



# LABS

**Michigan Learning Channel**  
**A Public Media Partnership**

## **Media Activity Deck: Journalism Edition**

**[MichiganLearning.org/LABS](https://MichiganLearning.org/LABS)**





# LABS

**Join our LABS program to connect with other teachers, learn more about media education, and share student projects across our platforms!**



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## ***Welcome to the MLC LABS Media Activity Deck: Journalism edition!***

This special edition mini-deck invites students into the world of public media journalism, where they'll learn about critical viewing and producing from the most trusted writers, reporters, and producers.

These prompts, crafted in collaboration with Detroit PBS's One Detroit local journalism initiative, will help students practice critical viewing by asking questions about perspective, bias, and purpose - and they'll be challenged to reflect on their own point-of-view and community relationships as they envision and create their own content.

Use this deck as quick warm-up or practice activities when you need to infuse your teaching with some media literacy activities, or build a larger lesson or unit plan around some of the prompts.

The cards themselves are student-facing, so they can be distributed to individual students, small groups, or a larger group for collaborative media analysis and media making.

**However you choose to use this deck, we want to hear from you! Share what you're practicing with us and other MLC LABS teachers so that we can grow together.**



***A note from Managing Editor of Journalism, Elisha Anderson, and Manager of Content Operations, Zosette Guir:***

At Detroit PBS, and at PBS stations across the state and country, we focus on providing trusted, in-depth journalism that connects the communities we serve.

DBPS's commitment to local journalism can be seen in our program called One Detroit. Grounded in community engagement, One Detroit's journalists tell stories about our diverse region. Our storytelling takes viewers beyond the headlines, offering context and understanding of crucial issues. We strive for accurate and fair coverage, which helps build credibility.

Our team is excited to partner with the Michigan Learning Channel to create this deck that supports media literacy and community-based storytelling in classrooms across Michigan. The questions and prompts on these cards are what journalists think about when producing impactful, in-depth stories that reflect a diverse audience.

We look forward to how students respond and create their own stories rooted in these values. Thank you for joining us!

# VIEWING

Use the **viewing** cards to facilitate watching and responding to film and video content. Many activities can also be used with text or photo content.

Each card includes a brief prompt and sometimes additional ideas for creative engagement or extension. How you use the prompt in your classroom (i.e. inviting students to write, discussion, draw, etc.) is completely up to you and what works in your space.

As always, stay in touch so that we can showcase how you are using these cards in your classroom!

## Tips for watching film or video:

- Watch the film or video all the way through with no discussion or interruptions and record initial responses.
- Watch the film or video more than once with a different focus each time.
- Offer students specific things to look for during a particular viewing.
- Be aware of the film's context (where and when it was produced, who played a role, what the intended purpose is).
- Balance time for individual reflection, pair and small group dialogue, and large group discussion after viewing.
- Watch "around" the film - watch other projects from the same director or organization and watch other projects that examine the content from a different perspective.

# PRODUCING

Use the **producing** cards to invite students to create their own media, either as part of a larger project or as a short and informal opportunity.

Each card features a prompt with some ideas for application or further development. Depending on how you use the prompt, you may need to develop rubrics and assessments and support students with additional instruction and resources (we can help!).

If you're using the prompts as brief activities, give yourself permission to just offer the prompt and see what students do!

As always, be in touch - we would love to collaborate and support you as you develop larger projects and we will be excited to showcase any student work - small or large - through our platforms.

## Tips for producing video

- Don't be afraid to let students lead - many of them already create content and are just looking to be seen and celebrated.
- Don't get too hung up on content looking polished - learning still happened!
- Do your research to find great equipment, but recognize that smartphones, ordinary lamps, and natural backdrops can do a lot!
- Watch several different kinds of videos to get a sense for style and technique.
- Spend time planning so that you don't have to spend as much time recording or editing.
- Think about audience and what will be engaging and impactful.
- Lighting, sound, placement - learn the vocabulary of production and check all of your boxes before turning on the camera or the microphone.

