

Analyze Media Content

When you analyze media content, you think carefully about who produced the content and why they produced it. You think critically about all aspects of the content. When you think carefully about content in this way, you can draw conclusions about the message and its intended impact.

1 Identify the media source and important information about the author.

The source of a piece of media content may be a single writer or a whole organization. The name of the author may appear at the beginning of a book or article. However, for Web sites and some documents, you may need to look carefully for the person or organization that created the content. Try to learn all you can about the source. What experience does the author have? If the source is an organization, who gives money to the organization?

2 Determine the economic, social, and political context of the message.

The context is the background that helps shape the message. Is the writer responding to a certain problem or situation? Is there an event, such as an upcoming election, that might be important to the writer? These factors may help you figure out the purpose of the writer and whether or not the writer is biased.

3 Identify the message, noting what is missing, and determine whether the message relies on stereotypes.

Try to figure out the meaning of the message. Is the source leaving out important information? Is the message based on stereotypes or other inaccurate information? If you are not certain, you may want to read more about the topic to understand it better.

4 Draw conclusions about the intended impact of the message.

Once you have thought about the context and content of the message, try to draw a conclusion about the purpose of the message. What does the writer hope that you will think or do after reading the message?