10 Engaging Media Literacy Activities

1. **Dissecting Logos:** Ask students to share logos that pop into their heads. Print and bring in those logos. Ask questions while holding up each one. “How did you know this logo is Taco Bell?” “Would you still recognize it if it were green instead of purple?”

2. **Describing Characters:** Play a show or movie, asking each student to pay attention to a specific character. After, pair classmates together. Each partner takes turns describing three traits of his or her character, as the other partner solicits more information by asking “why?” when appropriate.

3. **Building a Cereal Brand:** Bring in different cereal boxes, giving one to each small group of students. They must analyze the box, noting attributes such as font and mascot use. After developing an understanding of the cereal brand, they can make an ad for it.

4. **Dissecting Logos, Part II:** Analyze logos more thoroughly than in the first exercise. Students should bring up to four logos to class. Have them identify each other’s logos, launching a talk about how a company benefits from being easily-recognizable.

5. **Finding Movie Messages:** Explain that most media have underlying messages they communicate. Then, sort students into groups and present a list of movies they know. Groups should write a key message of each movie before reviewing responses together.

6. **Differentiating Media:** Share an idea or story, such as a sports arena opening nearby. Students must work to create distinct media -- from ads to news reports -- about it. After finishing, hold a discussion about how the content differed based on the medium.

7. **Deconstructing Advertising Language:** Explore advertising claims with your class, which you can learn about through many online resources. For example, “our cola tastes better” is an unfinished claim. Tastes better than what? Once students grasp the concept, hand out stacks of magazines. Each group should identify two to four ads that use a claim.

8. **Making a Newspaper:** Make a class newspaper about a relevant fictional setting -- such as a town in a novel you’re reading. One student can write a breaking news story, whereas another can craft a report about a major local event. Encourage students to pitch ideas.

9. **Re-imagining the News:** Watch a short news clip, asking students how they would change it to better communicate important points. Then, let them. In groups, they can storyboard and act out the revamped news piece.
10. **Switching the Medium**: Assign students different scenes from a book or movie in the curriculum. Then, match each scene with a specific medium. For example, a scene in which the protagonist argues with supporting characters could be re-imagined as an advertisement -- the protagonist would “sell” his ideas to them. Students tackling this scene-medium combo would have to write the ad.