

A TEACHER'S GUIDE FOR THE *Spa@eheadz* SERIES

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INTRODUCTION

What is media literacy?

Literacy refers to our ability to read and write in a particular language. *Media literacy* expands what we consider to be “language.” Today, we regularly convey meaning through symbols, language, and communication in a variety of forms, including information that is *print-based* (media we *read*), *audio* (media we *hear*), *visual* (media we *see*), and *interactive* (media we *use* or *play with*).

Students and teachers alike incorporate lots of different media and technology tools into their learning and their lives. Media literacy is one way to explore our relationship to the many forms of messages, symbols, and ideas that we interact with every day, from books to websites to advertisements to text messages.

As we explore Jon Scieszka’s *Spaceheadz*, we are going to put on our Protective Tinfoil Helmets® to help us be *critical thinkers* like Michael K. Michael K. asks lots of questions about all of the media in his life. Just like him, we are going to ask lots of questions about *what* it is that different media tell us, *how* these media were created, and *why* they say what they say.

Key ideas in media literacy

Media literacy education emphasizes several key ideas and questions that critical thinkers ask about all of the media they encounter. These ideas include:

I. Authors and Audiences: The relationship between the people who make media (authors) and the people who use and experience media (audiences).

- Who made this media, and how and why did they make it?
- Whom did the authors make the media for?
- How do I interpret this media?
- How might someone else interpret this media differently?

II. Messages and Meanings: What media messages tell us (and don’t tell us), and how and why they do it.

- What is this media saying, directly or indirectly?
- What techniques does this media use to attract my attention?
- What does this media want me to think, believe, or do?
- What information is included in this media, and what information is left out?

III. Representation and Reality: How do media messages reflect or shape the realities they represent?

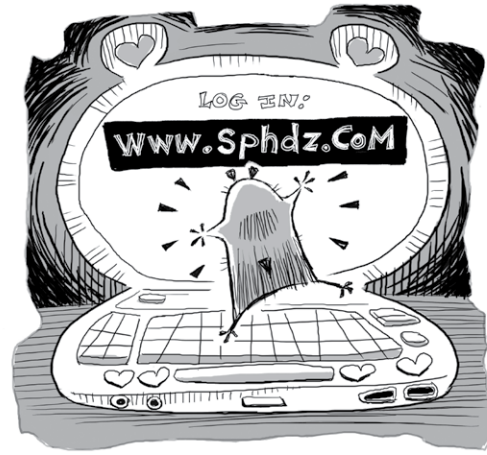
- How does this media portray real people, events, or ideas?
- Does this media’s portrayal of reality seem accurate or inaccurate?
- Does this media use stereotypes to simplify characters or certain types of people?
- Was this media created for private gain or for public good?






SPHDZ BOOK #1

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Discussion Questions

1. Talk about products, brands, logos, slogans, and jingles. Throughout the Spaceheadz series, we learn that the Spaceheadz aliens have been exposed to lots of media on their home planet. They've learned about things like:
 - **Products:** The food, clothing, toys, electronics, and other things that are created and sold by companies.
 - **Brands:** The names of popular products that we often see advertised on television or sold in stores.
 - **Logos:** Visual symbols that remind us of a particular brand. You can probably imagine the McDonalds "golden arches," the Facebook "f," and even the Spaceheadz logo: 
 - **Slogans:** Short, memorable phrases that are associated with popular brands of food, clothing, and entertainment.
 - **Jingles:** Slogans that are sung or set to music, and designed to get stuck in your head.

What products, brands, logos, slogans, or jingles do you recognize throughout the book? Where have you seen or heard about them before? (You might say things like, "I saw this on TV after my favorite show" or "My sister eats that cereal.") Why do you think you remember these products, brands, slogans, and jingles as well as you do?

