INTRODUCTION

This Junior Division Media Unit is designed to assist teachers in delivering a program that will help students develop their critical thinking skills. The seven lessons highlight the media literacy expectations, and reading, writing and oral language opportunities are deeply embedded. It is suggested that teachers use the response journal as a way to track and provide feedback to student thinking. Many reflective questions are posed throughout the lesson, and time should be taken for students to think, make connections, and respond at a deep level.

These seven lessons take students through a continuum of media texts, from the fantasy world of superheroes to real-life stunt junkies. Students at this age level live in both worlds and are challenged to understand and respond to the messages of violence and dangerous behaviour. Is it more exciting to watch bombs explode and cars crashing, rather than fighting evil through compassion? Are we more likely to imitate more realistic representations of risky behaviours rather than two robots fighting? The media texts will challenge students to examine multiple perspectives and production choices in the creation of media texts related to superheroes. From the fantasy world of superheroes to more realistic portrayals, students will read, view, analyze, and critically respond to the representations of dangerous behaviour.

The resources provided in these lessons will contain some sensitive materials that match the realistic viewing experiences to which youth are exposed. Teachers should consider reviewing all lessons, links, and resources to ensure the content is suitable for their given audience/class. In addition, all links and resources should be checked to ensure the content is still available and accessible online.
UNIT OVERVIEW

The purpose of this unit is to encourage students to look at superheroes and dangerous behaviours from multiple perspectives, encouraging them to think critically about the unrealistic portrayal of characters and the construction of stereotypes in popular culture media texts.

- Lesson 1: Comic Book Superheroes – Understanding Different Perspectives
- Lesson 2: The Selling Power of Superheroes
- Lesson 3: Power and Hero Gear
- Lesson 4: Power and Celebrity Gear
- Lesson 5: Fighting Evil in Video Games
- Lesson 6: Conflict: From Superheroes to Stunt Junkies – Don’t Try This At Home!
- Lesson 7: Wha’s Up with Parkour?

Lesson 1: Comic Book Superheroes – Understanding Different Perspectives

This lesson introduces students to the imaginary world of comic book superheroes. Students will consider the gender differences between these characters, and how they represent power. By exploring individual superheroes from multiple perspectives, students will deepen their understanding of the construction of stereotypes in popular culture media texts.

Lesson 2: The Selling Power of Superheroes

The focus of this lesson deals with the superheroes from imaginary worlds, and their power to sell real products in a real world. Students will deconstruct some milk advertisements from the Got Milk campaign to critically analyze how a milk company uses the physical power of superheroes to promote their product.

Lesson 3: What is the Message Behind the Numbers?

Understanding the power behind the use of weapons and gadgets in the imaginary world of superheroes is the focus for this lesson. Students first will brainstorm a list of top 20 Superhero weapons and gadgets that contribute to the identity of that superhero. One of the production tasks for this lesson will be to re-brand old toys and gadgets into new Superhero weapons that contribute to a new identify for a superhero. Using the conventions and techniques of store flyers, students will create a superhero store flyer advertising their new superhero gadgets. Connections are made with real-life superheroes, and how they have constructed themselves with symbols of power to influence and make a difference for a group of people.

Lesson 4: Power and Celebrity Gear

In this lesson, students are using the ideas of power from the fantasy world to make connections to the symbols of power that are represented in the photographs of celebrities. From accessories to weapons to the use of colour, students will reflect on how these photographs are constructed to reflect power and influence. Students will be given the opportunity to think about how they might construct and create photographs of themselves that represent power.
Lesson 5: Fighting Evil in Video Games

Is fighting evil with compassion and integrity less exciting than using bombs, blades, and guns? This lesson will focus on the representation of conflict in video games. Students will view a selection of video game trailers to understand the codes and conventions of this medium. A deeper analysis will involve a comparison of the jolts per minute between some favourite video games to understand how this relates to attracting and appealing to a target audience.

Lesson 6: From Superheroes to Stunt Junkies: Don’t try this at home!

This lesson focuses on the appeal and the excitement of the dangerous stunts and the extreme sports that we see represented in some of the reality television shows that appeal to this age group. Students will consider the features of this television show medium to understand how fast-paced reality shows represent the positive and negative consequences of competition. How do different people respond and question the content and safety concerns of these shows? Do some reality shows glamorize danger?

Lesson 7: What’s Up With Parkour?

This lesson will give students the opportunity to understand how the stunts, the acrobatics, and the risk-taking behaviours explored in the fantasy world of superheroes look in real-life. Parkour is a newly created extreme sport that requires the athletes to move through urban structures by vaulting over railings and climbing walls. While looking very Superhero-like, these athletes are highly skilled and extensively trained. Students then will consider how this extreme sport inspired video games, running shoes, and plotlines for movies and television.

For additional lessons on these topics, visit www.media-awareness.net and click on the “For Teachers” section.
LESSON 1: COMIC BOOK SUPERHEROES – UNDERSTANDING DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES

40 minutes

CURRICULUM EXPECTATIONS

- MEDIA LITERACY – EVALUATING TEXTS
  - 1.3 – Express opinions about ideas, issues, and/or experiences presented in media texts, and give evidence from the texts to support their opinions.

- MEDIA LITERACY – POINT OF VIEW
  - 1.5 – Identify whose point of view is presented or reflected in a media text, using evidence from the text, and suggest how the text might change if a different point of view were used

KEY CONCEPTS AND QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- All texts contain belief and value messages.
- What lifestyles, values and points of view are represented in Comic Book Superheroes? Who or what is included, missing and/or misrepresented?

INTRODUCTION/OVERVIEW

This lesson introduces students to the imaginary world of comic book superheroes. Students will consider the gender differences between these characters and how they represent power. By exploring individual superheroes from multiple perspectives, students will deepen their understanding of the construction of stereotypes in popular culture media texts.

TEACHING/LEARNING STRATEGIES

TERMS – Ask students to define the term superhero, and to suggest some of the character traits superheroes have. Track student responses on a chart with two columns: Positive Traits and Negative Traits.

THINK, PAIR, SHARE – Distribute Spiderman and Spiderwoman (1.1 H). Have students work in pairs to read and discuss their responses to the questions. Share responses as a class. Many students may not know a great deal about Spiderwoman, so use this as an opportunity to ask the question: Why do we know more about Spiderman than we do about Spiderwoman?

PERSPECTIVES – Divide the class into groups of four, and provide for each group, a selection of comic books, superheroes dolls, images and posters of superheroes. Ask students to choose two superheroes to compare and discuss, using the guiding questions from Perspectives (1.2 H). Have each group member pick one of the four perspectives to focus their analysis, so that all four points of view are covered. After each group member has been given enough time to reflect on the questions for his/her perspective, ask each to share their responses, one at a time.

Have groups of students summarize their learning by presenting their group’s analysis to the rest of the class.
Hand out *Group Skills Checklist for Discussion (1.3 H)*, and have students reflect on their skills in the group discussion.

**RECREATING** – Instruct students to create new superheroes by extending some of their ideas from the previous activity. Ask students to choose a comic book superhero, and then create a new superhero by changing the original perspective.

For example, they could choose Spiderman and change the setting to China. How might a Spiderman-like character from China be different? What superpowers might he possess?

