

Media Literacy: questions to ask yourself when viewing any media.

1. Who created this message?

Whoever created this media has made choices based on what to include, enhance or remove based on their own goals and belief system. Are they trying to sell something? If so, consider how the media itself may not be real.

2. What techniques have been used to construct this message?

Camera angles? Photoshop? Lighting? Sound? Computer editing? Celebrity endorsements? Visuals? Filters? Remember that even a selfie taken from a phone camera have be hugely altered and that a single image is not what someone looks like every day.

3. What lifestyles, values and beliefs are shown or left out from this message?

From advertisements to social media, the user will have an intention to posting. What do you think their values are in the message? Think about the meaning behind the message, what has been included or left out. Does the individual showing a lean physique talk about the sacrifices they made to their social, mental and emotional health to get that physique?

4. How might someone else understand the same message?

We interpret messages based on our own individual skill level and belief system as well as our personal experiences. Different people may have different views about fatness or thinness and the media can perpetuate these. Ask yourself what the message means to you and how it impacts your body satisfaction, does it make you want to do or change anything?

5. What is the purpose of the message?

Is it to sell something? Do you think the advertiser is trying to get you to feel negative about yourself and their product to be the answer? Remember that the media are a business and the goal is to make money, they do this by selling our attention to advertisers. The bigger the audience the bigger the profit. Consider who is paying for your attention, is it something you want to support?