2. **Be skeptical—can you trust that information?** Michael K. is skeptical about the Spaceheadz at first. When we are skeptical, we don't trust whether something we see or hear is true until we have lots of information we trust, which is called *evidence*. What kind of evidence helps Michael K. trust that the Spaceheadz really are who they say they are? When in your life have you been skeptical of something someone has shown you or told you? When have you been skeptical about something you've seen on TV or the Internet, read in a book, or heard on the radio or YouTube? Have you ever been skeptical about products you've seen advertised on television or online?
3. **Identify stereotypes.** Sometimes when authors create characters in media like books, comics, TV shows, movies, and video games, they use stereotypes. Stereotypes are ways of describing groups of people that represent a small and sometimes unrealistic aspect of who they are. For instance, sometimes teachers are portrayed as mean and strict even though you have probably had teachers who are not like that at all. Are there any stereotypes in the first Spaceheadz book? Think about the different characters—are Agent Umber, Mom K., Dad K., Mrs. Halley, the Chief of AAA, Joey the school bully, Nurse Dominique, or Mr. Rizzuto defined by one particular *trait* or *aspect* of their character? What else might we learn about them that would tell us more about who they are? Now think about other characters you know in media—can you think of stereotypes in any of the shows or movies you watch, games you play, songs you listen to, books you read, or websites you visit?
4. **Attract people's attention through media.** Michael K. needs to help the Spaceheadz recruit 3.14 million and one kids to become Spaceheadz. If you had to reach millions of kids, what kind of media might you use to get your message out? Would you create a website, like Michael K. did? Would you get the word out on social networks like Facebook? Would you create a commercial for television? Would you put your message on a billboard? Would you write a song? Would you create a video game? What would these media look and sound like? Why would they grab lots of kids' attention?
5. **Send messages over the airwaves.** Author Jon Scieszka describes how all media messages are sent through *airwaves*, which are paths through the air all around us that can carry information. Humans cannot see or hear the information traveling along these paths without special technologies like TVs, radios, cell phones, or computers. Imagine that you could send one song, one TV show, and one website to another planet through the airwaves. What media would you want representing our planet? Why would that be the best media to represent us?

I would choose the song _____	because _____.
I would choose the show _____	because _____.
I would choose the website _____	because _____.

Activities

1. Make your own Picklephone (See Picklephone activity sheet at the end of this section)

In this activity, you will talk with other students in your class about all of the features on Agent Umber's Picklephone. The Picklephone is a lot like a *smart phone*—a cell phone that also connects to the Internet.

Now design your own perfect Picklephone on the attached Picklephone worksheet. Design all of the features you think it should have to make it the best possible phone. These might be features that exist on phones now, like certain buttons, apps, or tools. Or they might be features that haven't been invented yet. Next to the drawing, you should write down all of the features and describe what they do and why they're important. Why did you design your Picklephone this way? Who do you think might like to have a Picklephone like this and why?

2. Create a slogan or jingle for your school

Slogans and jingles are often used to help us remember the names of products, brand names, and phone numbers in television or radio commercials. But slogans and jingles can also be used to help us remember important lessons (as in the classic *Schoolhouse Rock!* series or the show *Sesame Street*), learn ways to help people and the world (in public service announcements or charity songs), and promote causes we believe in. If you had to come up with a slogan or a jingle for your school, what would it say, and why would people remember it? A slogan should be very short and very easy to remember.

First look at examples of slogans in advertising or in public service announcements to get a sense of what characteristics they have. You might find these slogans in the Spaceheadz books or from other media. For instance, the car company Dodge uses the slogan "Ram Tough!" for its line of Ram trucks because they want you to believe that their trucks are tough. However, toilet paper company Charmin probably would not want you to think their toilet paper was tough, which is why they call it "ultra-soft."

Next, brainstorm as a class what you might want people to remember about your school—is it the way the school looks? Is it the kind of learning that happens there? Is it the way teachers and students work together?

Finally, try to write a short, memorable slogan or a jingle that highlights some of the things you want people to remember about your school. You might create several slogans and jingles (just like Dad K. does as an advertiser) and select the best one by voting as a class.

3. Create a comic in an animal language (See comic activity sheet at the end of this section)

There are several passages in the Spaceheadz series in which Major Fluffy "talks" to characters in his hamster language—"Eee! Eeeek! Wee eee eek!" We later have to use context clues and translations from other characters to figure out what he actually said.

Do you think that you could create an entire story in a language that no one else could understand?

One way that we can tell stories without the use of print is by drawing picture stories or comics. Individually or in groups, try to plan out a story as a comic that does not use any words that we can understand. That means you will want to focus on context clues from your drawings to help readers understand what's happening even when they don't know what your character is saying.

First, decide what kind of animal your character will be. You can use word balloons in your drawings, but instead of using real words, you'll use the words that your animal uses—in Major Fluffy's case, that means "eek eee eek!"

On the comic worksheet, you'll find a page of comic panels. Panels are shapes on a page that contain multiple pictures that are read in a specific order, just like in a comic strip, comic book, or graphic novel. Use these panels to create a short story or situation about your animal character that readers can understand without the use of words.



Special features include...

