



# critical media project

## Lesson Plan: Disability

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 disability 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 disabilities.
- Students will be able to learn how to “read” media texts (film, television, streaming content, Internet, radio and recording, news, social media, etc.) and identify patterns and stereotypes.
- Students will be able to explain in written and oral forms the way disability takes on varied meanings in different media contexts and depending on the type of disability being represented.
- Students will be able to explain how the media’s representations of disability can potentially impact how they understand specific facets of 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 a particular “disability” as a fundamental part of who they are.
- Ask students to list media and other stereotypes of specific disabilities (see accompanying worksheet).

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

- While things are changing, there are still very few representations of disabled persons in the media, and most focus on physical disabilities.
- Disabilities are often used in media as a primary way to identify a character or tell a certain kind of story.

- Perceptions of disability and disabled people are heavily influenced by media representations
- The media is a key site where stereotypes of disabled persons persist and may also be challenged.

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

- Can students see and identify patterns in the representation of disabilities in the media?
- Can students critically question and challenge the representations and stereotypes they identify?
- Can students critically question their own ideologies (ways of seeing) tied to disabilities and the role media may play in shaping those ideologies?



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## Worksheet: Media Representations of Disability

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

### Class Discussion:

1. List any stereotypes (in media and everyday life) of people with disabilities 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. What types of representations of individuals with disabilities do we see in these media examples?
2. Are the individuals stereotypical or complex?
3. If they are stereotypical, what kinds of stereotypes do you notice?
4. Are the stereotypes based on how the individuals look? What they say? How they speak? What they do?
5. What types of disabilities do you notice? Are they physical? Cognitive? Emotional?
6. What are the individuals doing? Do their actions (or inactions) relate to their disability?
7. Do the disabilities impede the individuals from participating fully in particular activities?
8. 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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