CATEGORIES AND SAMPLE QUESTIONS FOR MEDIA DECODING
DEVELOPING HABITS OF INQUIRY AND REFLECTION

AUTHORSHIP & PURPOSES

- Who made this and for what purposes?
- What do they want me to do, think or feel?
- Who is the target audience?

ECONOMICS

- Who paid for this?
- Who might make money from this and how?

CONTENT

- What are the messages about _____?
- What values, ideas and biases are overt or implied?
- What is left out that might be important to know?
- Whose voices are included and whose are left out?
- How does this compare to other messages on this topic?

TECHNIQUES

- What techniques are used to communicate the messages?
- Why might they have chosen to use those techniques?
- Was this crafted to trigger emotions, if so, how and why?

CONTEXT

- When was this created and how was it shared?
- What aspects of historical or cultural context are relevant to consider?
- How does this reinforce or counter cultural norms?
- How does the technology or media form (social media, print, TV, etc.) impact the message?

CREDIBILITY

- Is this fact, opinion, or something else (fiction, satire, etc.)?
- What are the sources of the ideas or assertions?
- How do I know this is believable or accurate?
- Is this a trustworthy source about this particular topic?
- How might I confirm this information using reliable sources?

EFFECTS

- How does this make me feel and why?
- What impact might this have on others or on society?
- Who might this message benefit? Who might it harm?

INTERPRETATIONS

- How and why might different people interpret this differently?
- How do my experiences and identity shape my interpretation?
- Do I have an open mind on this? Why or why not?
- What do I learn about myself from my interpretation or reaction?

RESPONSES

- What questions do I have about this?
- What knowledge do I need to fully understand this? How do I find that information?
- Will I share this? If so, how and with whom? If not, why not?
- What kinds of actions might I take in response to this?

FOLLOW UP WITH...

- What is my evidence?
- Why do I think that?
- How could I find that out?
- Why might this matter?

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