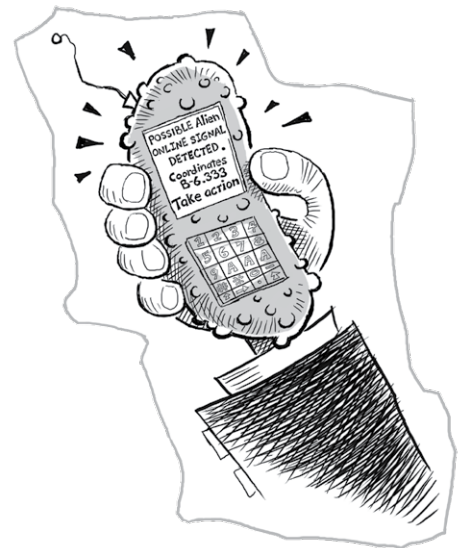
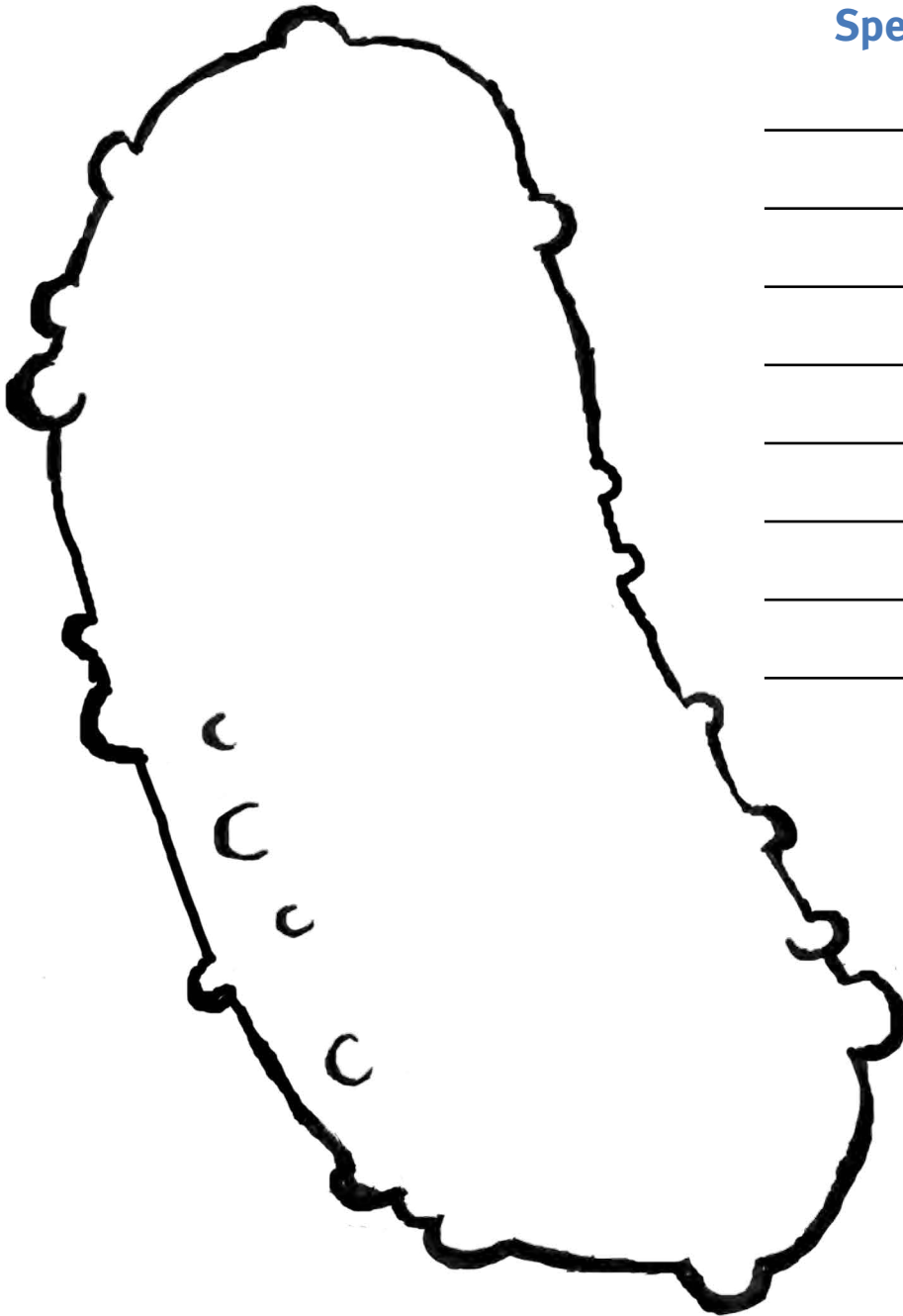


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People are going to want this Picklephone because



Comic Worksheet

TITLE: _____

As told in the language of _____ (animal).

GLOSSARY SECTION:

Text box: In a text box, you can narrate your story, just like in a book. (Text box reads: "It was a dark and stormy night...")

