***Media Literacy Key Concepts***

**1. All media are constructions.**
Media products are carefully crafted constructions, the results of many decisions, conscious and unconscious.

*Questions:* How do we know this was "constructed"? What are the elements of the construction (script, music, editing, etc.)? How was this crafted? What decisions were made by the director and producers?

**2. The media are commercial entities.**
All media products are shaped, in terms of both their form and their content, by commercial considerations.

*Questions:* All media cost money. Who made this piece of media? Why? Who might they have sold it to? Why would it have been bought? Who was the target audience for the purchase of this piece of media? Who was the target audience for the messages in the media? How might the commercial considerations have affected the piece?

**3. Media communicate values and ideology.**
All media products contain implicit and explicit value messages and assumed truths about the nature of human beings and the world in which we live.

*Questions:* What value messages does this piece of media send? How does it communicate values about what is right and wrong? What economic messages does it send? What messages does it send about relationships between people or between people and the world?

**4. The media have social and political implications.**
The mass media have the potential to affect out behavior as individuals and citizens in a variety of ways.

*Questions:* What might be the cumulative effect of repeatedly viewing message like this? What issues is it most related to? How might it change how people act? How might it change how people vote or think about political issues?

**5. Media forms are related to content**.
Different media represent reality in different ways: the form of a given piece of media shapes the message it sends.

*Questions:* What form is this media? How do the characteristics of this form affect the message it sends? How would it be different if it was in a different form (e.g. if a film was changed to be a billboard, or if a song was changed to be a short story)?

**6. The media have aesthetic qualities.**
Familiarity with the aesthetic dimensions of media can lead to deeper understanding and greater enjoyments.

*Questions:* What are the aesthetic components of this piece of media? What does it look like? What does it sound like? How is color or lighting used? How is music used? How is editing used? How is meaning constructed through these elements?

**7. Audiences are involved in the process of creating meaning.**
What a viewer makes of a piece of media depends on his or her past experiences, viewing skill, and current state of mind.

*Questions:* How might different audiences view this differently? How might this piece of media be interpreted at the time it was made? How has that interpretation changed over time? Would the meaning of this piece of media differ if viewed by someone older or younger, someone of a different race or nationality, or someone of a different socioeconomic status?

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***The TAP Model***

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