

T-ACT

My World May Not Be Our World The Power and Danger of Symbolic Worlds

Follow the guidelines below
to implement this learning
activity in your classroom



Cluster competences

- Media literacy aspect: The learner can cope with several sources of media.
- Digital literacy aspect: The learner develops digital and technological knowledge, skills and attitudes to act in society.
- Information aspect: The learner develops knowledge, skills and attitudes to cope with (dis)information.

Learning objectives

- Information aspect:**
- S1 – The learner can demonstrate an understanding of how the structure, content and wording of a piece of information can be designed to influence opinions or to trigger actions.
 - S4 - The learner can differentiate between official and unofficial sources of information.
 - S6 - The learner can explain how everyone's ability to create and share information impacts the information ecosystem.
 - S7 - The learner can demonstrate that they approach with similar scrutiny information that corresponds to their beliefs/opinions and information that does not.
 - S9 - The learner is able to critically discuss the possible harm resulting from a suspecting or identified disinformation/misinformation item.

Digital aspect:

- D1 - The learner can demonstrate that they understand various techniques used by media platforms to emphasise, amplify and extend the reach of their content.
- D2 - The learner can explain concepts like 'echo chamber', tunnelvision and information bubble.
- D3 – The learner can explain how search engines adapt their results based on user profiling.
- D4 – The learner can explain how digital tools can be used to manipulate the appearance of websites, images, personal profiles, attributed statements, product/service reviews.

Media literacy aspect:

- M1 - The learner can demonstrate that they are aware of the mix of ownership, funding and editorial policy of a media.
- M2 - The learner can explain the meaning of 'media bias'.
- M3 - The learner can elaborate on the role of media in a democratic society and how this role changes in repressive states.
- M4 - The learner can differentiate between facts, fact interpretation, and opinions.
- M5 - The learner can trace the source of information in a media article to confirm it reports correctly on facts.

National learning objectives

1. Media Education (Mediální výchova)

- **Understanding symbolic worlds and social constructs.**
→ Related to S1, M4, and S4.
- **Analyzing historical and contemporary media representations of Indigenous people.**
→ Related to M2, M5, and S6.
- **Recognizing the role of media in shaping public perceptions.**
→ Related to S7, D1, and M3.

- **Critically evaluating stereotypes and cultural distortions in media.**
→ Related to M5, S9, and discussion activities.

2. Civic Education and Social Studies (Občanská výchova a společenské vědy)

- **Understanding different perspectives on history and cultural narratives.**
→ Related to M3, discussion on historical narratives, and ethical considerations.
- **Recognizing biases in historical and contemporary discourse.**
→ Related to M2, S6, and debate exercises.
- **Analyzing the social construct of race and identity.**
→ Related to discussion on media representations and critical evaluation of sources.
- **Evaluating the impact of stereotypes on social cohesion.**
→ Related to M7, discussion on how media representations shape social identity.

Topics

1. Symbolic Worlds: What are they and how do they shape our perception of reality?

2. The historical evolution of Indigenous representations in Western media.

3. The role of storytelling in shaping cultural perceptions.

4. The concept of race as a social construct.

5. The impact of symbolic narratives on history, identity, and politics.

6. Stereotypes in literature and film: Comparing past and present depictions.

7. Ethical considerations in media representation.

Method

- **Discussion and debate:** Exploring how different symbolic worlds influence personal beliefs and public discourse.
- **Source analysis:** Evaluating historical documents, literature, films, and media representations of Indigenous people.
- **Critical comparison:** Assessing differences between factual historical records and cultural myths.
- **Fact-checking exercise:** Identifying misinformation and evaluating sources.
- **Group work:** Analyzing and presenting on different symbolic narratives.

Materials

- Historical and contemporary representations of Indigenous people in media.
- Josef Václav Sládek's poetry – portrayal of Indigenous people as victims of colonization.
- Franz Kafka's *Desire to Become an Indian* – analysis of Indigenous people as symbols of freedom.
- Petr Placák's writings – representation of Indigenous people as warriors for justice.
- Video analysis: *The Myth of the Ecological Indian*.
- Social theories on race and symbolic representation.
- Comparative media analysis of Indigenous depictions in past vs. present films.

Lesson Plan

1. Introduction (15 min)

- Explanation of symbolic worlds and their role in shaping perceptions.
- Discussion on how people develop different realities based on their cultural influences.

2. Discussion: Indigenous Representations (20 min)

- What stereotypes exist about Indigenous people?
 - How have these images evolved in history and media?
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3. Comparing Historical and Contemporary Representations (25 min)

Divide students into small groups. Each group will analyze a different representation:

- Sládek's poetry (colonial victimhood)
- Kafka's perspective (freedom and existential escape)
- Placák's Indigenous warrior symbolism

Groups present their findings and discuss how perspectives differ.

4. Critical Media Analysis (30 min)

- Identify stereotypes and analyze the intent behind different portrayals.
 - Discuss how these symbolic representations influence public opinion and policy.
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5. Reflection and Conclusion (15 min)

- Students discuss key takeaways.
- Debate: Should media be responsible for correcting historical misrepresentations?

Assessment

- Participation in discussion and debate (argument clarity, engagement with sources)
- Written reflection (short essay analyzing a symbolic world and its impact on identity)
- Fact-checking task (evaluating the accuracy of a historical claim)
- Group presentation (analyzing and explaining different symbolic representations)



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