Word balloon: In a word balloon, you can add the dialogue that your character is saying. (Remember, in this comic, your character can only talk in their animal language!)

Thought balloon: In a thought balloon, we see what a character is thinking, even though no one else in the comic can hear it.



SPHYZ BOOK #2

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Discussion Questions

1. Talk about ads. Dad K. is an *advertiser*. That means that he is the author of the advertisements that you see on billboards, posters, television and radio commercials, websites, and sometimes even in video games. What are some advertisements that you remember? Why do you think they were so memorable?

2. Explore advertising claims. Advertisers use different techniques to capture our attention and persuade us to like or buy their products. They claim that their products are better than other products. They sometimes claim that their products will make your life better. Think about the different advertisements you've experienced on TV, radio, online, or in public on billboards, buses, or posters. What products have you used that didn't live up to the hype? When did advertisements claim things that turned out to be inaccurate or even false (for instance, you might say "This toy wasn't how it looked in the commercial," or "These shoes didn't make me run faster")? What products did exactly what their advertisements promised? How might you figure out whether or not an advertisement's claims about its product are accurate?

3. Target your audience. When Venus and TJ join the Spaceheadz team, they have some ideas about how to better promote—or spread the word about—Spaceheadz. They think that the website could be cooler and there are lots of other ways to reach out to new recruits. When they make their choices as authors of websites, they have a particular audience in mind—this is called the author's *target audience*. How might Venus and TJ promote Spaceheadz differently to reach these different target audiences?

- Kids who love computers
- Kids who love cartoons
- Kids who love skateboarding
- Kids who love science
- Kids who love fashion
- Kids who love music
- Teachers
- Principals
- Kindergartners
- Parents
- Grandparents
- People from another country

4. Thinking about little kids' media. Michael K. and his friends figure out that kindergartners need special techniques to hold their attention. Michael K. sings a children's song to hold their attention. Think about different kinds of media for little kids, like TV shows, songs, movies, apps, and games for kindergartners or younger brothers and sisters. How are these media different from media for big kids? What's different about how they look and sound, what kinds of stories they tell, or how they grab their audience's attention? What were your favorite media when you were little, and how do they compare to media that you like now?

5. Predicting what will happen next. One important way that Michael K. helps his friends is by always looking out for clues that tell him more about what will happen next. At the end of the second Spaceheadz book, the Chief thinks to himself, "Umber had messed up . . . perfectly." Why did the Chief leave us with that remark? What do you think will happen next in the story?

Now think about some of the other media you have experienced—TV shows, movies, books, comics, and video games. Are there any times when you had a strong sense that you knew exactly what would happen next? Were you right or wrong in your prediction? If you were right, what clues did you have that let you know what was going to happen—was it the music, something a character said, or something that reminded you of a similar story? How about times when you thought you knew what would happen but things didn't really happen that way? How were you surprised, and why couldn't you see it coming?

Activities

1. Sell Spaceheadz to different target audiences

In Discussion Question #3, you were shown several possible target audiences for the Spaceheadz initiative. Imagine that you need to create a flyer that convinces one of these target audiences to BE SPACEHEADZ.

Using words, drawings, or even media from magazines or the Internet, create a persuasive flyer that targets your particular audience. Remember that when you target an audience, you need to think about what will attract the attention of your audience. For instance, you probably won't capture teachers' attention with slogans or pictures that appeal to little kids.

When you've created your flyer, you can *pitch* it to the whole class. A pitch is a short and lively presentation of a concept or an idea. In a pitch, you give everyone the most important information about your work in a way that is engaging and appropriate to your target audience. For instance, if you were going to pitch your flyer for kids, you might want to talk about *why* your design would attract the attention of kids.

2. Tell the same story from different points of view

In the second book of the Spaceheadz series, we see the same event happen several times from different points of view. Depending on their point of view, different characters have different experiences and information from other characters. When we read all of the stories together, we can piece together what really happened.

Could you write a story about one event that has several different points of view? First, you will need to imagine one event that might affect several different characters. Then you'll need to come up with at least three characters that might have been affected by this event. Figure out where these different characters were when the event happened and how they reacted. Now write a story that describes each of their stories from their different points of view. You might write each story in the first person, meaning the character him- or herself is telling their side of the story.

Your stories should give us different information about the event. For instance, if you were to tell the story about how three different people reacted to a loud noise, then each person's point of view might tell us a little more about what the noise was. The first character might have no idea what the noise was. The second character might have gotten a glimpse. The third character might have caused the noise.

See how creative you can get—use dialogue, description, and, if you like, pictures or comics to help tell your story.