Have students summarize the following information to create a Superhero Trading Card for their new superhero:

- Superhero’s Name
- Occupation
- Special Powers
- Setting
- Appearance
- Personality
- Superhero’s most important action

**ACTIVISM**

Many of the character traits that Superheroes possess are honourable, and similar to the character attributes that are integrated into every school’s curriculum and practice. Students could choose one of the following attributes and create posters that use superheroes as examples of that trait:

- Respect
- Responsibility
- Empathy
- Kindness and sharing
- Teamwork
- Fairness
- Honesty
- Co-operation
- Integrity
- Perseverance

**ASSESSMENT OPPORTUNITIES**

- Group Skills Checklist for Discussion (1.3 H)

**IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE LESSONS/HOMEWORK/EXTENSION ACTIVITIES**

Many extensions are possible using the student created Superhero Trading Cards. Students could create games and write instructions for their trading cards. Further examination and analysis of trading cards as media texts is also another way to extend this lesson. Why do we enjoy collecting cards? How many different media texts are related to trading cards?
CROSS CURRICULAR CONNECTIONS

- Oral Language
- Reading
- Writing
- Visual arts

MATERIALS AND RESOURCES

- Collect a variety of comic books, superheroes dolls, images and posters of superheroes, and encourage students to bring in their favourite superhero, as a comic book or as represented on a popular culture media text (t-shirt, poster, pillow case, toy etc).
- Spiderman and Spiderwoman (1.1 H)
- Perspectives (1.2 H)
- Group Skills Checklist for Discussion (1.3 H)
- Information listed in Links / Resources

TERMINOLOGY/BACKGROUND FOR TEACHERS

- **Superhero**: A hero/heroine having imaginary powers
- **Spiderwoman**: Jessica Drew is a fictional superhero from Marvel Comics. While Jessica’s mother was pregnant, she was hit by a laser beam containing the DNA traits of several different species of spiders. She possesses superhuman strength, endurance, reflexes, and speed. Spiderwoman can generate “venom blasts” that can kill, and she can adhere to almost any surface by excreting an adhesive substance from her palms and soles. She also is proficient in hand-to-hand fighting, and has been trained in boxing, judo, and karate. She speaks several foreign languages, and received training in undercover detective work. She sometimes carries a handgun.
- **Spiderman**: Peter Parker is a fictional Marvel Comics superhero. He was an orphan raised by his aunt and uncle. His superpowers include super strength and agility, the ability to cling to most surfaces, and the ability to shoot spider webs. His spider-sense enables him to react quickly to danger. Peter Parker, the character, excels in science, chemistry, and physics. He is able to weave web material into shields, weapons, or a hang-glider wing.

LINKS / RESOURCES

- Media Awareness Network: Villians, Heroes, and Heroines
  www.media-awareness.ca/english/resources/educational/lessons/elementary/gender_portrayal/villains_heroes_heroines.cmf
SPIDERMAN AND SPIDERWOMAN

Spiderman and Spiderwoman
What do you know about these comic book superheroes?
Use the following questions to guide your discussion:

• What do these superheroes have in common?
  • What special powers do they have?

• Describe the background of each superhero? Where did he/she grow up? How old is he/she? Does he/she have a family?

• How are the superheroes represented in these images similar? How are they different? Why might the comic book creators choose to represent these two characters in this manner? What clues in these images suggest point of view?


PERSPECTIVES

Directions:
- As a group, choose two superheroes to compare.
- Each group member should choose one of the following perspectives to think about and discuss with the rest of the group.

AUDIENCE PERSPECTIVE:
Who do you think would like this superhero? Why?
Who would not like this superhero? Why?

GENDER PERSPECTIVE:
Do you know if this superhero is a boy or girl?
Do you think that this superhero’s gender affects what he or she can do? How?
How would this superhero be different if he or she were the opposite gender?

SETTING PERSPECTIVE:
When and where did the story about this superhero happen?
How does the setting affect the superhero? How would he or she be different if the story happened at a different time or in a different place? What are some ways you think the superhero would be different?

PRODUCTION PERSPECTIVE:
Who produced this superhero? Where else have you seen this superhero? (i.e., lunch boxes, t-shirts, movies)
If I were to re-create this superhero, I would make the following changes: __________________________________________
# Group Skills Checklist for Discussion

**Student Name:** ________________________________

**Date:** ________________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>During Group Discussions:</th>
<th>Examples of My Behaviour:</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I participate actively in the group.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I listen carefully.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I ask questions.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I connect my ideas to the comments of others.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I support opinions with evidence.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

I can improve my group discussion skills by doing the following things:

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*Adapted from A Guide to Effective Literacy Instruction, Grades 4-6, Volume 2*
LESSON 2: THE SELLING POWER OF SUPERHEROES

40 minutes

CURRICULUM EXPECTATIONS

- MEDIA LITERACY – PRODUCTION PERSPECTIVES
- 1.6 – Identify who produces various media texts and the reason for their production.
- MEDIA LITERACY – MEDIA FORM
- 2.1 – Identify elements and characteristics of some media forms.

KEY CONCEPTS AND QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- Media Texts serve different interests (commercial, ideological, political). Most media messages are created for profit or to persuade, but all texts are produced intentionally for a purpose.
- What assumptions does this media text make about its audience? Who benefits from the production of a media text that uses Superheroes?

INTRODUCTION/OVERVIEW

The focus of this lesson deals with the superheroes from imaginary worlds, and their power to sell real products in a real world. Students will deconstruct some milk advertisements from the Got Milk campaign to critically analyze how a milk company uses the physical power of superheroes to promote their product.

TEACHING/LEARNING STRATEGIES

MESSAGES – Using Got Milk Advertisements (2.1 H), have students consider the message for each Milk Advertisement. Ask pairs of students to discuss the two advertisements. Direct students to use the questions below the pictures to guide their discussions. Debrief the discussions by asking students why a milk company would use a superhero to sell their product.

JOURNALS – Have students complete a journal response by responding individually to one or more of the questions from Got Milk Advertisements (2.1 H). If you wish to mark this journal, hand out Rubric for Journal Response (2.2 H), and go over this with the students, so they will know how their journals will be evaluated.

MEDIA TEXTS – Collect or ask students to bring in a range of media texts that are related to superheroes. This may include lunch boxes, dolls/figures, posters, magazines, superhero birthday party articles, comic books, t-shirts, toys, pillow cases, etc. If possible, include magazine advertisements that use superheroes to promote their products. A google search will result in many products from cars to furniture that use a superhero theme.

ANALYSIS – Hand out Analyzing Superhero Texts (2.3 H). Explain to students that they will be using this framework to help them critically analyze the media texts that have been brought to class. Explain that the triangle represents three sides for discussion: a description of the text, the target audience, and the production choices for that text. Read over the questions for each of these topics for discussion, clarifying where necessary. Students may choose to analyze one or more of the texts by discussing their
responses to all of the questions on the triangle, for the chosen text(s). Have students summarize their discussion by sharing their ideas with the rest of the class.

Provide students with the opportunity to reflect on their thinking by responding to some of the questions in their journals. Again, the Rubric for Journal Response (2.2 H) can be used for evaluation.

MESSAGES REVISITED – Many cleaning products use the superhero theme in commercials and magazine advertisements. The idea is that stains need the superpower of a cleansing product.

Have students brainstorm a list of products that could be endorsed effectively by a superhero. Students could choose a product and create a proposal for a magazine ad or television commercial that uses a superhero theme to endorse the product.

ACTIVISM

Who are the heroes in your school and community? Invite members of the community to share their stories with your class. What can we learn from the acts of kindness, friendship, honesty and loyalty displayed by some of these people who make a difference? Create a school bulletin board that features news stories about heroic acts and make connections to the character-development traits.

