



# critical media project

## Lesson Plan: Class

This lesson plan should be used in conjunction with the [media examples](#) and the various resources, including [diy activities](#). Please also see the provided example worksheet that can be printed and handed out for students to write their responses on the socio-economic class of their choice. See [CMP website](#) for ideas.

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### PURPOSE & LEARNING OUTCOMES:

- Students will be able to critically analyze a range of media examples and their representations of socio-economic class and class politics.
- Students will be able to learn how to “read” media texts (film, television, news, streaming content, Internet, radio and recording, social media etc.) and identify patterns and stereotypes in media representations of socio-economic class.
- Students will be able to explain in written and oral forms the way socio-economic class takes on varied meanings in different media contexts.
- Students will be able to explain how the media’s representations of socio-economic class can potentially impact how they understand their own and other identities.

### GETTING STARTED:

- Ask students to think about how they see or understand themselves (what part of their identity is most important to them).
- Ask students to assess how many of their peers cite socio-economic class as a fundamental part of who they are.
- Ask students to list stereotypes of socio-economic class (see accompanying worksheet).

### KEY IDEAS & CONCEPTS: (see longer overview on [CMP website](#))

- Class (also called social class or socio-economic class) refers to a system that groups or ranks individuals based on wealth. It is most simply defined by three strata: upper class, middle class, and working class.
- Except at the very extreme ends of the spectrum (very wealthy or very poor), socio-economic class can often come across as invisible. Yet, class

is still an important factor in shaping who we are and what kinds of opportunities we are afforded. Class intersects with race and ethnicity in important ways that further impact opportunities.

- American history is permeated with the narrative of the "American Dream," which suggests that if we work hard enough, we can succeed, achieve, and move up the socio-economic ladder. Critics of this perspective point out that upward social and economic mobility has always been difficult in the United States.
- From the way individuals speak, to where they live, what they wear, and what transportation they use, many of the messages that we receive about socio-economic class come to us through the media.

**CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING:** (use [media examples](#) & [diy activities](#))

- Can students see and identify patterns in the representation of class status in the media?
- Can students critically question and challenge the representations and stereotypes they identify?



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## Worksheet: Media Representation of Class

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_

### Class Discussion:

1. List any stereotypes (in media and everyday life) of different socio-economic classes (wealthy, poor, middle class) you can think of.
2. Are there any patterns that you identify on your list?
3. How would you characterize these representations? Are they positive? Negative? Neutral? Why?
4. Do you agree with these representations? Do they seem true or accurate? Why?

### Your Thoughts/Notes:

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### Small Group Discussion (after viewing media examples from website);

1. Describe what you noticed about the representations of socio-economic class?
2. Are individuals from different socio-economic classes represented differently? If so, how?
3. Are the representations of different classes constructed based on how they look? What they say? How they speak? What they do for work? Where they live?
4. Do the representations seem stereotypical or complex?
5. If they are stereotypical, what kinds of stereotypes do you notice?
6. Are there ways in which different socio-economic classes are represented in relation to other identities (for example, race and ethnicity)? If so, what kind of relationship is set up between class and race or ethnicity?
7. What do you think the potential impact of such representations is on people who regularly view them?

### Reflection: Should we try to change or challenge these stereotypes in the media? Why? How?

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