3. Adapt or remix a fairy tale

In the second Spaceheadz book, the kindergartners perform an adaptation of the classic fairy tale "Little Red Riding Hood." In an adaptation, you take an existing story and retell it in a new way. Some people call the process of taking something original and presenting it in a new way "remixing."

There are about a million ways to adapt or remix a story. You might change the setting, the time period, or you might tell it in a new style—as a comic book, movie, or song. Today you're going to adapt a fairy tale, just like the Spaceheadz did in the book.

First, you'll need to choose your fairy tale. This could be any short story that you already know—you could even remix Spaceheadz and create your own Spaceheadz story!

Next, select your *genre*—the type of story you're telling (like "comedy," "romance," or "action"). Also select your setting and your characters. How will the different genre or setting change the way your characters look or act?

Finally, figure out the style in which you'd like to tell your story. Is it going to be a news report? A comic book? A YouTube video blog? A poem? There are so many different styles, genres, settings, and stories to choose from. Have fun and use your imagination!

My genre is _____.
My setting is _____.
My characters will be similar to the original, because _____.
But they will be different from the original, because _____.
I will tell this story in the style of a _____.



4. SPHDZ existing ads, commercials, websites, products.

Paste a SPHDZ logo over almost anything . . . and it becomes an ad/commercial/website for SPHDZ.



SPHDZ BOOK #3

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1. Figuring out “real and fake.” Bob and Jennifer, who were raised on television and radio airwaves from Earth, tend to believe everything that they hear. So it comes as a big surprise when they realize that the Santa Claus at the donut shop is not, in fact, really Santa Claus. Think about your experiences with media—from television, radio, Internet, video games, and books. Have you ever figured out that something you thought was real turned out actually to be fake? How did you figure it out, and how did you feel afterward?

2. The good and bad of groups and networks. Jon Scieszka tells us all about networks and group intelligence between chapters in this book. Are you part of any networks online or offline at home, in school, or in your community? How do these networks work together to help one another? We also learn in this book that sometimes acting in groups can lead to problems. In your experience, can you think of any times when groups of people worked together in ways that weren't helpful? Maybe at a sporting event where lots of people joined in booing a player? Maybe when someone did something mean, some people in a group joined in when they might not have if they were alone? How could helpful networks work together to stop bad things from happening? Can you name any animal, insect, or plant networks?

3. I want that! . . . But what is it? When the Brainwave gets taken over by General Accounting and the evil Chief, it is used to make people crave a make-believe product called “Purple Nertz.” Have you ever seen a commercial for something without knowing exactly what it was or why someone might want it? Have you ever remembered a character (like the KIA gerbils or the GEICO gecko) or a catchy jingle (like the FreeCreditScore.com songs) without really knowing what the product does? What are some of the problems that might come up when we want or like things without knowing enough about what they're really made of?

4. Paying attention to the ads around us. When Mom K. and Dad K. meet each other in New York City's Times Square, they are surrounded by brands, logos, and advertisements. It would take a very long time to count all of the advertisements you can see in the middle of a busy city center like Times Square, but what about in our everyday lives? How many advertisements do you think you hear, see, or click in one day? Think about advertisements you've seen today—whether they were on posters, billboards, or buses, commercials on television, or even printed on school supplies like pens and notebooks. How many advertisements can your whole class remember from the last twenty-four hours? Now try to keep track of every advertisement that you see for one whole day (see the activity “Keep an Advertising Log”). What did you notice about trying to keep track of how many advertisements you can find?

5. Are toys fun or “junk”? When Michael K. and his friends go to a toy store, Michael K. tells them, “This is a toy store. And none of it is real. You only want all of the junk in here because ads have told you you want it.” Do you agree with Michael K. or disagree with him? Do you think that toys are “a scam,” or do you think there are other reasons that you like toys besides the advertisements you see? Think about some of the toy commercials and ads you can remember. Are there any advertisements that made you want something only to find that it wasn't that fun, or got boring quickly? How about toys that were just as fun as the advertisement promised? How about toys that you wanted without ever seeing an advertisement for it? What made these different kinds of toys different from or similar to each other?



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Activities

1. Keep an advertising log (See advertising log activity sheet at the end of this section)

You may not know it, but on any given day, you might see dozens of advertisements. Ads are designed to persuade people to purchase products. Ads can be printed on billboards and posters, broadcast on television and radio, even built into websites as pictures or special video games called “advergames.”

For one day, try to mark down every single advertisement that you see, whether it’s outside on a building, a bus, or a telephone pole; whether it’s on TV or on the radio; or whether it’s on one of your favorite websites or even built into one of your favorite video games.