ASSESSMENT OPPORTUNITIES

- Rubric for Journal Response (2.2 H)

IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE LESSONS/HOMEWORK/EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

Have students connect their learning from the fantasy world of superheroes to the real world. Challenge students to commit random acts of kindness. Have students document what they did on a post-it note, and add it to a classroom bulletin board titled “Random Acts of Kindness.” Discuss with students the power of helping others in need. Have students respond in their journals to the following question: Do you have to possess superhero powers to help people in need? Explain by giving specific examples.

CROSS CURRICULAR CONNECTIONS

- Oral Language
- Reading
- Writing
- Information Technology

MATERIALS AND RESOURCES

- A selection of media texts related to Superheroes, such as lunch boxes, dolls/figures, posters, magazines, superhero birthday party articles, comic books, t-shirts, toys, and pillow cases. You may collect these yourself, or you may wish to ask the students to bring in their own examples of these items.
- Got Milk Advertisements (2.1 H)
- Rubric for Journal Response (2.2 H)
- Analyzing Superhero Texts (2.3 H)
TERMINOLOGY/BACKGROUND FOR TEACHERS

The triangle framework on Analyzing Superhero Texts (2.3 H) provides students with three different approaches to understanding and analyzing a media text. It allows the students to see a media text from more than one point of view. The audience side encourages student to consider the audience’s role in creating meaning and the questions allow them to consider different people’s perspectives. The text side asks students to consider the form of the text and the connections they make about what is represented. The production side allows students to consider the economic elements. Who makes money and how the texts were produced are important concepts for students to discuss.

LINKS / REFERENCES

- None for this lesson
GOT MILK ADVERTISEMENTS

Guiding Questions:

- What is the purpose of these two advertisements?
- Who is the target audience? How do you know?
- What is the message? How does the written text help you understand the message? How does the image help you understand the message?
- How would people who do not drink milk understand the message? How would people who don’t have any prior knowledge about comic book superheroes understand this message?
- Why would the milk company use Superheroes to sell their product?
## RUBRIC FOR JOURNAL RESPONSE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LEVEL</th>
<th>CRITERIA</th>
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| 4     | - Complete entry that addresses several of the questions asked during the lesson  
       | - Entry demonstrates a thorough understanding of perspective, and makes several connections to their own experiences  
       | - Opinions and ideas are expressed clearly and effectively |
| 3     | - Complete entry that addresses most questions asked during the lesson  
       | - Entry demonstrates a good understanding of perspective, and makes several connections to their own experiences  
       | - Opinions and ideas are expressed clearly |
| 2     | - Entry is only partially complete  
       | - Entry demonstrates some evidence of perspective, and makes limited connections to their own experiences  
       | - Opinions and ideas are unclear at times |
| 1     | - Entry is incomplete  
       | - Entry demonstrates little evidence of insight into a perspective, and makes little or no attempt to connect to own experiences  
       | - Opinions and ideas are not expressed clearly or effectively. |

**LEVEL:**

**COMMENTS:**
ANALYSING SUPERHERO TEXTS

What is this?
What do you do with it?
Can you name three things like it?
Describe the features of this text.
How does it connect to your life?
Do you like this text?
Would you buy it?
Would your parents like it? How do you know?
Who else would enjoy this? How do you know?
Who wouldn’t like this text? Why?

Who makes this? Where is it made?
How much do you think it costs? Where might you buy this?
Why do you think it was made?
Have you seen a commercial for it on TV, in a book or magazine, on a website, or in a game?
LESSON 3: POWER AND HERO GEAR

40 minutes

CURRICULUM EXPECTATIONS

- MEDIA LITERACY – Creating Media Texts
  - 3.2 – Describe in detail the topic, purpose, and audience for media texts they plan to create.
- MEDIA LITERACY – PRODUCING MEDIA TEXTS
  - 3.4 – Produce media texts for specific purposes and audiences, using media forms and appropriate conventions and techniques.

KEY CONCEPTS AND QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- All texts are constructions.
- How do the weapons that superheroes use define their identity? What messages about power are stated and implied?

INTRODUCTION/OVERVIEW

Understanding the power behind the use of weapons and gadgets in the imaginary world of superheroes is the focus for this lesson. Students will first brainstorm a list of top 20 Superhero weapons and gadgets that contribute to the identity of that superhero. One of the production tasks for this lesson will be to re-brand old toys and gadgets into new Superhero weapons that contribute to a new identity for a superhero. Using the conventions and techniques of store flyers, students will create a superhero store flyer advertising their new super-hero gadget. Connections are made with real life superheroes, and how they have constructed themselves with symbols of power to influence and make a difference for a group of people.

TEACHING/LEARNING STRATEGIES

SMALL GROUPS – Have students work in small groups to create a list of comic book weapons. Students may need to refer back to the comic book selections from the previous lessons. Alternatively, students could research this topic on-line. Have students then evaluate their list by determining their own top 20 best comic book weapons and gadgets. Encourage students to choose weapons that define the character to whom they belong.

JOURNALS – Each group should share their lists, with a brief explanation to support the choices the group made. Debrief this activity by allowing students to reflect in their journals by writing a response to the following quote: “Without their weapons, superheroes would lose their identity.”

Have students bring in some old toys and gadgets that could be re-branded as hero gear. In pairs, have students select one of these toys and then create a weapon or gadget that could be used for a known or imaginary superhero. Instruct students to consider these two questions:

- How is power represented in this new gadget?
- How does the gadget define the superhero?
FLYERS – Have small groups of students create a store flyer to sell supplies to superheroes. The store supplies heroes with their basic needs, and would include some of the weapons and gadgets that were created from the previous activity. Allow students the opportunity to read and analyze current store flyers to understand the codes and conventions that should be used on their own flyer. For example, have students investigate how catchy slogans, organizational features, and text features work together effectively to promote the store and its products.

Tell students to use the planning sheet on Superhero Store Planning Guide (3.1 H) to guide them in their production of the store flyer. Flyers can be created by hand or electronically.

Instruct students to complete the peer/self reflection sheet on Self and Peer Assessment of the Store Flyer for Superheroes (3.2 H).

Hand out Exit Card (3.3 H), and tell students that they must complete and hand in this worksheet before they leave class today.

ACTIVISM

Encourage students to continue contributing to a classroom/school bulletin board that celebrates the heroes in the community. Students could find examples of heroes that have “branded” themselves, or have created a positive identity based on the social work they do and the way they represent themselves in a public manner.

ASSESSMENT OPPORTUNITIES

- Self and Peer Assessment of the Store Flyer for Superheroes (3.2 H)
- Exit Card (3.3 H)

IMPLIEDATIONS FOR FUTURE LESSONS/HOMWORK/EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

View the National Film Board Documentary about Hannah Taylor and the LadyBug Foundation. The film, titled “Hanna’s Story,” can be viewed on-line at www.nfb.ca/film/hannahs_story/

This is the story about Hannah Taylor, who helped establish a charity that has raised over a million dollars to date. Have students discuss what her weapon of power might be. How have her hand-crafted jars (to collect donations) become part of her identity? Is Hannah Taylor a real-life superhero?

