



# Appearance, Identity & Media Influence

A single lesson, cross-curriculum Curiosity Pack for Year 9

## At a Glance

**Topic:** How Messages Shape Perception

**Age Level:** Year 9

**Session Length:** 45–60 minutes

Pathfinders will:

- investigate how media shapes appearance expectations
- explore how identity is represented through images and messages
- examine how media influences perception
- identify patterns in media representations
- create a Media Influence Project

## Lesson Overview

This Curiosity Pack introduces Pathfinders to the idea that appearance is influenced by media, representation, and perception.

Learners investigate how images, advertisements, social media, and digital platforms communicate messages about appearance and identity. They explore how repeated images and ideas can influence what people notice, value, and see as normal.

Pathfinders examine examples from advertising, social media, sport, entertainment, gaming, and popular culture. They investigate how appearance is represented and how different audiences may interpret the same messages in different ways.

The lesson combines media literacy, psychology, communication, critical thinking, mathematics, and creative design through observation, analysis, comparison, discussion, and project creation.

This learning experience supports:

- observation and questioning
- media literacy
- critical thinking
- data interpretation
- comparison and analysis
- communication skills
- creative expression
- systems thinking

The lesson is designed using inclusive learning principles, supporting diverse learning needs through:



- self-paced learning
- visual supports
- flexible activity choices
- hands-on exploration
- multiple ways to show learning
- opportunities for discussion and reflection

## **Session Length**

**Total learning time:** 45–60 minutes

Pathfinders may:

- ✓ complete the lesson in one session
- ✓ pause and return later
- ✓ spend longer on favourite activities
- ✓ simplify or extend the task

## **Learning Focus**

This Curiosity Pack explores:

- appearance and identity
- media influence
- representation
- perception and interpretation
- communication and persuasion
- data and media messages
- critical media literacy

Learners will:

- ✓ investigate how appearance is represented in media
- ✓ identify messages communicated through images and media
- ✓ analyse how media influences perception
- ✓ compare different examples of representation
- ✓ organise ideas visually
- ✓ communicate discoveries through writing, discussion, drawing, design, or digital creation
- ✓ create a Media Influence Project

## **Success Looks Like**

Success may look different for each Pathfinder.

Examples may include:



- ✓ identifying messages in media examples
- ✓ explaining how appearance is represented
- ✓ recognising patterns across different examples
- ✓ recording observations about media influence
- ✓ analysing an advertisement, image, or post
- ✓ creating a Media Influence Project

Exploring, noticing, investigating, and creating are all part of success.

## **Materials**

You may want:

- paper or workbook
- pencils and coloured pencils
- ruler
- sticky notes or index cards
- printed advertisements, social media posts, or magazine images
- newspaper or magazine articles
- access to media example

Optional:

- tablet or computer
- printer
- poster paper
- digital presentation tools
- infographic tools
- graphing software

## **Suggested Learning Resources**

### **Common Sense Media**

<https://www.commonsensemedia.org>

Articles and resources about social media, digital identity, online influence, and media literacy.





### **Behind the News (BTN)**

<https://www.abc.net.au/btn>

Videos exploring social media, digital culture, advertising, and online trends.

### **Online Safety Reminder**

When exploring online, remember:

-  Ask an adult first
  -  Use trusted learning websites
  -  Keep personal information private
  -  Tell an adult if something feels wrong
- Stay curious and stay safe.

## **MediaSmarts**



<https://mediasmarts.ca>

Resources about advertising, digital media, online identity, and critical thinking.

### **Our World in Data**

<https://ourworldindata.org>

Graphs, statistics, and visual data exploring technology, media, and society.

### **Canva**

<https://www.canva.com>

Create posters, infographics, campaigns, and visual responses.

### **Universal Design for Learning Supports**

This Curiosity Pack supports different ways of learning by providing flexible choices for engagement, learning, and expression.