Using the advertising log worksheet, write down each ad you see with a short description of it. At the end of the day, add up all of the ads you saw. Are you surprised at the results? Share with your class and see if your friends had a similar or different experience tracking their advertisements.

2. Create an ad for Purple Nertz

Purple Nertz are not real—but that shouldn’t stop us from selling them! There are lots of ways that we can sell products to people without telling them exactly what the product is. You might think of your favorite *mascots*—characters who represent particular brands. You might think of a slogan that people will remember. You might use strong adjectives that will make people think your product is great.

Could you come up with a convincing advertisement for Purple Nertz that doesn’t ever tell us what Purple Nertz actually are? On a blank sheet of paper, try to come up with an advertisement for Purple Nertz that never really tells us what Purple Nertz are. Use drawings, words, color, and other elements of design to make your advertisement persuasive.

When you’re finished with your ad, look at the other ads that students have created in class. What do you notice about their ads? Can you think of any other products that find ways to attract your attention without ever telling you what they are?

3. Map your networks (See guide at the end of this section)

In this activity, you’ll create a visual map of your *networks*—groups of people that you know. You will not use anyone’s name or other personal information.

In the middle of a blank sheet of paper, write the word “ME” in a circle. Now think about all of the different parts of your life. You know people from school, from your family, from activities, from online environments, or from other parts of your life.

Use one line from your “ME” circle for each part of your life. Those parts of your life, like “family,” “activities,” etc., will become their own circle. If you want to split up *those* circles, you can use more lines. (If you’re confused, take a look at the Map Your Networks guide at the end of this section for reference).

What you should be looking at on your paper are all of the people in your network. Now we’re going to ask some questions about our networks. Imagine that everything you said could be sent to everyone in your network. You might not want to say things to your friends that you would say to your family. You might not want to say things to people you know from your after-school activities that you would say to your classmates.

Look at the questions in the box below. If you were going to answer these questions, who would you want to share those answers with in your network? Remember, **you don’t really need to answer these questions**. It’s okay if you don’t want to share the answers with anyone from any of your networks. You just need to figure out who you might feel okay or not okay sharing the answers with.

“What is your name?” I might share this with my _____ circle, but I probably would not share it with my _____ circle.

“Where do you live?” I might share this with my _____ circle, but I probably would not share it with my _____ circle.

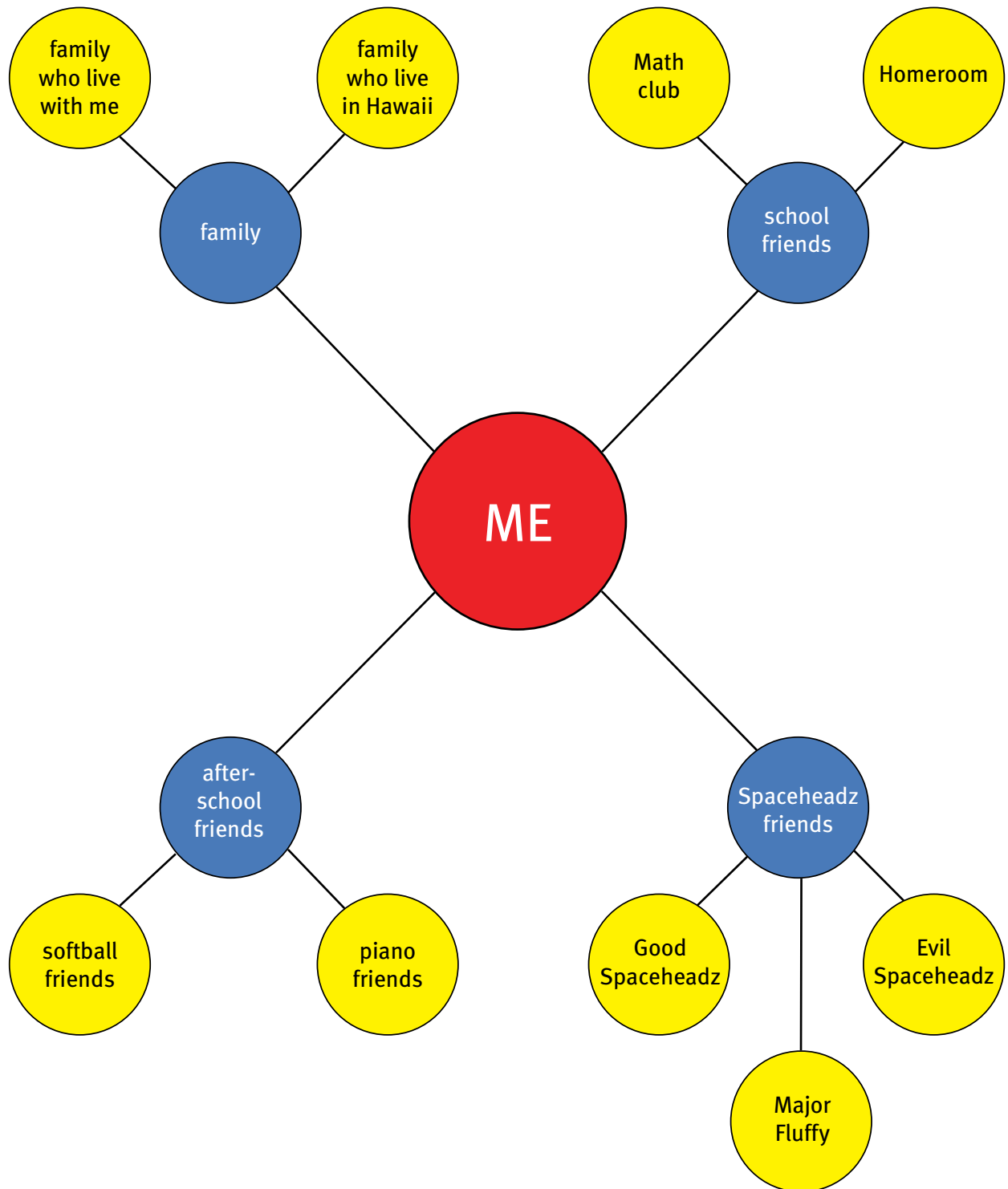
“What are your favorite media—TV shows, music, video games, websites, and movies?” I might share this with my _____ circle, but I probably would not share it with my _____ circle.