CROSS CURRICULAR CONNECTIONS

- Reading
- Oral Language
- Writing
- Art
MATERIALS AND RESOURCES

- Collect a range of comic books that are suitable for this age group. Alternatively, have students bring their own favourite comic books to use for this lesson.
- Collect a range of story flyers. Toy store flyers and electronic store flyers would be ideal for this lesson.
- Students need to bring to class toys and gadgets that could be rebranded as hero gear.
- Superhero Store Planning Guide (3.1 H)
- Self and Peer Assessment of the Store Flyer for Superheroes (3.2 H)
- Exit Card (3.3 H)
- Information listed in Links / Resources

TERMINOLOGY/BACKGROUND FOR TEACHERS

- EXIT CARDS: Written student responses to questions posed at the end of a class or learning activity. Students put their names on cards and respond to a question(s) given by the teacher. Students give their Exit Cards to the teacher before they leave the classroom.

LINKS / RESOURCES

- National Film Board Documentary - “Hanna’s Story”
  www.nfb.ca/film/hannahs_story/
# SUPERHERO STORE PLANNING GUIDE

**Name of Superhero Store:**  

**Target Audience:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUPER HERO GEAR</th>
<th>CATCHY SLOGANS RELATED TO THE PRODUCT</th>
<th>ORGANIZATIONAL LAYOUT</th>
<th>TEXT FEATURES THAT WILL BE USED</th>
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Media Literacy: *Grade 4-6*
### SELF AND PEER ASSESSMENT OF THE STORE FLYER FOR SUPERHEROES

| The store flyer is visually appealing and attracts the target audience. |
| The flyer copy uses effective slogans, phrases and words. |
| The flyer effectively includes superhero gear that persuades the audience to buy the product. |
| The organizational layout is clear and includes important information. |

### COMMENTS:
EXIT CARD:

Draw an illustration or a symbolic representation of the most important idea you gained from understanding the power behind superhero weapons and gadgets.
LESSON 4: POWER AND CELEBRITY GEAR

40 minutes

CURRICULUM EXPECTATIONS

- MEDIA LITERACY – INTERPRETING MESSAGES
  o 1.2 – Use overt and implied messages to draw inferences and construct meaning in media texts.
- MEDIA LITERACY – METACOGNITION
  o 4.1 – Identify what strategies they found most helpful in making sense of and creating media texts, and explain how these and other strategies can help them improve as media viewers/listeners/producers.

KEY CONCEPTS AND QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- All texts are constructions. What is written is the product of many decisions and determining factors. Much of our view of reality is based on messages that have been constructed in this way, with the author’s attitudes, interpretations, and conclusions already built into the texts.
- How are images of celebrities constructed to represent power and influence? How can I construct an image of myself that shows power?

INTRODUCTION/OVERVIEW

In this lesson, students are using the ideas of power from the fantasy world to make connections to the symbols of power that are represented in the photographs of celebrities. From accessories to weapons to the use of colour, students will reflect on how these photographs are constructed to reflect power and influence. Students will be given the opportunity to think about how they might construct and create photographs of themselves that represent power.

TEACHING/LEARNING STRATEGIES

ANALYSIS – Explain to students that they will be analyzing the symbols of power and influence that are represented in images of celebrities. Hand out Celebrities (4.1 H), and instruct students to read the photographs and think about how these celebrities use accessories as part of their identity. Which accessories are symbols of power? How do you know?

Using See, Think, Wonder ... (4.2 H), have students document their thinking as they read each of the six photographs. Debrief this activity by asking students to work in pairs to review the photographs for the following ideas: Where might this photograph appear? What is the purpose of this photograph? Have students add these ideas to the organizer on See, Think, Wonder ... (4.2 H).

Have students bring in media texts that use celebrity images, such as magazines, newspapers, CD covers, posters, etc. Have each student choose one celebrity photograph to analyze and share with the rest of the class. Explain to students that the images should include accessories, gadgets, and other symbols that connect to their identity.

JOURNALS – Tell students to explore their celebrity image by thinking and responding to the questions on Questions to Consider When Analyzing a Photograph (4.3 H). Debrief this activity by asking students
to respond in their journals to the following questions: “How are these photographs different than the ones you have of yourself? Why?” Display the celebrity images in the classroom and have students participate in a Gallery Walk. In small groups, the students could visit the “gallery” to discuss some of their ideas and connections. Students could add additional ideas on post-its that can be added to each image.

CONSTRUCTIONS – Encourage students to bring in their own digital cameras, or provide enough cameras for one per group of four. This is an opportunity for students to construct their own celebrity photographs that illustrate power, using themselves as models. Have students think about and plan what symbols they will incorporate into the photographs to connect to their identity and illustrate a form of power. In groups of four, each student should be given the opportunity to photograph someone else, so that all group members are illustrated. When it is time for the group member to have his/her picture taken, the student must explain carefully how he/she wants the photograph to be taken. Ensure that all students are given the opportunity to be photographed and to be the photographer.

Have students reflect on the strategies they used by completing 3-2-1 Reflection (4.4 H).

ACTIVISM

Invite students to take photographs of other students in the school who have displayed random acts of kindness. Challenge students to create photographs that send strong messages about the power of kindness.

ASSESSMENT OPPORTUNITIES

- Responses to discussion prompts and journal questions
- See, Think, Wonder… (4.2 H) organizer to assess inferential thinking
- 3-2-1 Reflection (4.4 H) to assess metacognitive skills

IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE LESSONS/HOMWORK / EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

To connect student learning to the previous lessons in this unit, have students complete a response to the following quotation: “Without their gear, celebrities would lose their identity.” Encourage students to bring in examples of photographs that demonstrate the use of the three camera angles listed in the Terminology/Background for Teachers section.

CROSS CURRICULAR CONNECTIONS

- Reading
- Writing
- Oral Language
- Information Technology

MATERIALS AND RESOURCES

- Media texts that use celebrity images, such as magazines, newspapers, CD covers, posters
- Digital cameras – students may bring in their own, or the teacher may provide these
- Celebrities (4.1 H)
- See, Think, Wonder ... (4.2 H)
- Questions to Consider When Analyzing a Photograph (4.3 H)
- 3-2-1 Reflection (4.4 H)

**TERMINOLOGY/BACKGROUND FOR TEACHERS**

- **Camera Angles:**
  - *Low angle* – the camera is looking up, and creates the impression of power since the subject looks large
  - *Normal or straight angle* – the camera is looking from eye-level at the subject, and creates the impression that the subject is equal to the viewer
  - *High angle* – the camera is looking down, and the subject appears small, which creates the impression of the weakness or unimportance of the subject

**LINKS / RESOURCES**

- None for this lesson
Celebrities

T-Pain
• jewellery

Paris Hilton
• dog

Justin Bieber
• hair

Gorilla Joe
• jewellery

Fergie
• jewellery

Legally Blonde
• dog
SEE, THINK, WONDER...

What do you see?

What are you thinking?

What are you wondering about?
QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER WHEN ANALYZING A PHOTOGRAPH

- **Context**
  - When was this photo made? What is the subject? What clues are given to tell you when or where this picture was taken?

- **Characters**
  - Who or what is portrayed here? Is it a person? Animal? Symbol? What clues are given about who/what they are?

- **Colour**
  - What colours are used in this photograph? Why do you think these colours were used? What is the mood or feeling you get from these photographs? Why?

- **Composition**
  - Look at the use of space. What takes up the most space? What is in the background? What is in the foreground? What is the most important part of this photograph?

- **Camera**
  - Where was the camera positioned (high, eye level, low) when this photograph was taken? What does this suggest about the relationship between the person in the photograph and the audience (viewer)?

