



HIDDEN MESSAGES

Key message/Summary

»Reading between the lines« is the ability, which helps people recognize the hidden messages behind the appealing texts/videos. By studying different texts in this activity students will become more alert and learn how to discover the second or even third levels of meaning. Activity itself enhances critical thinking toward news and messages different media or social media redistribute.

Module	Group size	Group age	Duration
• Prevention	• small	• 16 - 19 • 20 - 24	• 1 hour

Purpose

- detect verbal and nonverbal ways that media used to affect readers' emotional attitude towards foreigners/other nationalities;
- recognize parts in the text that inspire fear and anger or encourage to be hostile to foreigners;
- become acquainted with the most commonly used strategy / word phrase with which media gain our attention;
- distinguish subjective arguments from objective.

Participants

Pupils, students, youth

Description

Part 1:

Step 1 "Find the lines to read between," students work individually or in a small group.

Option 1: all students work on the same types of media (for example: magazines)

Option 2: group working on different types of media (TV, radio shows, video games, websites, apps, ...)

Teacher gives instructions and then collects answers from them in his interactive board/ flipchart/ PowerPoint presentation.

Questions:

Q1:What construction elements on the front page tell you what is intended to be looked at first? (headlines, pictures, top of page, first story below the fold, extra-wide column)

Q2 :What are the construction elements that are intended to encourage you to open the paper/continue with listening/ watching or playing game? (index, promos for other sections, stories that continue on other pages/parts, references to related articles in another

section)

Q3: How do you feel after reading/listening/playing this? (fear, despair, guilt, anger, uncertainty, incompleteness, envy, desire for having more, feeling that someone is going to take me, what belong just to me,).

Q4: Does titles/images/words influence on your current opinion. How?

Results of the research in the classroom need to be connect with the idea that media are constructed on an obvious level (Annex 1)

Step 2: Where they caught me?

Each student marks words and images, which:

a) have had an impact on the change in the way of his/her thinking.

Step 3: Let's read again

With use of Critical reading structure (Annex 2) they go through the same text/video and report what they found out.

Part 2:

»**Decrypt hidden**« gives students opportunity to become acquainted with spotting media techniques and their target audiences (Annex 3) In the third activity students learn how to differ objective arguments from subjective. The last activity gives students opportunity for self-reflection: what they really know about foreigners and what they decide to believe to be true.

Task for work in pairs or in a small group. Discussion should be lead by teacher. Take into consideration introduction part (Annex 3) and discussion about each technique aim.

Step 1: Students need to choose one or more text(s) and identify in it: a) purpose, b) techniques and c) the target audiences for each of the texts.

Step 2: Students are asked to find samples of the texts, where target audience are young people who are members of the majority and are unemployed or work for a limited time. According to structure in Annex 3 they need to answer, where they find typical elements.

or

Step 3: Student read and compare the article from a newspaper issued by right-wing political parties and newspaper article issued by the left. According to structure in Annex 3 they need to answer, where they find typical elements and answer:

a) How and where they have differences? b) Where are they find similarities?

Step 4: Students need to answer what they certainly know about foreigners, who live in their country? (Students should write down what they certainly know, not think.

They need to read an interview or story with one of foreign person/migrant. After that, they need to answer questions below:

1. How do I feel after I read that?

2. Do I still think the same?
3. Where can I get more information?

Aim of last task is to test, how text influenced on students emotions and how emotions influence on their thoughts. The last question is connected with critical evaluating, which will inform student how to establish emotional distance and to formulate an opinion on the basis of verified facts.

Materials needed

- Video games, TV, radio, newspapers and magazines
- Copies of Annex 1 and 2
- Cards with case studies and tasks
- Discussion board

Methodology

Method of discourse, method of debate, method of analysis, method of working with text and photos, flip-up method, method of obtaining the results of samples, method of evaluation and self-reflection

Advice for Trainer

Students, who have difficulties working alone can be partnered to another student to help them improve the process. The exercise can be done individually or in a small group. Students can be encouraged to bring media texts that they find outside the classroom and are connected with the theme. It would be helpful to have copies of other newspapers' front pages too, so that students have a variety of texts to examine.

Source / Literature

Adapted from : Chris M. Worsnop: Media Literacy through critical thinking, teaching material, NW Media for Excellence in Media Literacy, Washington State Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Handouts

[Annex 1](#)

[Annex 2](#)

[Annex 3](#)



CC - Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike
<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/3.0/>

HIDDEN MESSAGES. Retrieved %s, from %s Sunday January 5, 2025 from <https://toolbox.ycare.eu/courses/YCARE157/>

<https://www.ycare.eu>

Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union



The European Commission support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents which reflects the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein

