Understanding Media: The Music Industry[[1]](#footnote-1)

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Brainstorm possible topics for exploration.

Using the Internet, examine the videos of today’s top recording artists. Analyze the

messages and values of a music video of choice (based on the availability of song lyrics

as well as the video for the song).

The analysis should include the following:

* Examination of the content of the lyrics, including a description of the ways in

which the images in the video relate to the lyrics and melody of the song, and to the

teacher’s interpretation of the lyrics

* Examination of the technical components of the video, considering the use of colour,

lighting, editing (pace, juxtaposition, cutting on the beat), special effects, and the

connection between audio and video components

* Examination of the social issues dealt with in the video, with consideration given to

how those messages might change if people of a different social class or race were

included, or if the male and female characters switched roles

Interpret the ideological and value messages being presented in a video using the

following questions as a guide:

* Does the video present the beliefs of one particular group?
* Describe the representations of men and women in the video. Are any stereotypes

used? If so, to what effect?

* Who is in a position of power? Who is not? Who benefits as a result?
* Does the video exclude any groups of people or their beliefs?
* What definitions of happiness, success, or morality are implied?
* Determine the target audience. Assess to what extent the video would have any appeal

beyond this target audience.

1. Assess the power of popular culture and music as tools for transformational change.  
   To what extent do musicians and artists have a role in providing political and social commentary and in promoting social justice? Look at the work of the Denmark-based organization Freemuse, which supports musicians who have been involved in social and political causes. What issues and events have been represented in their music? To what effect?
2. Select song lyrics and prepare an original storyboard for a music video that will convey the message of the lyrics. Carefully consider the images that will represent the lyrics. Identify and select the technical elements that will enhance this representation. If a video for this song already exists, compare the storyboard with the video that has been produced, noting differences and similarities in imagery and techniques.
3. Visit the Internet site of an organization such as MediaWatch **(**[**www.mediawatch.org**](http://www.mediawatch.org)**),** committed to challenging ‘racism, sexism and violence in the media through education and action’. Investigate the goals and campaigns of this and similar organizations.

**SOURCES FOR EXPLORATION**

1. Reconstructions, a site launched by members of the MIT Comparative Media Studies

community in the days following the events of 11 September 2001: **http://web.mit.edu/**

**cms/reconstructions**

1. Imob, wide range of links to music: recordings, films, technology, production courses:

**www.imob.com**

1. BIRTH, the historical archives of European television**: http://www.birth-of-tv.org/birth**
2. Cynopsis, free daily news aimed at the television industry – a number of editions are

available: **www.cynopsis.com**

1. Box Office Guru, American and international box office figures, both current and past,

are listed here: **http://boxofficeguru.com**

1. The Internet Movie Data Base, the most comprehensive site for researching films and

television. There is a wealth of information on individual titles, reviews, chat, actors,

directors, genres: **www.imdb.com**

1. United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing Declaration and Platform

for Action (1995) at, **http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/**

1. International Federation of Journalists. (2009). Getting the balance right: Gender

Equality in Journalism: Brussels, Belgium at, **http://portal.unesco.org/ci/en/**

**files/28397/12435929903gender\_booklet\_en.pdf/gender\_booklet\_en.pdf**

1. World Association of Christian Communication. (2010). Who Makes the News? Global

Media Monitoring Project: Toronto, Canada at, **www.whomakesthenews.org**

1. International Women’s Media Foundation. (2011). Global Report on Status of Women in

the News Media: Washington, DC, USA AT, **http://www.iwmf.org/pdfs/IWMF-Global-**

**Report.pdf**

1. From UNESCO Curriculum [↑](#footnote-ref-1)