

## **MEDIA MANIPULATION AND ITS IMPACT ON THE AFRICAN-AMERICAN STUDENT**

**Core Curriculum Standards:** Social Studies, Civics, Health

**Goals:** Students will understand how the media is being used to manipulate their behavior

**Materials Needed:** False Media Extension Activity Sheet, Permission Forms, and Printout of lyrics to popular song being played on radio

**Time Frame:** 60 minutes

**\*\*\*PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS LESSON USES SOME EXPLICIT LANGUAGE, NECESSARILY IF WE'RE DEALING WITH THE MUSIC OF TODAY. FEEL FREE TO ADJUST WHERE YOU DEEM APPROPRIATE\*\*\***

**\*\*\*Please feel free to adjust this lesson plan to fit the student demographic that you are servicing. This particular lesson was written with African-American children in mind. However, it can be easily adjusted to fit the need of any ethnicity\*\*\***

**COLLECT PERMISSION FORMS FROM STUDENTS BEFORE BEGINNING LESSON**

### **LESSON PLAN**

**Introduce the goal of the lesson with the following discussion point:**

Media comes in different variations. You have traditional media, which includes television, newspaper and radio and you have digital media which includes social media outlets like Facebook, Instagram and internet blogs. Media is very important, because it actually helps to fuel our fashion, our dialect, our thoughts and our actions. That's why today we're going to discuss a specific type of media, music, and we're going to explore how music is being used to manipulate our behavior.

## Activity 1:

**DISCUSSION POINT:** – Inform students that for purposes of this lesson, and this lesson only, you will allow them to use language that would otherwise be deemed inappropriate. Let them know that they can speak freely and honestly, as this is the only way you all can have an effective discussion. However, due to the nature of the conversation, a level of maturity will need to be maintained.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Write the term Black Man on the board. Raise question: When I say young black man what are the first words that come to mind? (listen for words like nigga, thug, gangsta, etc.. list responses under the term Black Man)
2. Write term Black Woman on the board. Raise question: When I say young black woman what are the first words that come to mind? (listen for hoe, bitch, etc.. – list responses under term Black Woman)
3. Ask class to list words that they hear in urban music that describe young black men? (create separate list on board)
4. Ask class to list words that they hear in urban music that describe young black women? (create separate list on board)

You should end up with four separate lists on board. Compare and Analyze lists with class – What you should find is that the lists are very similar, usually containing a majority of the same words in both the urban music list and black woman/man list. Be sure to point this comparison out to the students.

**\*\*If students choose adjectives outside of the expected responses for questions 1 and 2, ones that are actually positive in nature, acknowledge how wonderful it is that they define themselves with such distinction. Reference, with greater emphasis, the list containing the words that they hear in music to describe young black men and young black women, then, ask the following questions:**

1. **Do you see yourselves in this light?**
2. **Do you know of any individuals who see themselves in this light?**
3. **Have you ever called yourself or any of your peers any of the words listed in the music list? (If yes then raise this question)**
4. **If you don't see yourselves in this light, why would you refer to yourself or your peers using this language?**

**Ask if anyone has ever heard of the term conditioning.**

**Define Conditioning** – the process or act of training a person or animal to do something or to behave in a certain way in a particular situation. (Merriam Webster) *In other words, it is the art of brainwashing a person to do or be whatever it is that you want them to do or be.*

**Inform students that the way that the conditioning process works is generally through repetition.** *Feel free to write the definition on the board, as you'll go back to it later in the lesson.*

**DISCUSSION POINT 1:** How many of you have ever heard the saying, you tell a person something enough times they'll begin to believe it? Well, consider this. When you wake up in the morning and listen to the radio before heading to school, in a majority of the songs you're being called niggas and bitches; after school, when you're on the bus or in the car, if you have on the radio or if you have music in your ear, you're hearing yourself being called niggas and bitches; you get home, you look at TV, probably a reality show like Love and Hip Hop, and now you have the visual image of what a bitch and a nigga is supposed to look like and how a bitch and a nigga is supposed to act; if you have your headphones on while you're doing homework you're being called a nigga and a bitch; you watch TV at night before bed, you're a nigga and a bitch then you wake up the next day and repeat the same pattern all over again; an unfortunate and constant cycle of hearing yourself being called niggas and bitches, among other things. Is it a wonder that when you're walking down the halls at school you greet one another, "whaddup nigga or what's up bitch? That's how conditioning works, training a person to behave in a certain way through repetition.

**DISCUSSION POINT 2:** So the questions should now become, why would someone want to condition you to be niggas and bitches (**to fill up the privatized prison system which is discussed in the follow up lesson**) and why would they use music to do so? Well, we'll deal with the reason *why* you're being conditioned in the next lesson, but in this lesson we will touch on why music is being used as the conditioning tool of choice.

**Music has always been an extremely significant communication mechanism in black culture.** In Africa, the drummer was sometimes considered to be one of the most important people in the village; why, because the drum told the story of the people. It was like Fox 6 News. The drummer would beat the drum to let villagers know that a baby was born or that an enemy was on the way, etc.

During slavery, some of the Negro spirituals that were sang, were actually used as roadmaps during the Underground Railroad; the lyrics of the songs guiding the slaves to freedom. For instance, the song Follow the Drinking Gourd, instructed its listeners to move in the direction of the star constellation the big dipper, in search of freedom.