- **Construction**
  - Someone consciously constructed this image for a specific purpose. Who do you think made this? Why? For what audience? Who would connect with this image? Who would not?
3-2-1 REFLECTION

Student Name: ________________________________

Date: __________________________

3 strategies/ideas that I used to photograph myself to show power:

2 strategies/ideas that I used when I photographed a group member:

1 way I can improve my group work skills:
LESSON 5: FIGHTING EVIL IN VIDEO GAMES

40 minutes

CURRICULUM EXPECTATIONS

- MEDIA LITERACY – EVALUATING TEXTS
  - 1.3 – Express opinions about ideas, issues, and/or experiences from the texts to support their opinions.
- MEDIA LITERACY – UNDERSTANDING MEDIA FORMS
  - 2.1 – Identify elements and characteristics of some media forms.

KEY CONCEPTS AND QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- Each medium develops its own “language” in order to position readers/viewers in certain ways. Demographic factors such as age, culture, gender and socio-economic status as well as prior experience and knowledge play a role in how we interpret a message.
- How are power, conflict and violence represented in video game trailers?

INTRODUCTION/OVERVIEW

Is fighting evil with compassion and integrity less exciting than using bombs, blades, and guns? This lesson will focus on the representation of conflict in video games. Students will view a selection of video game trailers to understand the codes and conventions of this medium. A deeper analysis will involve a comparison of the jolts per minute found in some favourite video games, and an understanding of how this relates to attracting and appealing to a target audience.

TEACHING/LEARNING STRATEGIES

INFORMATION SOURCES – Ask students from where they receive their information about new video games. Create a list of the sources on the blackboard or chart paper. Ask students to think about their video game experiences and to fill out the survey on Video Game Trailers Survey (5.1 H).

When everyone is finished filling in the survey, collect the papers. Have a small group of students tabulate and present the results to the rest of the class. Follow with a discussion of some of their favourite video games. Create a list on chart paper for activity number 3.

TRAILERS – Explain to students that they will be viewing a number of video game trailers. Ask them:

- What is the purpose of a video game trailer?
- What are some of the features that we would expect to see in a video game trailer (i.e., music, action, montage of images, voice over narration)?

View as many of the following trailers as possible:

- Ben 10 Alien Force Rise of Hex Gameplay: www.youtube.com/watch?v=mA6wNibbxAc
- The Sims 3 E3 2010 Trailer: www.youtube.com/watch?v=b-0Ze4cHxSI
- HydroThunder Hurricane Trailer: www.youtube.com/watch?v=FANEQRvkABc&feature=fvst
- Nancy Drew Trail of the Twister Trailer: www.youtube.com/watch?v=IrWz-lh35AM
- Megaman 10 Trailer: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=clmYt-Ce8ss](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=clmYt-Ce8ss)
- Toy Story 3 – The Video game trailer: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=dEl9NXnJJro](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dEl9NXnJJro)

**JOLTS** – Have students focus their initial viewing on the structure of the video game trailers. Tell students that video game trailers tell the story of a video game in a highly condensed form, with maximum appeal. Write on the board: *A jolt in media refers to the surprising or fast-paced moment that will generate excitement in the audience.* Brainstorm with the class a list of examples of what a jolt might be. The list should include:

- a violent act
- motivating language
- quick film cuts
- flashes of colour
- exciting music

Have students keep score of the number of jolts per minute they count as they view the trailers, using **Jolts in Trailers (5.2 H)** as a viewing and recording guide for this activity. You should act as the time-keeper for this activity.

Tell students that they now will view a few of the trailers a second time, and they will focus their viewing on three features:

- voice over narration
- use of music,
- use of cast

Divide the class into three large groups, and assign one of the features to each group. Encourage students to jot down their ideas as they view the trailers, and to support how that feature is used to create an effective video game trailer. When the viewing is finished, allow the group members time to compare their ideas and answers. When they are ready, ask one student from each group to summarize their group’s observations.

**CHOICE BOARD** – Hand out **Choice Board (5.3 H)**, and read over the options with the class. Instruct students to choose the questions to which they would like to respond. There are many entry points available for students on this choice board, based on experience and interest level.

**JOURNAL** – Instruct students to write a response journal that explains their ideas and their answers the questions they have chosen. Hand out **Response Journal Rubric for Choice Board (5.4 H)**, to show how this journal will be evaluated.

**ACTIVISM**

Have students share their learning at the school’s parent meeting or other appropriate venue. Parents would benefit greatly from learning about the critical thinking skills that their children have used to understand the representation of power, conflict and violence in their favourite video games. Have students generate small group questions to promote discussion about this topic with their parents and other family members.
ASSESSMENT OPPORTUNITIES

- Oral discussions as a class and in small group contexts
- Jolts in Trailers (5.2 H) worksheet
- Response Journal Rubric for Choice Board (5.4 H)

IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE LESSONS/HOMWORK / EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

Currently, a definition of video game trailer is not represented in Wikipedia. Challenge students to create a definition for this term. Allow students the opportunity to view similar terms on Wikipedia to determine the form and structure of an appropriate entry.

CROSS CURRICULAR CONNECTIONS

- Information Technology
- Music

MATERIALS AND RESOURCES

- Data projector or SMARTboard
- Internet connectivity will be necessary for this lesson.
- Video Game Trailers Survey (5.1 H)
- Jolts in Trailers (5.2 H)
- Choice Board (5.3 H)
- Response Journal Rubric for Choice Board (5.4 H)
- Information listed in Links / Resources

TERMINOLOGY/BACKGROUND FOR TEACHERS

- **Video game**: A type of game existing as and controlled by software, usually run by a video game console or a computer, and played on a video terminal or television screen. Controlled by a paddle, joystick, joypad, mouse, keyboard, or a combination of any of these input devices
- **Video Game Trailer**: A mini-movie or sampler created from excerpts from a video game, designed to promote and sell the game.
- **Jolt**: a surprising or fast-paced moment that generates excitement in the audience, caused by a violent act, motivating language, quick film cuts, flashes of colour, or exciting music

LINKS / RESOURCES

- Common Sense Media – Access to additional age-related video game trailers
  www.commonsensemedia.org/by-age/preteen-bys

- YouTube
  - Ben 10 Alien Force Rise of Hex Gameplay
    www.youtube.com/watch?v=mA6wNibbxAc
  - The Sims 3 E3 2010 Trailer
    www.youtube.com/watch?v=b-OZe4cHxSl
- 33 -

**HydroThunder Hurricane Trailer**
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=FANeQRvkABc&feature=fvst](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FANeQRvkABc&feature=fvst)

**Nancy Drew Trail of the Twister Trailer**
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=lrWz-lh35AM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lrWz-lh35AM)

**Megaman 10 Trailer**
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=clmYt-Ce8ss](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=clmYt-Ce8ss)

**Toy Story 3: The Video game trailer**
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=dEl9NXnJJro](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dEl9NXnJJro)
I find out from my friends which video games I should buy.

I wait until I have viewed the video game trailer before I decide to buy it.

I enjoy watching video game trailers online. I even visit the video game website.

I always read the video game reviews in the paper or online before I decide to buy it.

I enjoy playing video games with friends more than by myself.

I prefer the fighting parts in video games more than the puzzle solving parts.
JOLTS IN TRAILERS

A jolt in media refers to a surprising or fast-paced moment that generates excitement in the audience. A jolt can be a violent act, motivating language, quick film cuts, flashes of colour, or exciting music.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Video Game Trailer</th>
<th>Length of Trailer</th>
<th>Number of Jolts (e.g., IIIII, II)</th>
<th>Jolts Per Minute</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>1.</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Do any of the games you play have stereotypes? If so, give some specific examples from a video game. In your opinion is there anything realistic about this game? Are stereotypes harmful?

