children and families.

2450 Riverside Ave.
Minneapolis, MN 55454
(888) 672-5437

NATIONAL TELEMEDIA COUNCIL

Promotes media literacy through workshops and *Telemidium: The Journal of Media Literacy*.

120 E. Wilson St.
Madison, WI 53703
(608) 257-7712

NEW MEXICO MEDIA LITERACY PROJECT

www.nmmlp.org

Grass roots media education organization offering *The State of Media Education* newsletter, workshops, training and CD-ROMs and other resources.

c/o Albuquerque Academy
6400 Wyoming NE
Albuquerque, NM 97109
(505) 828-3129

PARTNERSHIP FOR MEDIA EDUCATION

www.nmec.org

Plans the annual National Media Education Conference (June 23-26, 2000 in Austin, Texas) and works to promote the growth of media literacy through organization, advocacy and information exchange.

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