



THE PALEY CENTER FOR MEDIA



Greetings from The Paley Center for

Media's Education Department!

Like so many of you, we've had to suspend all of our on-site workshops and programs in the face of COVID-19, but we still want to support our community as best we can from home. With that in mind, we are planning a regularly scheduled newsletter that will come straight to your inbox with recommendations, best practices, and resources related to the media accessible to you at home. We also plan to host a weekly Zoom Room meetup for students who want to ask us questions or just chat about what they are watching. You'll find out more about that soon.

Luckily, television, film, and other digital streaming programs are widely accessible at home and can be powerful catalysts for expanding literacy and building knowledge on a wide range of subjects. To help navigate the broad media landscape, we would like to share our tips and strategies to help parents and teachers hone their media literacy skills while teaching and learning continues at home.

What Is Media Literacy?

According to the National Association of Media Literacy Education, media literacy is the ability to access, analyze, evaluate, create, and act using all forms of communication. In its simplest terms, media literacy builds upon the foundation of traditional literacy and offers new forms of reading and writing.

NAMLE's *Five Core Concepts* of media literacy are the foundation on which you can build great questions to ask students about television and movies you are watching at home.

- All media messages are constructed.
- Media messages are constructed using a creative language with its own rules.
- Different people experience the same message differently.
- Media have embedded values and points of view.
- Media messages are constructed to gain profit and/or power and/or spread ideas.

6 Tips for Practicing Media Literacy at Home

1. Develop open-ended focus questions

Focus questions are open-ended questions that ask students to look for or notice something in particular while viewing or listening to the selected media. It is important that the question be specific but also be open-ended, therefore allowing for several different responses in order to inspire discussion. For example, what did you notice? Can you tell me more about that? The questions should encourage students to be observational and interpretive rather than say 'yes' or 'no' answers.

2. Keep the media short

A good rule of thumb for screening length is to keep your media under 10 minutes if you want to have a rich conversation. You can, of course, screen a whole program as long as you pause intermittently to check in and discuss what is happening. Short clips can be screened more than once and be refocused on different elements of the construction (e.g. focusing attention on the sound first, then the images, or the story structure and characters).

3. Start each discussion by summarizing

After each clip is screened, ask students to describe what they remember seeing and hearing. Their summaries should start at the beginning of the clip and include as much detail as possible. Often it is useful to ask students literally, "What was the first thing you remember seeing or hearing?" Summarizing takes time, but it allows for richer discussions as information is slowly uncovered, and helps the teacher/parent know exactly what the student understood. It is not necessary to summarize an entire clip or program. When students are truly engaged and focused on what they saw and heard, the summary ends and they begin to answer the focus question.

4. Answer the focus question

Once students have begun to describe and summarize, restate the focus question. It is a good idea to encourage a wide range of opinions, especially if you have a group of students, by asking, "Does anyone disagree or want to add to that?" or "Did anyone notice anything different?"

5. Make connections

After analyzing a clip, ask kids to look for similarities and differences between other media you have shared with them, or that they have seen on a similar topic. Connections can also be made to a book, graphic novel, piece of music, or art. Students retain information more easily when it is connected to

background knowledge or personal experiences.

6. Reflect

Allow some time for students to reflect on what they learned from the media they viewed and discussed. Can you ask a question about it, or have the student ask you questions about it? To allow for different learning styles, you could give them time to draw, or write a response to the clips you have viewed together.

If you have any questions or ideas for topics you would like us to cover, feel free to email us at eduny@paleycenter.org . Looking forward to connecting with you online next week!

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We hope this inspires you to watch and learn together in a new way at home! This gives you a flavor of some of our work in the Education Program, which serves thousands of students, teachers, and families annually. The Paley Center is here for you and, now more than ever before, we would deeply appreciate your support.

SUPPORT US

Thank you so much for being part of the Paley family.

Rebekah Fisk, Director of Education

Caroline Quigley, Senior Manager of School & Family Programs



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