

## Overview of the Kit

This kit provides teachers with the materials needed to engage students in a dynamic and constructivist process of learning how global media perspectives differ based on country of production, media source, target audience and political and social context among other factors. It includes five lessons representing media documents from Africa, Europe, Latin America, South Asia and Southeast Asia. These materials were developed for ninth grade global studies classes and can also be used in other subject areas including history, communication arts, journalism, geography and economics.

The organizing principle of these lessons is an examination of the role that global media play in shaping the worldview of young people in the twenty first century. Today's students have access to a wealth of information about the world that was far less available just a generation ago. They have at their fingertips information in many forms - from the new media of Internet web pages and YouTube videos to older media forms such as magazine and newspaper reporting and television news. They can access and exchange information with other people from all over the globe through blogs and social networking sites. These lessons help teachers and students to develop the capacity to ask critical questions about the nature of their media consumption while at the same time learning about key issues addressed in curriculum standards and in the daily news. Another reason to study global media perspectives is to develop an awareness of the situations, conflicts, concerns, and realities of people in distinct regions of the world. These realities, often different from those experienced by young Americans, are essential components needed to accurately decode media messages.

## Lesson Format

Three of the lessons are offered as PowerPoint slide presentations, each of which contains five documents examining a range of media interpretations of a regionally significant issue. They are *Latin American Immigration in Editorial Cartoons*, *India's Rise in the Global Economy*, and *Islamic Majorities and Minorities in Southeast Asia*. The remaining two lessons are offered as video presentations, each containing four brief clips of video interpretations of the *Food Crisis in Africa* and *Islam and Cultural Identity in Europe*.

Through the interactive process of classroom decoding, students will develop visual literacy, media literacy and critical thinking skills while learning core information about key issues of global and regional concern. The documents chosen for this kit include editorial cartoons, magazine and newspaper covers, web pages, video news reports and short subject film. Educators can use these materials to engage students in learning and applying core historical knowledge while understanding the social, historical and media contexts in which they were created.

Each lesson includes a **TEACHERS' GUIDE**. The **INTRODUCTION TO THE LESSON** introduces or reinforces knowledge students may need to answer the probe questions and should be communicated to the class before decoding the slide. Probe **QUESTIONS** ask students to apply their knowledge of the topic and media in each slide. Possible answers and evidence are included as model evidence-based responses that address key media visual literacy concepts and information. However, there is rarely one right answer to any of these interpretative questions, and the teacher should encourage multiple readings and a diversity of responses as long as students present evidence to back up their interpretations. It is important that students recognize that all people do not interpret media messages the same way. The teacher's guide includes **SOURCE INFORMATION** and **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION** that adds information about the media source and from the source document or additional historical details that

the teacher may choose to share during or after the decoding. Material also include a one-page *LESSON PLAN* including objectives, vocabulary, materials needed and lesson steps. *STUDENT WORKSHEETS* and *STUDENT READINGS* are included for each lesson.

### Objectives:

- To teach core information and vocabulary about a regionally important issue.
- To teach students to understand historical, economic, social, and cultural perspectives not typically seen in the U.S.
- To train students in visual literacy and media literacy skills, especially the ability to identify persuasion in various media forms.
- To engage all students, but particularly those disengaged from traditional school work, in complex critical thinking and the development of reading, listening and visual decoding skills, and attitudes that support life-long democratic citizenship.

### Learning Standards:

This kit addresses specific content standards of the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) including:

- *Culture*: Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of culture and cultural diversity.
- *People, Places and Environments*: Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of people, places, and environments.
- *Individual Development and Identity*: Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of individual development and identity.
- *Individuals, Groups, and Institutions*: Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of interactions among individuals, groups, and institutions.
- *Power, Authority and Governance*: Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of how people create and change structures of power, authority, and governance.
- *Production, Distribution and Consumption*: Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of how people organize for the production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services.
- *Global Connections*: Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of global connections and interdependence.
- *Civic Ideals and Practices*: Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of the ideals, principles, and practices of citizenship in a democratic republic.

