

RESOURCES AND FURTHER INFORMATION

# ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

## MEDIA LITERACY ACTIVITIES RELATED TO THE STUDY OF WAR

Using the Internet, the library, and other classroom resources, the same process of critical analysis of media messages can be applied to studying other wars and historical events. The following suggestions could be used as homework assignments, or individual/small group projects to provide additional practice in media literacy analysis and deepen students' understanding of the relationship between historical events and their media coverage.

### Extend the Same Analysis to News Magazine Covers from Another Recent War

Apply the same critical analysis principles to studying magazine covers (or other media images) from other U.S. wars within the past 60 years (e.g., WWII, the Korean War, the War in Iraq). What messages are conveyed about those wars, and how are they similar (or different) from those conveyed about the three wars covered in this curriculum?

### Compare Images across Different Magazines

Pick one or more of the *Newsweek* covers from this curriculum, and find different news magazine covers (e.g., *Time*, *U.S. News & World*

*Report*) from that same week or month reflecting the ongoing war. Compare the content, tone, and message of the covers. In what ways were they similar? How were they different, and why?

### Compare Coverage of the Same Event Across Different Types of Media

Compare reports of the same event across different media sources (e.g., newspapers, news magazines, school textbooks, documentary films, encyclopedia). What information or images are consistent across different media sources? How are the sources different in terms of what information they included or left out, and the tone or emphasis of the message?

### Compare Coverage of the Most Recent War(s) in Newspapers from Different Countries

Using Internet sources for English language versions of foreign newspapers (see Web Resources), apply the same kind of critical analysis to the images and articles in news reports on the same day in different countries. How are they similar (or different) in what was reported, the tone or emphasis of the report, and the images selected? Discuss the implications of these differences in terms of what people in

each country “know” about the event, and how the media coverage might influence perceptions about the events and the people involved.

### Discuss or Design Magazine Covers for Other Wars

Select a war from a time period before news magazines such as *Newsweek* existed (e.g., the Revolutionary War, the Civil War). Using what you understand of the major issues, government perspectives, and public opinion at that time, design or discuss what a magazine cover during that event might look like. Include who would be featured, how the image(s) might be framed, what the accompanying titles/text might say, etc.

## ADDITIONAL VIDEO ACTIVITIES

### *American Photography: A Century of Images*

Part Three of the PBS video, *American Photography: A Century of Images*, includes two short clips that work well with these slides. The 60-minute video includes many short sections about the impact of photographs on American history that are excellent resources for the classroom. The video can be ordered online at: <http://www.pbs.org/ktca/americanphotography/> or by calling 1-877-PBS-SHOP.

### Four Photos From Vietnam

The *American Photography* video includes a powerful five-minute segment looking at famous photos from the Vietnam War. It begins seven minutes into Part Three of *American Photography*. The segment opens with a discussion of the power of the still image followed by brief stories about four influential photos. These include three of the pho-

tos shown in the last Vietnam War slide (#16) and the Kent State photo on slide #13. It would be most appropriate to show this clip after finishing the Vietnam slides. It could be used to discuss the role of still images in creating a national memory. Ask students if they agree that still photos leave a more lasting impression than moving images. Ask what media images might define the historic memory of their own generation.

### “Impressions Rather Than Substance”

Another excellent five-minute segment looks at the role of image-making in American politics. The clip begins approximately 30 minutes into Part Three of *American Photography*. It includes a piece about government censorship during the Gulf War in which photographer David Turnley tells the story of how he took the photo in slide #26. This video clip can be shown while discussing slide #26, or at the beginning or end of the Gulf War slides.

- Show the one-minute clip about Ronald Reagan that begins with “I have never seen anyone in that job more comfortable in his own skin than Ronald Reagan” and ends with “I believe that people absorb impressions rather than substance, particularly in this day and age.”
  - Explain that Michael Deaver was Ronald Reagan’s Press Secretary, the person responsible for contact with the media.
  - Ask students if they agree with Deaver, that the American people “absorb impressions rather than substance.” Ask for examples to back up their positions.

- Show the next four minutes of the video through the Gulf War segment.
  - Ask what is ironic about the closing quote by Michael Deaver in which he warns viewers about government control of the media (Deaver directed government manipulation of the media but now warns against it).
  - Ask how the photographer, David Turnley, was able to take and publish the photograph of the dead American soldier (he left his press pool and Public Affairs officer, joined an elite mobile army surgical hospital (MASH) unit, and convinced the censors to allow the photo to be released).
  - Ask if this video has a similar or different perspective on media coverage of the Gulf War than *Lines in the Sand*<sup>1</sup> (similar).
  - Ask if this video is propaganda.
  - Discuss the saying, “truth is the first casualty of war.”

### ***Toxic Sludge is Good for You***

*Toxic Sludge is Good for You: the Public Relations Industry Unspun* (a 45-minute video produced by Media Education Foundation), includes an excellent five-minute segment about the public relations campaign in the fall of 1990 to convince Americans to support war in the Gulf. The segment details how the huge PR firm, Hill and Knowlton, manipulated public opinion through media coverage. The segment includes clips of a young Kuwaiti girl giving tearful but false testimony about Iraqi troops killing Kuwaiti babies followed by clips of President Bush and others repeating her story to the mass media. The segment, titled “Selling Wars,”

begins 24 minutes into the video. *Toxic Sludge is Good for You* – and many other media literacy videos made for classroom use – are available through the Media Education Foundation website: [www.mediaed.org](http://www.mediaed.org) or by calling 1-800-897-0089.

<sup>1</sup>Produced by Ed Griffin-Nolan, Laura Marini, and Peter Wirth.