

Dear **U.S. History and Government** 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](#).

Below you will find an overview of our lessons for **U.S. History and Government** 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 [279 lessons](#) for incorporating [question-based media analysis](#) into the teaching of **U.S. History at the high school level**. These include extensive multi-lesson kits on the media construction of... [Presidential Campaigns](#) (from 1800-2020), [Peace](#), [War](#), [Social Justice](#), [Martin Luther King Jr.](#) and [Economics in U.S. History](#).

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** documents - such as short video clips, social media posts, songs, paintings, photographs, and excerpts from books, magazines, websites, films, TV shows, etc. – to **teach both core subject area content and media literacy**.

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

New U.S. History Lessons:

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

[Representations of Enslavement in South Carolina – Context is Everything](#)

[The Roots of Democracy in the United States: Iroquois or Athens?](#)

[Mapping the Border: Who Decides?](#)

[Decoding the Twenty: Andrew Jackson and Harriet Tubman](#)

[How Disease Spreads: Cholera Epidemic of 1892](#)

[World War II D-Day - Two Views of History: Soviet and American](#)

[Sexual Harassment: Time's Changing Coverage](#)

Anti-Semitism: Then and Now

New Lessons on Social Issues:

[Trusting Web Videos on COVID-19 \(Or Not\)](#)

[Tracking Lies: Determining the Credibility of Internet Information](#)

[Covering Black Lives Matter: Front Page Constructions](#)

[Youth Activism](#)

[Media, Politics and the Supreme Court](#)

[Community Responses to Climate Disaster Recovery](#)

[Polling on Structural Racism: What Do Different People Believe?](#)

New Lessons on the 2020 Election, the Insurrection and Polarized Politics:

[Election 2020 – The Facts are Clear but Who Do We Trust?](#)

[Storming the Capitol: Front Page Constructions](#)

[Two Views of an Insurrection: January 6, 2021](#)

[Confirmation Bias, Coronavirus and the 2020 Presidential Campaign](#)

[When to Call a Lie a lie – Media’s Responsibility to Hold Politicians Accountable](#)

[Presidents and Propaganda?](#)

CONSTRUCTIVIST MEDIA DECODING:

Our [constructivist approach](#) is particularly effective for leading civil and reflective document-based analysis about **potentially polarizing issues**. 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, songs to social media - must become habitual for all our students. Students need **continual practice** in asking [critical thinking questions](#) such as:

- *Who produced this and for what purpose?*
- *Is the source and information credible?*
- *What are the biases in this message?*
- *How does my own identity influence how I see this?*

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 in-person and online classroom media decoding for different levels and subjects including:

- *US Wars in Vietnam, the Persian Gulf, Afghanistan*
- *1800 Anti-Jefferson Political Cartoon*
- *WWI Propaganda Posters*
- *2008 Election Magazine Covers*

Our extensive [free PD materials](#) about **curriculum driven media decoding** include:

- [Key Questions to Ask When Analyzing Media Messages](#) and other handouts and posters
- [Articles and webinars](#) about Constructivist Media Decoding
- A [DIY Guide](#) for creating your own lessons

Please consider signing up for a [free account](#) so that you can download our lessons and get added to our [email list](#) that we can send you periodic notices about new lessons and resources for your subject and level. 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

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