In addition, this kit addresses specific standards of the **National Council of Teachers of English** (NCTE), including:

- applying a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate print and non-print texts.
- applying knowledge of media techniques, figurative language, and genre to critique and discuss print and non-print texts.

This kit also addresses many of the core learning skills that have been identified as essential skills for the **21st Century Literacy**, specifically:

- Information and media literacy skills: analyzing, accessing, managing, integrating, and evaluating information in a variety of forms and media.
- Critical thinking and systems thinking: exercising sound reasoning in understanding and making complex choices, understanding the connections, conflict and change among systems.

### **Level, Time, and Coverage**

Although the readings and questions were designed for ninth grade high school students these materials can be used effectively with a wide range of students by editing the slides and questions and providing additional background information. The time it takes to deliver these lessons will vary depending upon the prior knowledge of the students, the experience of the teacher with this form and these materials, the amount of additional information delivered and further questions asked, and how many of the documents the teacher uses. Although teachers may need to edit the number of documents used, they should avoid the temptation to sacrifice student interaction for content coverage. The power of the lessons emerge when students actively apply their knowledge, identify evidence, articulate their interpretations, analyze authorship and point of view, and discuss meaningful issues. If a teacher does not have the time to do all of the lessons, he/she should edit the number of slides, videos or readings rather than cover all of the documents in a lecture format.

### **Media Literacy and Democratic Citizenship**

The founders of the United States articulated the need for a literate citizenship as core to the development of a deep and enduring democracy. We live in an age when the most influential messages about pressing social issues and events are delivered through mass media, such as television, magazines and the Internet. Most students use the Internet as their primary source of information, yet few have any formal training in assessing the credibility of information in Web sites. It is essential to the success of our democracy that young people consciously and consistently analyze and evaluate media messages. They need to be taught to seek out current, accurate, and credible sources of information; they need to understand the influence of media messages on their understanding of the world; and they need training in identifying and using various techniques for communicating messages in different media forms. Without these critical skills, we risk losing the diversity and freedom of thought that underpins a culture of true democracy.

### **Collective Reading of Media Messages**

This curriculum is based on the classroom practice of collective reading, in which the teacher leads the class through the process of decoding images, sounds and text as a way of developing a range of critical thinking skills while teaching core knowledge. This constructivist approach encourages the development of moral reasoning as students clarify their own interpretations, listen to the analysis of their peers, and discuss ethical issues. Decoding of the documents in this curriculum will help train students to distinguish fact from opinion, analyze point of view and identify bias, interpret historical documents, and use evidence to back up a thesis. The classroom decoding process is particularly effective in involving students who rarely share their opinions about print-based material, including students with reading disabilities, visual learners, and students for whom English is a second language. The teacher should consider calling on students or going around the room to ensure participation by all students in the collective reading process.

## Encouraging Multiple Readings

Although the Teacher Answer Sheets for each lesson suggest answers to the probe questions, the teacher should encourage multiple readings and a diversity of responses for most of the questions posed in the teacher guide. It is important that students give evidence in the document to explain their conclusions. Occasionally a question has only one right answer (e.g., “who created this video?”), and students should learn to distinguish between objective and subjective questions. The suggested answers given in the scripts are intended to reflect typical responses that address key historical and media literacy concepts and information. However, it is important that students recognize that all people do not interpret media messages the same way. Depending upon each reader’s background, including life experience, age, gender, race, culture, or political views, he or she may have very different interpretations of a particular text. The collective reading experience provides the opportunity to explore these differences and discuss the important concept that readers interpret messages through their own lenses.

## Reading Bias

A major theme of these materials is the recognition that all media messages come from a particular point of view and have a bias that reflects the intent and perspective of the producer and sponsor. With these materials, teachers can train students to recognize bias and point of view. The teacher should encourage students to ask critical questions about any media messages encountered inside or outside the classroom using the Six Questions and Five Principles of Media Literacy found at [www.projectlooksharp.org](http://www.projectlooksharp.org).