# VIEWING

## 🔍 **Analyze authorship** ✕

Who made this content?  
What were their goals?  
Who did they work for  
and with to produce this?



# VIEWING

## 🔍 **Analyze perspective** ✕

Whose perspectives are included? What point-of-view is centered? Whose voice is left out?



# VIEWING

## 🔍 **Look for a paper trail** ✕

Who paid for this content? Who might benefit financially from this content?



# VIEWING

## 🔍 **Evaluate relationships** ✕

What relationships are evident in this content? What connection exists between the producing journalist and the community members featured? What might be missing?



# PRODUCING

## 🔍 *Interview a friend* ✕

Interview someone you know well about a topic you both care about. How does your prior knowledge and connection help you prepare? How does your relationship impact the interview?



# PRODUCING

## 🔍 *Tell a story* ✕

Identify a story that you could tell about something happening in your community. What background do you need to provide? How can you authentically capture diverse perspectives in your storytelling?



# PRODUCING

## 🔍 *Tell a different story* ✕

Find a news story about your community. How could you tell the story differently? What community members would help inform a new or updated version? What different impact would you aim for?



# PRODUCING

## 🔍 *Continue a story* ✕

Find a news story about your community that is due for an update. How can you build on the story with new information or a fresh perspective? How is this story relevant now?



# VIEWING

🔍 **Analyze message** ✕

What am I being asked to think about? What am I being asked to believe? Why?



# VIEWING

🔍 **Summarize content** ✕

What is the story being told? What can I learn from this story?



# VIEWING

🔍 **Look for gaps** ✕

What parts of the story are missing? What information is intentionally left out? What new information would change my perspective or opinion?



# VIEWING

🔍 **Analyze purpose** ✕

Why was this made? Who is the target audience? Is there a call to action?



# PRODUCING

## Q *Practice mini-doc technique* ×

Produce a short video that incorporates powerful documentary style. Leverage point-of-view and pacing to bring viewers into the story and have an impact.



# PRODUCING

## Q *Tell a visual story* ×

Practice “showing” versus “telling” by producing a video without voiceover. How can you have an impact by only using visuals? What story do you want to tell, and what are the best shots to tell it?



# PRODUCING

## Q *Pitch a series* ×

Conceptualize a story series that will focus on a specific community. How will you build trust and connection with the community? What is the message you want to share through the series?



# PRODUCING

## Q *Make bigger connections* ×

Find a story that has dominated the national or international media landscape. What is the local connection? Produce a story that connects a local event or feature with a broader message.



# VIEWING

## 🔍 *Evaluate technique* ✕

How does the format, style, and presentation of the content impact the storytelling? What visual and audio techniques are used to communicate meaning?



# VIEWING

## 🔍 *Analyze an interview* ✕

Choose specific interview footage and analyze the journalist's style. How do they build connection? How do they incorporate quality questioning? How do they support perspective-taking?



# VIEWING

## 🔍 *Analyze platform* ✕

Where and how was this content shared with the public? How does this impact accessibility and audience? How might the viewing platform impact understanding and support the call-to-action?



# VIEWING

## 🔍 *Analyze B-roll* ✕

Look closely at the B-roll that is used throughout the video. How does this visual content tell a story? How is this connected to the interviews and voiceover? What does the B-roll add? How does the B-roll impact how you see the story?



# PRODUCING

## 🔍 *Empower citizens* ✕

Identify a local issue or concern. Without advocating or influencing opinion, how can you empower and educate viewers to make informed decisions? What expert voices will you feature? What facts and perspectives will you need to include in your perspective?



# PRODUCING

## 🔍 *Make local connections* ✕

Tell a story that will unite your immediate community with a neighboring one. What is the geographic, cultural, or historical link that you can build on? How can your story help community members feel connected to one another?



