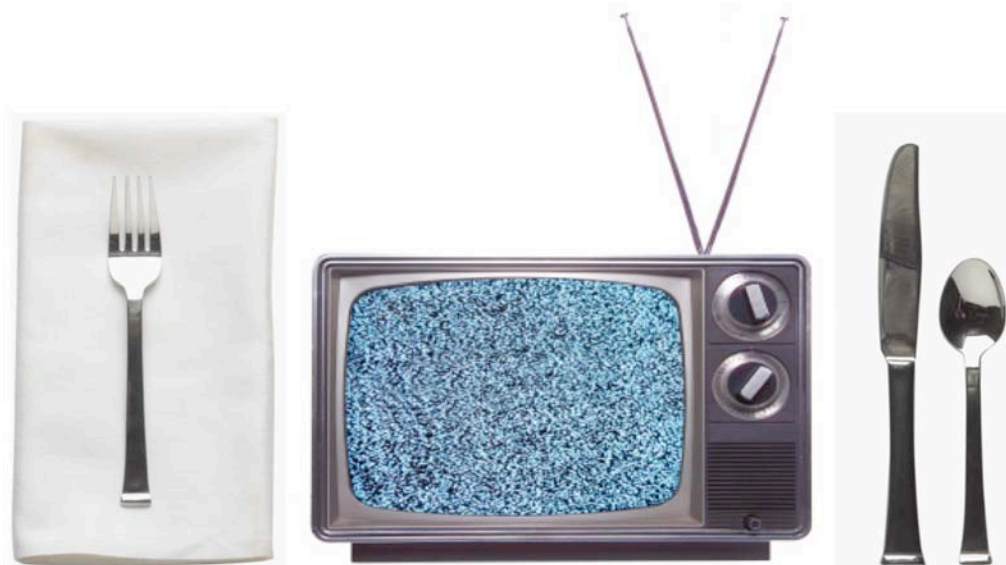


# **MEDIA REVEALED**

**“Some Things Just Aren’t What They Seem”**

## **Lesson Plan**



# “Some Things Just Aren’t What They Seem”

## LESSON PLAN

### Overview

This Lesson plan was created using an activity from the “Retouching Reality” section beginning on page 10 in *Media Revealed; Understanding our Media Diet* guide.

It’s hard to know what’s real anymore because media messages are constructed using specific techniques like camera angles, lighting, editing and special effects that may cover-up reality. In the same way that media can alter our perceptions of reality, the illusions around teen smoking can promote the misperception that most Vermont high school students smoke, compared with the reality that 8 out of 10 Vermont teens don’t smoke. Media and the messages conveyed within create false impressions that influence our thinking and behaviors.



*Note to Presenters/Educators: You can find several sources to introduce you to Media Literacy under Presenter Basics on pg.4 of the Media Revealed tool kit.*

### Subject

Misperceptions; Perceived reality influences behavior.

### Age

10-13

### Focus

Deconstruction (Discussed on pages 10-11 in *Media Revealed*)

Deconstruction activities teach a set of questions to ask as a way to explore media. In dissecting media, the discovery of how reality has been retouched is discovered. Emphasis is on core questions like:

- How is media constructed?
- What creative techniques are used to attract my attention?
- Who created the message?

### Rationale

Media literacy offers youth critical thinking skills that can help them make more informed decisions about health behaviors like not smoking and drinking.

**Learning Objectives** (Taken from “Why Media Literacy” page 1, *Media Revealed*)

- Challenge misperceptions
- Develop critical thinking skills – active instead of passive media skills

### Time

20-30 Minutes



### **Handout/Giveaway**

- Question Media: Be In Control of What Goes into Your Head (found in the Appendix- Media Revealed and the last page of this lesson plan).
- 8 Dollar Bill – this fun item looks a lot like a real dollar bill, but it can help reinforce that some things aren't what they seem. Hand out to everyone who takes part.

