

## OVERVIEW OF THE KIT

# How to Use These Materials

## LESSON #1: HISTORY SLIDES

This lesson consists of 48 slides organized into three parts.

- The first section of 17 slides is arranged into thematic chapters overlapping in chronological order: **Before** (pre-1492), **Frontier** (17<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> centuries), **Progress** (first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century) and **Consequences** (latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century).
- The second section, **Connections, Conflict, Change** includes 23 slides representing diverse perceptions about chemicals in the environment. These slides, many from websites, present contemporary views on issues including green marketing, endocrine disrupters, toxic waste, environmental justice and food issues including chemical additives, GMOs and native seed saving. The **Connections, Conflict, Change** chapter is designed to draw on information and understandings from the previous chapters in order to develop a more holistic and nuanced overview of contemporary media constructions of chemicals in the environment in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.
- The last section of eight slides includes sets of **Paired Image Comparisons**, which provides an opportunity for teachers to explore divergent representations of concepts relating to chemicals, corporate marketing and environmental justice.

The lesson begins with the students reading the four-page handout, **Student Reading – Media Construction of Chemicals in the Environment** that provides key knowledge and vocabulary for

“decoding” the slides. It may be given for homework or read in class.

Each slide presents one or two documents that range from oil paintings, magazine advertisements and book covers to DVD jackets, editorial cartoons and web pages. The teacher introduces each slide/document with brief background information adapted to reflect the knowledge, level and subject area of the class. As each slide/document is projected the teacher asks document-based probe questions that require students to apply core knowledge while analyzing the scientific, historical and media context in which the document was created. The teacher follows the decoding by adding additional information on the topic or document and open-ended discussion questions.

This interactive decoding process is detailed in the **Teacher Guide** that includes a one-page lesson for each of the slides. Each slide lesson begins with **Background Information** that students may need in order to answer the probe questions and should be communicated to the class before decoding each slide. Probe **Questions** ask students to apply their knowledge of resources and media in each slide. **Possible Answers** are included as model evidence-based responses that address key historical and 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 in the same way. It is also important to encourage students to begin to ask their own media literacy questions, especially as they become more familiar with this form of critical analysis.

**LESSON #1 CONTINUED...**

The teacher's guide includes **Additional Information** that adds information from the source document, including text from websites that may be too small to read when projected or additional historical details that the teacher may choose to share during or after the decoding. **Further Questions** prompt students to move beyond text-based analysis to discuss issues, make personal connections, do follow-up research or take social action. **Connections** link each slide to related topics in this and other kits with abbreviated references to specific slides and lessons.

Presenter Notes in the Power Point View Menu allows the teacher to view the current, previous and subsequent slides and includes a timer. This view also shows the **Background Information, Questions** and **Further Questions** for each slide.

**LESSONS #2-5: CASE STUDIES**

This kit includes two video lessons, *Rachel Carson on Film* and *Nuclear Reactor Safety*, each of which includes four short video clips for decoding. The video case study lessons, like the history slide lesson, have the teacher lead a whole class through decoding of each document. The two text based article reviews, *Rachel Carson Revised* and *Depleted Uranium*, ask students to analyze four two-page articles. The text-based case studies have students work as individuals or in groups and report out to the whole class. These text-based lessons may work better with more independent students. Each case study lesson includes a one-page **Lesson Plan** and detailed **Teacher Guide**.

**ASSESSMENT**

The assessment asks each student to demonstrate his or her knowledge gained from the lesson and his or her critical thinking and media literacy skills through document-based analysis. The *Media Construction of Chemicals in the Environment* kit assessment, "Changing Public Attitudes Toward DDT," includes a student handout with images from six documents, a document-based essay question and a page of short-answer (scaffolding) questions. The teacher may choose to use only the short answer questions with the image handout, or only the essay question and images, or both.

**LEVEL, TIME AND COVERAGE**

Although the readings and questions were designed for upper-level high school and college classes, 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 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.