# PRODUCING

## 🔍 *Do your research* ✕

Identify a local issue or story that you'd like to produce a feature on. What research do you need to do to collect the facts and context necessary to tell the story? Who do you need to collaborate with? How will you check the information you find?



# PRODUCING

## 🔍 *Tell a story to uplift* ✕

Identify a community, event, or neighborhood that is often overlooked in your area. What story can you tell to share a positive story about them? What footage, interviews, and techniques would help generate the impact you'd want to have?



# VIEWING

## 🔍 *Reflect on your response* ✕

How would you respond to this content if you had a chance to talk to the producer? What would you say if you shared this content with a friend? What about the video causes you to feel this way?



# VIEWING

## 🔍 *Try a different point of view* ✕

How might others respond to this content? What kinds of prior knowledge, personal relationships, or experiences would effect how someone might view this content?



# VIEWING

## 🔍 *Think about next steps* ✕

What productive steps are available to respond to this content? Does the producer/journalist/platform support dialogue? Are there opportunities to respond to the call to action and community connections for further engagement?



# VIEWING

## 🔍 *Evaluate credibility* ✕

Is this story factual? How can you tell? How can you evaluate the credibility and trustworthiness of the story, the platform, and those involved in production?



# PRODUCING

## 🔍 *Think beyond yourself* ✕

Think of a story you'd be really excited to tell about your community and tell the story from a different point of view. How can you explore this different (and maybe opposing) perspective? What expert voices can you learn from? How does this perspective challenge you to explore more deeply?



# PRODUCING

## 🔍 *Interview an expert* ✕

Find someone in your community to interview for a particular story. What makes them a reliable and impactful voice on the subject? How can you build trust when you speak to them? What questions can you ask that will encourage them to respond authentically?



# PRODUCING

## 🔍 *Be people-driven* ✕

Identify a place, event, or object that is significant in your community. Find the humans that are behind or connected to it. What's the story? How can you profile your subject in a way that uplifts people in your community?



# PRODUCING

## 🔍 *Pose tough questions* ✕

Find an issue that many people in your community are concerned about. Build trust with community members on either side of the issue and then use interviews to get to the core of their thinking. Produce a story that looks critically at the issue from both sides.



# VIEWING

## 🔍 **Consider universal truth** ✕

How does this story connect with a universal truth? Does it prompt deeper thinking or reflection? Does it unite or bring together diverse perspectives and ideas? Does it move conversation forward?



# VIEWING

## 🔍 **Consider context** ✕

What context is important to consider when viewing this content? What background knowledge is important? How might this story be different at another moment in time, or in another place?



# VIEWING

## 🔍 **Apply a DEI lens** ✕

How does the story intentionally uplift marginalized or minoritized voices and perspectives? How does the story challenge viewers to consider values of equity, inclusion, and justice?



# VIEWING

## 🔍 **Build a timeline** ✕

Where would this story go on a timeline? What is the theme or focus of the timeline? What other issues, moments, or stories would fill out the rest of the timeline?



# PRODUCING

## 🔍 **Curate and host a town hall** ✕

Bring together 3-4 experts on a topic and host a discussion about an issue important to your community. Build necessary context to drive engagement and prepare challenging questions that your experts can respond to. Host the event live or record it to share with your community.



# PRODUCING

## 🔍 **Record a live performance** ✕

Feature a local performer and/or artist by recording a live performance and interviewing them about their work. Prepare thoughtful questions that help your audience understand their background, motivation, and vision for their art and think about how you can best visually capture their work to have an impact.



# PRODUCING

## 🔍 **Find the story at an event** ✕

Attend an event in your community and capture both B-roll and interview footage. Identify one interesting story that you can tell about the event and focus on gathering as much footage as possible that supports that story.



# PRODUCING

## 🔍 **Make data engaging** ✕

Research to find important data about an issue in your community. Find a way to represent the data using video and audio so that community members can understand it and feel empowered to get involved.