### **Equipment**

- Computer
- Campaign for Real Beauty video
  - View at <http://www.youtube.com> (search for Dove Real Beauty)
  - Or, download the file from the KSV Extranet (under FY08 Common Theme Campaigns/FY08 Prevention Campaign–Correcting Misperceptions/Activity Guides & Materials)

### **Activity – Video & Discussion**

The lesson that follows is a great way to introduce a deconstruction activity. Students will be introduced to a short video that deconstructs some of the creative techniques used in media messages, which can have an influence on perception and behavior.

#### **Step 1 – Group Discussion**

Open with a discussion that will challenge students to start questioning the impact of media in their lives, to increase awareness and make a connection between what they see and how they think, feel and behave.

1. Have you purchased something because you saw it in a magazine, movie or on TV?  
Why or Why Not?
2. How do you choose what to buy? Where does the idea come from?
3. Could you pick out a photo that is real or retouched? What could give it away?

*Most advertising photos have been retouched and it's almost impossible to know exactly what has been altered. However, in reality if you compare the differences between how people or things look in everyday life, the imperfections and unique qualities can become apparent.*

#### **Step 2 – “Evolution of Beauty” (Campaign for Real Beauty) Video Activity**

Play the video. (Just over 1 minute) It may need to be played 2-3 times to start to identify all the creative techniques used to change the appearance of the model. Ask the students to list all the changes as they see on a piece of paper.



### Step 3 – Making the Link, Misperceptions and Smoking

After the video use the following questions to help guide a deeper discussion about misperceptions and how they might influence choices made.

1. What are the changes done to the model? What do you see happening? How many of the changes were done electronically using Photoshop?

*Changes include; artificial lighting, makeup applied, blemishes covered, hair curled and styled, artificial wind blown hair effect, hair color was changed to be more reddish and highlighted, eyes enlarged, neck sculpted, eyebrows shaped, hair made to look fuller, forehead and face slimmed and lips enlarged*

2. Would you recognize the model on the street, after all the changes were made?
3. How much retouching and/or improvements do you think occur in other media, like commercials, magazines or TV shows? Think about the food you see?
4. Did it surprise you to see how much went into creating this ad?
5. What are some other ways that companies can change people's perceptions or what they think?

*For example, the number of times an ad is seen, the wording used product placement (into shows and movies), etc.*

6. Our opinion of beauty may be altered by creative techniques. Can our opinion of smoking also be changed by what we see and hear? Positively? Negatively?  
*For example, classes about the health effects of smoking might influence to have a negative opinion about smoking, but what might influence positive opinions or misperceptions?*
7. Does it surprise you to learn that 8 out of 10 Vermont youth don't smoke? (The rate of smoking among teens, 8<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> grade, is 16%.)
8. How do you think tobacco companies and other industries (like the media) influence the misperception that more teens smoke than they really do? Brainstorm a list or discuss.

**Want More?** Use the **Be In Control of What Goes Into Your Head!** handout at home.

## **Question Media**

### **Be In Control Of What Goes Into Your Head!**

#### **Media is constructed**

A team of people creates media. Some of the positions include – directors, producers, writers, set designers, prop masters, publicists, photographers and art directors as well as many assistants.

#### **Each media form is constructed using specific creative language**

Movies, TV and magazines (and other media) use unique ways to create a message for a specific audience. Some techniques include: sound effects, music, camera angles, colors, words, lighting, editing, dramatic graphics, etc.

#### **Media messages affect our thoughts and actions**

Media is created to bring out an emotional response like fear, anger, love, longing, excitement, etc.

#### **People experience messages differently**

People translate messages based on their own culture, family and personal beliefs and values, lifestyles, interests and experiences.

#### **Media messages have their own values and points of view**

Messages are created to influence the audience to accept or understand a particular viewpoint. Usually, the “whole story” is not reflected. People can choose to accept or reject the values promoted in a message.

#### **Begin Questioning**

The following questions are based on the ideas listed above. They are the basic tools for exploring and understanding the impact that media plays in our lives.

Who created this message? Why? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Who is the target audience? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What creative language is used to attract my attention? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

How does this message make me feel? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

How might different people understand this message differently from me? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What values, lifestyles and points of view are represented in, or left out, of the message? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_