During the civil rights/black power movement, they didn't just march, they march and sang, to help to strengthen them during that time and to remind them of their ultimate goal and objective, which was to overcome the atrocities of Jim Crow (We Shall Overcome).

And then there is hip hop – music that was used to transmit the stories of the hood across state lines, helping black youth to connect through a common struggle (“Don’t push me cuz I’m close to the edge” or “F the Police”, which was NWA’s way of informing others about police misconduct in their communities).

This is important to recognize because as it stands, it appears as if somebody else knows the impact that music has on our culture, particularly our youth, and they appear to have a better understanding of this concept than we do. As such, the message has been manipulated to encourage ignorance. There’s a reason why the music has gone from Fight the Power to money, bitches, hoes and snitches, but again, we’ll get to that next lesson.

So now, let’s go back to the term conditioning. ***Review the definition again.*** **Conditioning** – the process or act of training a person or animal to do something or to behave in a certain way in a particular situation. (Merriam Webster) ***In other words, it is the art of brainwashing a person to do or be whatever it is that you want them to do or be.***

**DISCUSSION POINT 3:** How often have you found yourself liking a song, never paying attention in a real way to the lyrics of the song that you are listening to? Oftentimes, we fail to pay attention to the lyrics of the songs that we listen to, as we are so caught up in the actual beat of the song.

*Ask students to give you the name of a popular song that they're listening to. Find the lyrics to the song on the internet. Inform them that today you are going to recite the lyrics to whatever song they choose in an effort to help them to recognize the ideas that they are internalizing on a daily basis.*

## **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

1. How many of you have ever paid attention to the actual lyrics of the song?
2. How many of you know and recite the lyrics to the song, even though you've never really paid attention to them?
3. What is it about the song that you like the most? Is it the beat?
4. What do you think about the lyrics after hearing them without the music?
5. Can you see how this can be used to condition your mind? The act of reciting words repeatedly, without actually considering the words that you're saying and the impact that they have?
6. Do you think that you'll pay closer attention to the lyrics of the music that you listen to moving forward?
7. Is this list of words (reference Black Man/Black Woman lists on board) are these the terms that you use to define yourselves because this is who you really are? Or do you define yourselves as such (reference music list on board) because this is who you're being conditioned to be?
8. Who are you being conditioned to be? (Create list on board)
9. Who do you choose to be? (Create list on board)

**Remind students that you are who and/or what you say you are, which is why we have to change the way that we reference ourselves and address one another. Tell them that they're about to participate in an exercise where they will be encouraged to address one another properly.**

## **Exercise:**

**Have students to stand up and walk around the room, embracing one another, giving high fives, etc.. While doing this, however, they should address one another properly. They should greet one another, peace king, peace queen, or what up king, what up queen, or peace brother, peace sister, etc.. After a few moments of addressing one another as such, you'll notice that smiles will likely come across their faces. Once you see the smiles, have them stop where they stand and look around. Point out to them the smiles that are on their faces. Use this as an opportunity to demonstrate how doing something as**

simple as changing the way that they greet one another can ignite a familial feel inside of them.

**\*\*\*IF YOU DON'T GET THIS DESIRED RESULT, CONSIDER IT A FIRM INDICATION THAT MORE WORK NEEDS TO BE DONE\*\*\***

**FINAL DISCUSSION POINT:** We have to change our language when addressing one another, this is essential. For it is really easy to kill a nigga. It's easy to smack a bitch and even easier to disrespect a hoe. But it's hard to kill your brother. It's hard to disrespect your sister. So moving forward, let's try to address one another as brothers and sisters, kings and queens.

**Activity 3:** Ask who got flow (can rap) and encourage them to rewrite lyrics to a negative song and create something positive. Encourage them to work together in groups to come up with the lyrics and then perform it for the class. To make it fun, listen to the original song first so that it can be contrasted against the song that they create.

**Extension Activity:** Distribute False Media extension activity sheet. At home, students should listen to radio and look at TV shows with a primarily black cast. Afterwards, have students document what they see and hear on the extension activity sheet. Encourage participation by offering extra points for assignment completion.

**Reflection:** Ask students if they have any questions, concerns or opinions about what they just learned. Ask if they think that they'll be able to address one another as brother, bruh, sister or sis, king or queen, moving forward. **Additionally, the instructor should address the students as king, queen or scholar moving forward.**

**“FALSE MEDIA, WE DON’T NEED IT DO WE?” – FALSE MEDIA – PUBLIC ENEMY**

Look at TV shows with majority black casts and listen to songs on the radio. Write the titles of the shows and songs then document what you see and hear by answering the questions below:

**Title:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

1. **How are women being portrayed?**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. **How are men being portrayed?**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. **What do they value (what’s important to them)?**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. **Are there any references to violence, sex and/or drug usage?**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. **How are you being encouraged to behave from the actions or lyrics?**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**False Media**  
**Character Education Lesson**

**False Media** is a character education lesson that will focus on media manipulation and its impact on behavior. The primary objective of this particular lesson is to aid our participants in developing critical and analytical media habits, thus empowering them to make informed decisions about their media behavior. In our effort to have an honest and open dialogue about media, we may view images or use language that might be explicit in nature.

\_\_\_\_\_ has my permission to participate in the  
False Media Character Education Lesson.

\_\_\_\_\_

Date

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Parent/Guardian