## Bias in this Curriculum and in the Classroom

This series of lessons, like all media, also has a point of view and a bias. As teachers use the lessons, they may identify opinionated language, selective facts, missing information, and many other subjective decisions that went into constructing this view of history. The same questions the curriculum applies to other documents can be applied to this media construction: Who produced this curriculum for what purpose and what is its bias? Teachers and students could and should be asking critical questions about the editorial choices that went into constructing these lessons. For instance, why did we choose to focus on certain topics (e.g., the Indian economy and the African Food Crisis), but not others (e.g. microcredit programs and subsistence agriculture)? And, what is your evidence for these conclusions? When using these materials teachers will make their own decisions of what to include and to edit, what questions to use and what issues to avoid. All of these decisions, both by the creators and users of the curriculum, will influence the view of current events, and international perspectives that students receive. Teachers should encourage students to thoughtfully analyze and discuss the stories, the perspectives, and the biases celebrated and criticized within our own classrooms. Those skills and practices are core to an educated democratic citizenship.

## Fair Use of Media Documents

The classroom critique of political and cultural documents (e.g., paintings, TV news clips, excerpts from films, webpages) is essential to the development of core literacy skills in our media saturated democracy. To enable educators to fulfill the mission of teaching these core civic objectives, Project Look Sharp has created media literacy integration kits using a variety of different media documents for critical analysis in the classroom. The documents in this curriculum are presented for the purpose of direct critique and solely to be used in an educational setting.

## Cornell Educational Resources for International Studies (CERIS)

CERIS is a collaborative outreach team made up of the Mario Einaudi Center for International Studies and associated Area Studies programs which include the East Asia Program, the Institute for African Development, the Institute for European Studies, the Latin American Studies Program, the South Asia Program, and the Southeast Asia Program. CERIS is dedicated to facilitating the internationalization of the K-12 curriculum through the use of Cornell resources and expertise. CERIS offers curriculum units, country and regional kits, and a variety of audio, video, and text resources. CERIS provides speakers, presentations, performances, and demonstrations to schools, and alternative education sources in the Central New York region. In addition, CERIS offers a number of educator professional development opportunities throughout the school year and into the summer. For more information see <http://www.einaudi.cornell.edu/outreach>

## The Project Look Sharp and CERIS Collaboration

Project Look Sharp and CERIS bring international perspectives and media literacy together for the first time in the *Global Media Perspectives* kit. The two organizations merged their missions by offering a kit that blends international content with media decoding methods. The result is a set of lessons that offers students the opportunity to learn how to critically evaluate international media sources while providing exposure to issues of global importance. This is the first of a number of collaborations between the two organizations.

## About the Author

Sox Sperry is Program Associate and curriculum writer for Project Look Sharp. Sox began his career as a teacher and curriculum designer in 1974 working at the Learning Center parent-teacher cooperative in Fort Wayne, Indiana. Between 1984 and 2007 he worked at the Center For Nonviolence in Fort Wayne teaching nonviolence, developing curriculum and training trainers for a batterer's intervention program. While in Fort Wayne he also taught peace studies and developed curriculum for the Three Rivers Jenbe Ensemble. He is author of Project Look Sharp's document-based history kits, *Media Construction of Chemicals in the Environment*, *Media Construction of Endangered Species* and *Media Construction of Resource Depletion* and co-author of *Media Construction of Presidential Campaigns* and *Media Construction of the Middle East*.

## Slides and Print Copies/How to Order

The slide show is free to download at [www.projectlooksharp.org](http://www.projectlooksharp.org). Educators will need access to a computer and digital projector so that the class can identify key details in each slide. The lessons, readings and assessments are available in *PDF* form on the Project Look Sharp web site for downloading and printing. Teachers will want to print and review the lesson and make copies of student handouts and assessments prior to instruction. **Educators may purchase at cost** a print copy of the entire teachers guide (including lessons, readings and assessments) and a CD with the slides from the Ithaca College Bookstore. Check the Project Look Sharp website for more information.