Choose a video game that uses cartoon violence. Do you think explosions and laser beams scare children? Do you accept that cartoon violence is just part of a kid’s action game?

Some video games are based on movies or television shows. Can you play and enjoy this type of game without watching the movie or show? Are licensed games only for fans of the shows to which games are connected? Give an example of a video game to support your answer.

Do any of the games you play have a player creation tool that allows you to create an avatar? If so, what is the name of the game and describe your avatar. Are any of the avatars you have created based on real people? Why did you create these avatars?

Choose a game that you think has equal parts fighting and puzzle-solving. Which part do you like better? Can those two different types of games work well together? Explain, using examples from a video game and your own experience.

Do you feel that fighting against robots is less disturbing than fighting against people? Are some superheroes more heroic than others? How does a superhero like Iron Man, who uses rockets and lasers, compare to a superhero like Spiderman or Batman, who fight hand-to-hand more often? Is there a difference in how they appear to kids in video games?

Think of an example of a video game that rewards bad behaviour. What is the name of the video game? List some examples of bad behaviour that you feel gets rewarded. Does it make it okay if bad behaviour is silly and cartoon-like? Use examples from a video game to support your answer.

Choose a racing game to investigate. Who is the target audience? What is appealing about this game? Do you think that young players’ driving habits maybe influenced by the sort of racing seen in realistic driving videos? Do you think that fantasy racing games that don’t feature cars pose the same risk? Use examples from a video game to support your answer.
## RESPONSE JOURNAL RUBRIC FOR CHOICE BOARD

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LEVEL</th>
<th>CRITERIA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 4     | - Complete entry that fully addresses one of the options on the choice board  
       | - Entry demonstrates a thorough understanding of the issue, and supports ideas with specific examples  
       | - Opinions and ideas are expressed clearly and effectively |
| 3     | - Complete entry that addresses one of the options on the choice board  
       | - Entry demonstrates a good understanding of the issue, and supports ideas with specific examples  
       | - Opinions and ideas are expressed clearly |
| 2     | - Entry is only partially complete  
       | - Demonstrates some evidence of understanding of the issue, and supports ideas with specific examples  
       | - Opinions and ideas are unclear at times |
| 1     | - Entry is incomplete  
       | - Little evidence of understanding of the issue  
       | - Opinions and ideas are not expressed clearly or effectively |

**LEVEL:**  
**COMMENTS:**
LESSON 6: FROM SUPERHEROES TO STUNT JUNKIES: DON’T TRY THIS AT HOME!

40 minutes

CURRICULUM EXPECTATIONS

- MEDIA LITERACY – AUDIENCE RESPONSES
  o 1.4 – Explain why different audiences might respond differently to specific media texts
- MEDIA LITERACY – CONVENTIONS AND TECHNIQUES
  o 3.3 – Identify conventions and techniques appropriate to the form chosen for a media text they plan to create

KEY CONCEPTS AND QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- Each Person interprets messages differently. Demographic factors such as age, culture, gender and socio-economic status as well as prior experience and knowledge play a role in how we interpret a message.
- How might young children respond differently than teenagers to the elements of risk and danger in some reality television shows?

INTRODUCTION/OVERVIEW

This lesson focuses on the appeal and the excitement of the dangerous stunts and the extreme sports that we see represented in some of the reality television shows that appeal to this age group. Students will consider the features of the television show medium to understand how fast-paced reality shows represent positive and negative consequences of competition. How do different people respond to and question the content and safety concerns of these shows? Do some reality shows glamorize danger?

TEACHING/LEARNING STRATEGIES

REALITY TV – Tell students that they will be investigating some of the ideas, messages, and features of a reality television show. Ask students the following questions:

- How they might define this term?
- How are reality shows different from a situation comedy, or a documentary, or a talk show?
- Why do we enjoy reality television?

SMALL GROUPS – Arrange students to work in small groups of four. Using Reality TV (6.1 H), have students consider the list of some of the Reality Shows. Tell students that this only represents 30 titles from a possible 130 reality shows aimed for children ages 9-11. As a group, students will create an organizer that sorts this list into categories, based on any criteria agreed upon by the group. Students are encouraged to add additional television titles to their categories. Debrief this activity by asking students to share their lists with the others in the class. Ask Students:

- What categories were chosen?
- What kinds of conflict are demonstrated in reality television?
- What kinds of shows are missing from this list? Why?
AUDIENCE RESPONSES – Divide the class into groups of nine students. Hand out Role Cards for Viewing (6.2 H). Tell students that their task is to understand different audience responses. Before viewing the trailers for Who Wants to be a Superhero?, Worst-Case Scenario, and Stunt Junkies: Go Big or Go Home, listed in the Links/Resources section, each group should divide up the role cards, one per person. These cards indicate the point of view or the perspective they will be using as they view the trailers. Each student should jot down his/her ideas to the questions on the top of the page of Role Cards for Viewing (6.2 H), in the box with the name of the role he/she assumed. After viewing, allow time for students to discuss and to complete their jot notes, adding details for the other points of view. The trailers to be used for this activity may be viewed at the websites listed in the Links/Resources section.

Debrief this activity by focusing the discussion on the representation of danger. Ask students:

- Do any of these reality shows offer an accurate representation of what life is like?
- Does the element of risk make these shows more exciting?
- What kind of training do you think is required for some of the stunts represented in these clips?
- Does watching these kinds of reality shows make you feel like copying what you see?
- Do women participate in extreme sports?
- Do you think more men participate in these kinds of risky behaviours than women? Why or why not?
- Do you feel that these clips of reality shows glamorize danger?
- What similarities and differences did you notice in the perspectives for viewing the trailers that you examined?

Suggest why these similarities and differences occurred. What does the creator of a reality show have to consider when trying to appeal to a specific audience?

PITCH – Have students work in small groups to plan a pitch for a new television reality show. The reality show should involve children ages 9-11 competing in tasks that promote safe and exciting competition. Hand out Create a Plan for a Reality TV Show (6.3 H), and instruct the groups to use these instructions to create and present their pitch.

Hand out Rubric – Create a Plan for a Reality TV Show (6.4 H), which may be used to evaluate a written or an oral presentation of the pitch.

ACTIVISM

Challenge students to think of ways to use what they have learned about reality shows, to raise donations for a local community cause. How might different classes compete against each other to raise awareness and money?

ASSESSMENT OPPORTUNITIES

- Group Work Skills, Oral Language
- Role Cards for Viewing (6.2 H) – Participation in group viewing activity
- Rubric – Create a Plan for a Reality TV Show (6.4 H)
IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE LESSONS/HOMWORK / EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

Have students design a website for a reality television show. What might the home page include? Students also could create a summary of the program for the website, TV Guide, or for a magazine publication.

CROSS CURRICULAR CONNECTIONS

- Oral Language
- Writing
- Visual Arts
- Information Technology

MATERIALS AND RESOURCES

- Data projector or SMARTboard for viewing trailers
- Trailers are listed in step 2 of Teaching/Learning Strategies
- Reality TV (6.1 H)
- Role Cards for Viewing (6.2 H)
- Create a Plan for a Reality TV Show (6.3 H)
- Rubric – Create a Plan for a Reality TV Show (6.4 H)
- Information listed in Links / Resources

TERMINOLOGY/BACKGROUND FOR TEACHERS

- Reality Television: a genre of television programming that presents unscripted dramatic or humorous situations, documents actual events, and usually features ordinary people instead of professional actors.