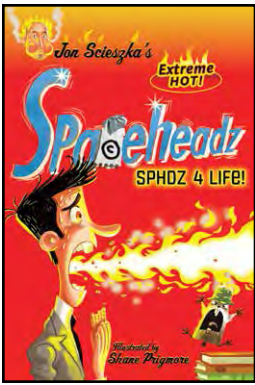
“When is your birthday?” I might share this with my _____ circle, but I probably would not share it with my _____ circle.

“What’s the most embarrassing thing that’s ever happened to you?” I might share this with my _____ circle, but I probably would not share it with my _____ circle.

“Who do you have a crush on?” I might share this with my _____ circle, but I probably would not share it with my _____ circle.

Discussion time! How did other students in your class organize their circles in their network? Is there anything someone would share with his or her circle that you wouldn’t share with yours? Is there anything you’d share with one of your circles that someone else wouldn’t have shared? Why or why not?





SPH4Z BOOK #4

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Discussion Questions

1. Good guys and bad guys in media. In Book 4, we're shown that media can get the word out about bad guys, but we're also shown that media can make people appear to be "bad guys" even when it's not true. The good Spaceheadz crew creates media to warn people about the bad guy Chief, but the Chief just as easily creates media to make Mom K. and Dad K. look like bad guys too. Who we call a "bad guy" sometimes depends on our point of view. For instance, you might have read Jon Scieszka's *The True Story of the Three Little Pigs*, which is told from the point of view of the wolf (who obviously does not think of himself as "big and bad"!). Do you know about any bad guys in real life? How are they shown to us on news, television shows, or online? How about good guys in real life? How are they shown to us differently from the bad guys?

2. Too much media? When the Chief takes over the school, he forces everyone to watch TV, play video games, surf the web, and use all other kinds of media all day and all night. At first it's fun, but soon students start feeling "media overload." Have you ever watched too much TV, played too many video games, or been on the Internet for too long? What did it feel like? Why do you think you kept watching, listening, clicking, or playing? Do you think there is there such a thing as "too much media"?

3. Resisting WantWaves. Michael K. has the ability to resist WantWaves. His dad, an advertiser, has taught him about all of the tricks and techniques that advertisers use to capture people's attention. When we figure out how and why advertisements were created, they sometimes lose their power. We can think about whether what advertisements tell us is *credible*, or reliable, and we can think about why companies might want us to buy their products. Have you ever seen an advertisement that you were skeptical about, or an advertisement that you thought might not be telling the whole truth? What made you question this advertisement? Was it something about the way the product looked? Was it an experience you've had with a similar product?

4. Who's telling the story? At the end of Spaceheadz, we hear about what happened to save the day from an unlikely source—the kindergartners! How is their version of the story different from the version of the story we read in the following chapter? What's different about how the kindergartners remembered the event? What's different about the language the kindergartners use? Why do you think the kindergartners' version of the story is different from the story told from Michael K.'s point of view? How do you think the story might be told from the point of view of other characters—from the Chief's point of view? From Venus's point of view? From Major Fluffy's point of view?

