

Dear Elementary Teachers,

For over two decades, [Project Look Sharp](#), a mission-driven not-for-profit **media literacy** organization at Ithaca College, has been collaborating with educators to provide free, inquiry-based, standards-aligned **media analysis lessons** that integrate core subject area content and skills with [habits of critical questioning](#). Recently, we have been focusing on the needs of early elementary students and teachers with new media literacy lessons and resources specifically for our youngest students.

Thanks to Faith Rogow, author of [Media Literacy for Young Children: Teaching Beyond the Screen Time Debates](#), we now have a version of our [Key Questions](#) for media analysis specifically [for early childhood](#). [Sign up](#) for our e-mail list for periodic announcements about new resources for media literacy with early elementary students.

Below you will find an overview of our lessons for Early Elementary followed by an introduction to the purpose and pedagogy of [our approach](#), ending with information about our free professional development resources for [Constructivist Media Decoding](#).

THE LESSONS:

We currently have over [40 lessons for early elementary](#) that incorporate [question-based media analysis](#) into the teaching of diverse subjects. For instance, teach about nutrition in K-1 using lessons in our kit, [Critical Thinking and Health](#), or core science through lessons in our kit, [Media Construction of Sustainability](#).

Below are just some of our **newest lessons** for early elementary. Click on any title below to get a brief description and to download all the teaching materials.

For Early Elementary:

[Internet Messages About Toys: What's the Purpose?](#)

[Mr. Rogers: What Do We Do When Our Feelings Are Hurt?](#)

[First Contact: Who's Telling the Story?](#)

[What's in My Lunchbox?](#)

[Wash Your Hands – What's the Right Way?](#)

[What can you tell from a Book Cover?](#)

[Dinosaurs: What's True and What's Not?](#)

You can [search](#) our lessons by grade level, subject area and keyword and filter your search by media type, educational standards, and much more. All our lessons provide **rich media** - such as short video clips, social media posts, songs, paintings, sculptures, photographs, and excerpts from books, magazines, websites, films, TV shows, etc. – to **teach both core subject area content and media literacy**.

CONSTRUCTIVIST MEDIA DECODING:

Our [constructivist approach](#) is particularly effective for leading civil and reflective document-based analysis about **challenging topics**. Our lessons and methodology help students learn to habitually ask key questions; assess truth, credibility, and accuracy in media messages; and become **metacognitive** about their own thinking.

We believe that the critical analysis of all media messages - from books to blogs, TV to TikTok - must become habitual for all our students. Students need **continual practice** in asking [critical thinking questions](#) such as;

- *What does this tell me about _____?*
- *Who is telling this story?*
- *How do I know what they are saying is true?*
- *How does this make me feel?*
- *What can we do to change the story?*

For this kind of self-reflective critical analysis to become ingrained, we need to have students practice this questioning, in age-appropriate ways, from kindergarten through 12th grade, and in diverse subject areas. And we need effective and **efficient methodologies and free materials** to support the integration of media analysis into the core curriculum – helping us to teach what we already teach in ways that **engage more students** more effectively.

Project Look Sharp has published over [500 media analysis lessons](#) on our website and over [70 professional development resources](#) for this purpose. All of our lessons – including the lesson plans, media materials, and student handouts – are grant-funded so we can make them available **FREE for educators** through the [Project Look Sharp](#) website. All educators need to do is set up an [account](#).

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES:

Project Look Sharp also has short, annotated [video demonstrations](#) of classroom media decoding for different subjects. These include demonstrations of in-person as well as [virtual media decoding](#). Elementary level demonstration videos include:

- [Gender in children's commercials](#)

- [First contact between Europeans and Native Americans](#)
- [Paintings of King George and George Washington](#)
- [Decoding Money](#)
- [Elementary Level Online Media Decoding](#)

We are planning to add demonstrations of media decoding with the youngest students in the spring of 2023. [Sign-up](#) on our list to get updates on these and other new materials.

These videos are just part of our extensive free [professional development materials](#), including:

- [Handouts](#), including [Key Questions for Media Analysis](#) that can be made into posters for your library or classrooms.
- [Articles, webinars](#) and a [DIY Guide](#) for creating your own media decoding lessons.

Please consider signing up for a [free account](#) to fully view our lessons and get added to our [email list](#) so that you will get periodic notices about new lessons and resources. And please pass on the word about [Project Look Sharp](#). Together we can build a more civil, reflective and just society for all.

Project Look Sharp

Ithaca College,

Email: looksharp@ithaca.edu

Web: <https://www.projectlooksharp.org/>