#### **Multiple ways to engage**

Learners can:

- choose media examples that interest them
- focus on advertising, social media, sport, gaming, or entertainment
- take movement or sensory breaks
- work independently or with support
- connect ideas to personal interests

#### **Multiple ways to learn**

Learners can:

- read articles
- watch videos
- explore images and advertisements
- examine graphs or statistics
- compare media examples
- discuss discoveries

#### **Multiple ways to show learning**

Learners can:

- draw and label
- write notes
- create a poster
- explain ideas verbally
- create digitally
- make comparison charts





## **Appearance, Identity & Media Influence**

### **Pathfinder Guide**

Welcome Pathfinder!






Pathfinders explore how media, images, and messages influence the way people think about appearance and identity.

Every day people see thousands of images through social media, advertising, entertainment, sport, gaming, and digital platforms. These images can communicate ideas about identity, belonging, popularity, success, and appearance.






Media does not simply show information. It can influence what people notice, value, remember, and expect.

Looking closely at media messages can help Pathfinders understand how appearance is represented and how perception is shaped.


During this Pathfinder Journey, Pathfinders may:

-  explore appearance and identity
-  investigate media influence
-  examine perception and interpretation
-  analyse patterns and messages
-  create a Media Influence Project

Ideas may be shown in many ways:

-  drawing
-  writing notes
-  creating charts
-  designing
-  creating digitally



 explaining ideas aloud

Activities may be completed in order or Pathfinders may begin with the part that feels most interesting.

Taking breaks, noticing patterns, asking questions, and making discoveries are all part of the Pathfinder Journey.

## Pathfinder Investigation


Pathfinders sometimes notice that appearance is shaped by the messages people see around them.

Images, advertisements, social media posts, videos, and digital content often communicate ideas about identity, appearance, lifestyle, and success.

Media examples may be carefully selected, edited, designed, or promoted to attract attention and influence audiences.

 Some Pathfinders investigate by:


- looking at advertisements
- exploring social media examples
- examining magazine or online images
- comparing different media messages
- discussing observations

 Pathfinders may investigate:

Choose **two or three media examples** such as advertisements, social media posts, sports promotions, gaming images, or magazine covers.

For each example, investigate:

- What do you notice first?
- What message is being communicated?
- How is appearance represented?
- Who might be the intended audience?
- What design choices attract attention?
- What might people think or feel after seeing this?
- Are similar ideas repeated across different examples?

 When Pathfinders investigate, they sometimes keep track of what they discover.

Ideas may be recorded by:

- writing notes
- annotating images
- creating a comparison chart
- recording observations
- highlighting repeated messages
- identifying patterns

 Some Pathfinders may compare:



- social media and advertising
- gaming and entertainment
- sport and fashion
- different target audiences


Looking closely at similarities and differences can help Pathfinders understand how media shapes perception.

## **Pathfinder Studio**

Pathfinders now bring their discoveries together.








Media creators often use images, design, language, and data to communicate messages and influence audiences.

In this activity, Pathfinders create a project that communicates what they discovered about appearance, identity, and media influence.








 Before creating, Pathfinders may think about:

- What did I discover?
- What message do I want to communicate?
- What examples will I use?
- Who is my audience?
- How can I present my ideas clearly?

You may create:

-  a poster
-  a fact page
-  an infographic
-  a digital presentation
-  a short video
-  a social media awareness campaign
-  a mini booklet

You may include:

-  appearance examples
-  media examples
-  key messages
-  data or statistics
-  explanations
-  visuals
-  interesting discoveries

As you create, you may notice new connections between media, appearance, and identity.


There is no single correct way to create.





Different Pathfinders may choose different ways to share their discoveries.


## Reflection

How did this Curiosity Pack feel?

 Loved it

 Interesting

 Okay

 Challenging

Pathfinders may think about:

- What surprised you?
- What did you discover about media influence?
- How does media shape appearance expectations?
- What patterns did you notice?
- What would you like to learn more about?
- Which activity did you enjoy most?

You may reflect by:

- talking
- drawing
- writing
- creating
- recording a short explanation

