

PROJECT LOOK SHARP



May 2025 Newsletter

PLS Newsletter at a Glance

New Media Decoding Lessons:

For Elementary:

- [Houses Around the Globe: Decoding Book Covers](#)
- [Librarians in the Movies - Media Messages and Effects](#)

For Preservice/Teacher Ed.:

- [Cinematic Stereotyping - Librarians in the Movies](#)
- [Cinematic Stereotyping - Elementary School Teachers in the Movies](#)

Lessons about **the Vietnam War**

Lessons for **Pride Month**

Lessons for **AAPI Month**

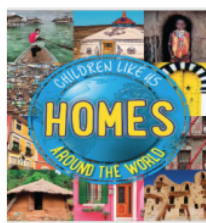
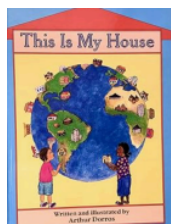
Lessons for **Memorial Day**

New Elementary

Lessons:

[Houses Around the Globe: Decoding Book Covers](#)

Inspired by a lesson from
Tanja Scott



Media Decoding Questions:

Students analyze book covers
for messages about houses and
homes around the world, how

- 1) What do you notice about the homes on the cover?
- 2) How are the houses the same, how are they different?

different book covers treat similar topics, and choosing books to read.

- 3) *Who do you think makes a book cover? What is it for?*
- 4) *Which of these books might you choose to read and why?*



Librarians in the Movies - Media Messages and Effects

Inspired by a lesson from
Julianne Westrich

Students analyze film clips for messages about libraries and librarians and about purpose and effects of media messages.

Media Decoding Questions:

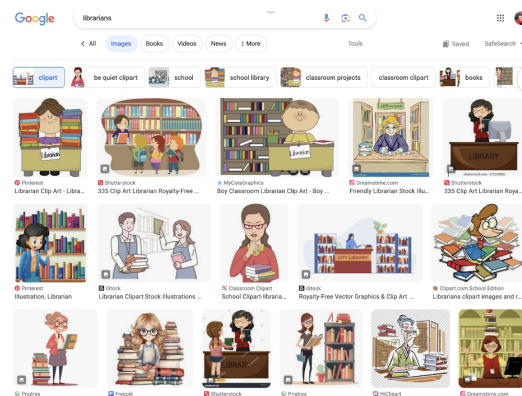
- 1) *What does the film clip tell you about librarians? Is that true about librarians?*
- 2) *Why do they make movies? What do they do to make it interesting?*
- 3) *What is the purpose of a library? Do you like to go to the library? Why or why not?*

Project Look Sharp was prompted by Julianne's lesson about librarians to create a series of new lessons to introduce preservice teacher education students to the concept of [Constructivist Media Decoding](#) (CMD) through analyzing media representations of teachers and librarians.

New Lessons for Preservice/Teacher Ed.:

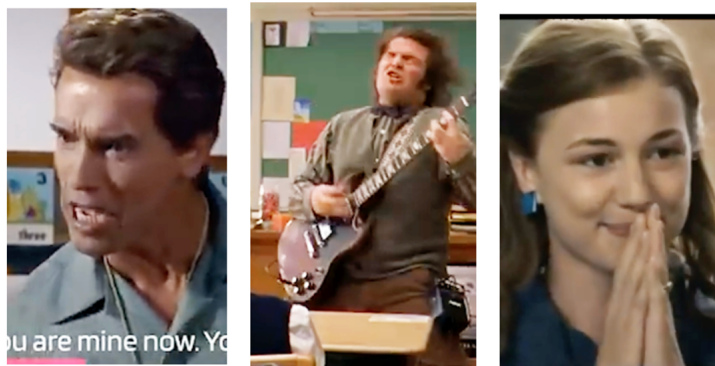
Cinematic Stereotyping - Librarians in the Movies

Preservice students analyze a Google search and film clips for messages about libraries and librarians and about purpose and effects of media messages.



Media Decoding Questions:

- 1) *What are the messages about librarians? What are the impacts of these messages?*
- 2) *Why might clipart producers and filmmakers use stereotypes?*
- 3) *How would you describe the process we went through in analyzing these documents?*



Cinematic Stereotyping - Elementary School Teachers in the Movies

Teacher Education students analyze a Google search and clips from 4 feature films for messages about stereotypes of teachers, about the impact of film representations of teaching, and about the process of question-based, student-centered Constructivist Media Decoding (CMD).

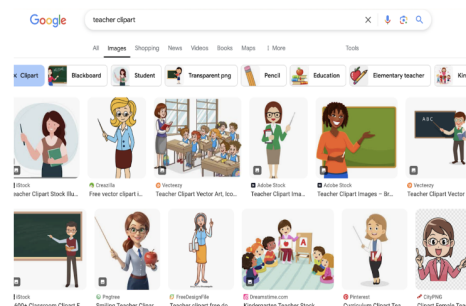
Media Decoding Questions:

- 1) How might this representation of teachers impact teachers and students?
- 2) Why might this view of teaching sell movie tickets?
- 3) How would you describe the process we went through in analyzing these documents?
- 4) How might the decoding process (CMD) be used to teach different subjects and levels?

Coming Soon:

Cinematic Stereotyping - Secondary School Teachers in the Movies

This lesson follows the same format at the elementary lesson (above) but with film clips from: ***Freedom Writers***, ***Dead Poets Society***, ***Bad Teacher***, and ***The Substitute***.



PLS has just added a new Subject Area: [Preservice/Teacher Ed.](#) with additional free media decoding lessons and PD resources for college preservice classes including:

- [Teaching the Enslavement of African People in the Americas](#)
- [Teaching About Climate Change: Why Does the Source Matter?](#)
- [Critical Race Theory – Whose History? Whose Story?](#)
- [Math, Media, and Me](#)

Decoding the Vietnam War:

April 30th was the 50th anniversary of the end of the Vietnam War in 1975. Project Look Sharp has over a dozen free [media decoding lessons](#) about the war and the related peace movement. These range from [short decoding activities](#) using a single document to a full [unit](#) for teaching the history of the Vietnam War through analyzing *Newsweek* covers.



The unit comes with slides, a teacher's guide, history handout, glossary, & assessments.

It does an enormously important job in preparing students for a critical analysis of the media. It does not preach, but by asking provocative questions it leads student to think carefully and re-examine traditional ideas. In short, it fosters independent thinking, which, after all, should be the chief objective of a good education.

Historian Howard Zinn on the Media Construction of War decoding lessons.

Lessons for Pride Month:

PLS has over a dozen free media decoding lessons related to LGBT issues including:

- Pride Month: Representation and Authorship
- Out and Affirmed - history in images
- Challenging Homophobia - through songs



Lessons for Memorial Day:

PLS has over 100 free media decoding lessons related to war and peace in U.S. History including our kits:

- * Media Construction of War
- * Media Construction of Peace
- * Causes of the American Revolution



Veterans' Statues:

Reading the Messages



Media Decoding Questions:

- 1) *How are the different wars presented similarly or differently in these statues?*
- 2) *What war or veterans' group is being honored here?*



Asian American Pacific Islander Heritage Month

Free media decoding lessons, including:

- [Asian American Pacific Islander History and Culture](#)
- [Representations of Asian People in the Media](#)
- [Japanese Internment During WW2](#)
- [The Chinese Exclusion Act - Media and Messages](#)



Project Look Sharp just posted our
900th free media decoding lesson!