LINKS / RESOURCES

- Common Sense Media – TV Show Reviews (information about reality television shows targeted to the 9-11 age group):
  www.commonsensemedia.org/tv-reviews/preteen-tv/reality-tv?action=new-releases

- Youtube
  - Who wants to be a superhero?
    www.youtube.com/watch?v=vgzSZjAqAQ
  - Worst-Case Scenario
    www.youtube.com/watch?v=u-Y113MT3W4

- TV Rage
  - Stunt Junkies: Go Big or Go Home
    www.tvrage.com/Stunt_Junkies
Here is a list of some Reality Television Shows. In your group, create an organizer that sorts this list into categories, based on any criteria that your group chooses. Feel free to add additional television titles to your categories.

**Reality TV**

- Say Yes to the Dress
- Ice-T’s Rap School
- Mall Cops: Mall of America
- America’s Got Talent
- Deadliest Catch
- Man vs. wild
- Inedible to Incredible
- Ultimate Car Build-off
- Lottery Changed My Life
- Battle of the Wedding Designers
- Bert the Conqueror
- Dual Survival
- Kate Plus Eight
- Expedition Great White
- America’s Best Dance Crew
- The Next Best Thing – Celebrity Impersonation
- MTVs Little Talent Show
- Take Home Chef
- Extreme Makeover: Home Edition
- The Haunted
- Dancing with the Stars
- So You Think You Can Dance
- Cake Boss
- Toddlers and Tiaras
- Diners, Drive-Ins, and Dives
- American Idol
- Flip This House
- Who Wants to be a Superhero?
- Worst-Case Scenario
- Stunt Junkies: Go Big or Go Home
ROLE CARDS FOR VIEWING

As you view these three Reality Show trailers, think about how each of the identified people might respond.

- Would the person like the trailer?
- What message might the person understand?
- What questions might the person have?

JOT DOWN YOUR GROUP’S IDEAS TO THESE QUESTIONS IN THE CORRESPONDING BOXES.

11 year old boy  
11 year old girl  
film producer  

parent  
doctor  
teenager  

police officer  
6 year old child  
an alien
**CREATE A PLAN FOR A REALITY TV SHOW**

Your group will work together to create a pitch for a new reality television show. The purpose will be to use this television form to promote safe competition. The target audience for this show is 9-11 year olds, and the show will feature this age group as contestants.

**PLAN YOUR REALITY SHOW**

List the different parts of your show, and decide who in your group will produce each piece. You will need to include the following information in your pitch:

- A title that illustrates the show’s idea and that attracts the target audience
- A plan that describes the different elements of the show
- A description of how you will create a reality show that is exciting, competitive, and attractive to the target audience
- List three challenges in which the contestants might be involved. Remember to balance healthy and safe competition with good sportsman-like behaviour.
- An explanation of how the winner will be determined, and the prize for the winning team

**START BRAINSTORMING YOUR GROUP’S IDEAS HERE!**
# Rubric – Create a Plan for a Reality TV Show

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LEVEL</th>
<th>CRITERIA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 4     | - Complete plan appeals to the audience in an effective and exciting manner  
       | - Includes appropriate challenges that promote healthy competition  
       | - Includes all the features of a reality TV show  
       | - Ideas are presented thoroughly and clearly |
| 3     | - Complete plan appeals to the audience in an effective manner  
       | - Includes appropriate challenges  
       | - Includes most features of a reality TV show  
       | - Ideas are expressed clearly |
| 2     | - Entry is only partially complete  
       | - Includes some appropriate challenges  
       | - Includes a few of the features of a reality TV show  
       | - Ideas are unclear at times |
| 1     | - Entry is incomplete  
       | - Little evidence of appropriate challenges  
       | - Little evidence of the features of a reality TV show  
       | - Ideas are not expressed clearly or effectively. |

**LEVEL:**  
**COMMENTS:**
LESSON 7: WHAT’S UP WITH PARKOUR?

40 minutes

CURRICULUM EXPECTATIONS

- MEDIA LITERACY – CONVENTIONS AND TECHNIQUES
  o 2.2 – Identify the conventions and techniques used in a variety of media forms and explain how they help convey meaning and influence or engage the audience.
- MEDIA LITERACY – PRODUCTION PERSPECTIVES
  o 1.6 – Identify who produces various media texts, the reason for their production, how they are produced, and how they are funded.

KEY CONCEPTS AND QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- Texts serve different interests. Most media messages are created for profit or to persuade, but all texts are produced intentionally for a purpose. These interests can be commercial, ideological or political.
- Who benefits from the commercialization of parkour? Who is disadvantaged?

INTRODUCTION/OVERVIEW

This lesson will give students the opportunity to understand how the stunts, the acrobatics, and the risk-taking behaviours explored in the fantasy world of superheroes, look in real-life. Parkour is a newly-created extreme sport that requires the athletes to move through urban structures by vaulting over railings and climbing walls. Looking very superhero-like, these athletes are highly skilled and extensively trained. Students then will consider how this extreme sport has inspired video games, running shoes, and plotlines for movies and television.

Note to teacher: If you have not heard of parkour, please review the information provided in the Terminology/Background for Teachers and Links/Resources sections before delivering this lesson.

TEACHING/LEARNING STRATEGIES

INFERRING MEANING – Write the word parkour on the board (pronounced par-koor). Ask: Has anyone heard of the term parkour? Show the class a hardcopy photo or projected image of someone engaging in this activity. In small groups, have the students clarify their understanding of this term. Ask the students for their ideas and write them on the board. Be careful not to define the word for them or give them too much information if they have not heard of parkour.

Hand out It’s a Jungle Gym Out There (7.1 H), and instruct students to read the four “chunks” of information. Explain to students that these come from “Parkour Toronto”. Without giving any additional clues, ask students to think of what the term might mean. Again, sample student responses and write these on the board before referring students to the handout again to determine the sources of these four chunks of information (i.e., Newspaper headline, magazine article, etc.).

Hand out What is Parkour? (7.2 H). Ask students to write down what they think the definition of parkour might be, based on the discussion and information so far. Remind students that they will be referring to this handout several times to add details/modify their thinking.
Tell students that they will be viewing a video of parkour. They must focus their viewing on the categories found on What is Parkour? (7.2 H). This is another opportunity for them to build their knowledge through a different medium. They must focus their viewing on new information that will help them build a definition, and that will provide characteristics and examples of parkour. The following video may need to be viewed twice before students begin to discuss their ideas.

Best of David Belle’s videos: www.youtube.com/watch?v=x98jCBnWO8w&feature=related

After viewing, ask students:

- Who do you think created this video?
- For what purpose?
- Who is the target audience?
- How does this video appeal to its audience?
- How might a person interpret this video differently from the way it was intended?
- How is this video different than/same as other YouTube videos?
- How has YouTube influenced this sport?

JOURNALS – Ask students to respond in their journals to two final questions:

- How is David Belle like a superhero?
- How is David Belle not like a superhero?

Ask students how Hollywood might use this kind of extreme sport. Have students brainstorm a list of movies that have used parkour-like acrobatics. Tell students that they are about to view two commercials that use David Belle and his skills. They will use Focused Viewing Notes Organizer for Commercials (7.3 H) to focus their viewing.

GROUP WORK – Divide the class into six groups. Assign to each group one element to focus their viewing (i.e., camera angles and movement, composition, sound and music, audience and message, construction, and symbols). Group members first will discuss the focus questions, and then will take notes as they view the videos (see list in Links/Resources). Note to teacher: This activity could also be done as a Jigsaw or Gallery Walk. For more information about these strategies, see the Terms/Background for Teachers section. Organizers should still be used with either of these teaching strategies.

GROUP SHARING – After viewing, allow students to discuss, in their groups, their observations and analyses. View commercials a second and third time if necessary. Ask groups to share their conclusions with the class by providing a brief summary of their discussions. As each group presents, the rest of class will add notes to their organizers.

Conclude this viewing activity by asking students how these commercials the same as/different than the videos of parkour shown at the beginning of the lesson?

ACTIVISM

Have the students share their learning with the students in the primary division. How can your students teach the younger students how to play safely on the playground equipment? Arrange for mixed level groups of students to work together to provide safety guidelines for your school.
Assessment Opportunities

- Group Skills Checklist for Discussion (7.4 H)

Implications for Future Lessons/Homework / Extension Activities

Have students consolidate their learning from this unit by creating a continuum line of media texts. Provide them with the list of terms: movies, reality TV shows, superheroes, youtube videos, video games, parkour. Tell students to draw a line on their page. At one end they will write Fantasy, and at the other end they will write Reality. Their task is to place all the terms on the list on this continuum line, to show the progression from fantasy to reality. Which items are more fantastical, and which are more realistic? Encourage students to give their reasons for the placement of each of the items on the list. See below for an example continuum.

Cross Curricular Connections

- Reading
- Writing
- Oral Language
- Visual Arts
- Physical Education

Materials and Resources

- Information listed in Links / Resources
- Data projector or SMARTboard
- It’s a jungle gym out there (7.1 H)
- What is Parkour? (7.2 H)
- Focused Viewing Notes Organizer for Commercials (7.3 H)
- Group Skills Checklist for Discussion (7.4 H)

Terminology/Background for Teacher

- **Parkour** Background and Definitions:
  - Parkour is a French word meaning *l’art du déplacement* (art of movement). Parkour originated as a non-competitive sport in France, originally called *le parcours*, with the concept for the sport resembling the military training obstacle courses, or the *parcours de combattant*. It is the physical discipline of training to overcome any obstacle within one’s path by adapting one's movements to the environment.
  - Participants run along a route, attempting to negotiate obstacles in the most efficient way possible. Skills such as jumping and climbing, or the more specific parkour moves are employed. The goal of a practitioner of parkour, called a *traceur* if male, or *traceuse* if female, is to get from one place to another using only the human body and the objects.
in the environment. The obstacles can be anything in one’s environment, but parkour is often seen practiced in urban areas because of the many suitable public structures available such as buildings and rails. (Wikipedia)

- **Parkour:** is a discipline that aids in passing obstacles. To move from one place to another using only the possibilities of the human body. Practitioners (known as traceurs) train their bodies and minds to move about their environment with efficiency. In an emergency situation where someone might try to reach a spot by running up stairs and down set walk ways – a traceur would use their skills to find a quicker alternative. Instead of using the stairs they might swiftly leap or climb to the next level. Parkour allows one to see things like walls, buildings, and fences as part of their pathway rather than something that is blocking them. Much conditioning is needed in order to beautifully execute maneuvers that could possibly be harmful to one’s body. Practice of safe landing, precise motion, reaction time, balance, explosiveness, and strength are all involved in parkour training. (Parkour British Columbia)

- **Gallery walk strategy:** a teaching strategy that enables students to explore multiple texts or images that are placed around the room. Have students work in groups to generate information on particular topics. This information should be displayed on chart paper. Once groups have finished recording their information, have students display their work “gallery-style” – in a way that allows students to disperse themselves around the room, with several students clustering around a particular text. Texts can be hung on walls or placed on tables. The most important factor is that the texts are spread far enough apart to reduce significant crowding. Have students walk with their groups through the gallery, allowing time for them to stop and read at each station. Teachers can provide students with instructions for recording information from each station, or can just allow them to pass through and read the content

- **Jigsaw strategy:** consists of students in “home” groups of three to five to address a topic of study. Each student from the home group meets with a member from each of the other home groups to form an “expert” group. Each expert group is assigned a particular aspect of the topic to explore, discuss, and summarize. Students then return to their “home” groups and teach what they have learned to their group members. Individual accountability is created by requiring students to complete a summary, or do a report or quiz. Group accountability is created by having the group share or present a summary for others

**Links/Resources**

- **YouTube – CBC News Report on Parkour**
  - www.youtube.com/watch?v=P6OorYtltTw
  - www.youtube.com/watch?v=B8qgn0mc7gg&feature=related

- **YouTube – David Belle (Canadian originator of Parkour) videos**
  - Best of David Belle’s videos: www.youtube.com/watch?v=x98jCBnWO8w&feature=related
  - David Belle Commercial: www.youtube.com/watch?v=5BOUohniyJU&feature=related
  - David Belle-Rush Hour Parkour (BBC): www.youtube.com/watch?v=SAMAr8y-Vtw&feature=related

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Media Literacy: Grade 4-6
- Wikipedia – Parkour
  http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parkour

- Parkour Toronto
  www.pkto.ca/articles.php
  www.pkto.ca/parkour.php

- Parkour British Columbia
  http://pkbc.ca/about

- Straight to the Bar website has other commercials using Parkour

- Internet Movie Database – District B13 (gang movie about Parkour)
  www.imdb.com/title/tt0414852/
It's a jungle gym out there

In the growing discipline of parkour, railings become gymnastics bars and trash cans become vault boxes as adrenaline junkies treat the city as their playground.

The activity was born of urban ennui in the mid-1980s when two restless teenagers, David Belle and Sébastien Foucan, started tearing around the Paris suburb of Lisses. Partly inspired by Mr. Belle's soldier father, parkour took its name from parcours du combatant, the term for the French military's training courses.

(REFERENCE: INFORMATION FROM PARKOUR TORONTO)
WHAT IS PARKOUR?

What is your definition of Parkour?

What are some characteristics of Parkour?

Examples:

Non-examples:
**FOCUSED VIEWING NOTES ORGANIZER FOR COMMERCIALS**

**TITLE OF COMMERCIAL:** ________________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FOCUS</th>
<th>NOTES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Camera Angles and Movement</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What kinds of camera angles are used?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What feelings and mood do they create?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the effect on the viewer?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Composition</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What elements are included?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is missing?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why do you think the creators did this?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sound and Music</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What sounds and/or music are used (or not used)?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How does what you hear help to communicate the message of this film?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Audience and Message</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who is the target audience? How do you know?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What message did the creators want the viewer to understand?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What helped you to draw that conclusion?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Construction</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How have the producers of this film constructed reality for the viewer?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Symbols</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What symbols do you recognize in this film?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What effect do these have on the viewer?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Adapted from A Guide to Effective Literacy Instruction Grades 4 to 6 Volume 7 - Media Literacy (2008)*
## GROUP SKILLS CHECKLIST FOR DISCUSSION

**Student Name:** ____________________________________________

**Date:** ____________________________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DURING GROUP DISCUSSIONS:</th>
<th>EXAMPLES OF MY BEHAVIOUR:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I participate actively in the group.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I listen carefully.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I ask questions.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I connect my ideas to the comments of others.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I support opinions with evidence.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**I can improve my group discussion skills by doing the following things:**

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*ADAPTED FROM A GUIDE TO EFFECTIVE LITERACY INSTRUCTION, GRADES 4-6, VOLUME 2*