5. Make an informed decision about becoming a Spaceheadz. Now that you know the whole Spaceheadz story, think back to the first two books in the series. Michael K. eventually could do anything—he saved the day!—but he also helped sign up a lot of kids for Spaceheadz without really knowing what might happen as a result. What would you tell Michael K. in the first book now that you know what problems could happen as a result of signing kids up for Spaceheadz? What could Michael have done in the first book to learn more about Spaceheadz before he helped them recruit 3.14 million and one kids to their website? Sometimes when we sign up for something before we know enough about what it is, we can run into problems later that we didn't think about. What kind of information would you want to know about a website, a social network, or a club you sign up for before you decided to become a member? How can we learn more about how signing up for something might affect us in the future?



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Activities

1. Keep a media diary for one week (See media diary worksheet at the end of this section)

Michael K.'s classmates experience some serious media overload as they surf the web, watch TV, and play video games all day and all night. Most people read, watch, listen, and play with lots of media, whether that means any of the following activities:

- Reading a book
- Watching TV or movies
- Listening to music or radio
- Going online to read, hang out, or play games
- Reading comics
- Calling and texting on cell phones
- Playing video games

For one week, try to keep track of all of the media you use. At the end of each day, think back on all of the media that you've experienced in and out of school. Keep a record of *what* and *how long* you watched, listened to, read, used, or played with media.

What kind of media did you use the most? What kind of media did you use the least? Did any of your media use surprise you? Would you think about doing anything differently now that you've seen what a week in your media life looks like? How do your uses of media differ from your friends' use?

2. Create a media collage for your headquarters

The Spaceheadz have decked out their headquarters with all of the media they know and love. We often use media to help us understand who we are, what we like, and how we want others to think about us.

Imagine that you had the opportunity to design your own special media headquarters, and you had to decorate it with all of the media that represents you. What media would you choose?

On a piece of paper, create a media collage that represents you. This will be the design of your special headquarters. Anyone who enters your HQ will know a lot about you from the media that you choose to represent yourself. You might cut pictures out of magazines, print photos or cartoons from the Internet, or draw characters from media yourself.

At the bottom of your collage, write three or four sentences about all of the media you chose to represent you. What kind of media was it? Media that you read, watch, hear, or play with? Media from music, sports, TV, or comics? Why did you choose this media, and how is it different from the media that other students chose?

3. Make a bad guy good

We know that media can be a powerful force to get the word out about bad guys. But imagine that you are in a *public relations* firm—a company that is paid to make their famous clients look good—and you have been hired to create a poster that makes a bad guy look good to a particular group of people. For instance, the Chief might hire a public relations firm to make good Spaceheadz think he is not an evil criminal mastermind.

Think about a villain that you know from media. This might be the villain in a fairy tale, like the Big Bad Wolf, or a villain in a show, movie, or comic book. Now create a poster that makes this villain seem good. You might use any of the following techniques:

- Telling a popular story from a new perspective
- Using details from the villain's life or childhood that make people better understand them or feel bad for them
- Emphasizing good work (like charity or community service) that no one else knows about
- Using positive traits (like "warm," "caring," or "helpful") to change people's minds
- Putting your villain with things that people feel good about
- Drawing your villain differently from how he or she's usually drawn

Was your attempt to make your villain "good" successful? Why or why not? What techniques did other people use to make their villain appear good instead of bad?

_____ 'S MEDIA DIARY



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DAY: _____ DATE: _____

	What did you read, watch, listen to, use, or play with?	For how long?	Give a short description
WATCHED TV OR MOVIES			
PLAYED VIDEO GAMES (ONLINE OR ON A CONSOLE)			
LISTENED TO MUSIC OR RADIO			
WENT ONLINE FOR HOMEWORK OR FOR FUN			
USED A CELL PHONE			
READ A BOOK, MAGAZINE, OR COMIC			

DAY: _____ DATE: _____

	What did you read, watch, listen to, use, or play with?	For how long?	Give a short description
WATCHED TV OR MOVIES			
PLAYED VIDEO GAMES (ONLINE OR ON A CONSOLE)			
LISTENED TO MUSIC OR RADIO			
WENT ONLINE FOR HOMEWORK OR FOR FUN			
USED A CELL PHONE			
READ A BOOK, MAGAZINE, OR COMIC			

Frequently Asked Questions for Teachers

1. What counts as “media”?

Media is anything that can communicate a message. We use media in school all of the time in print form—books, worksheets, articles, and much more. We can also include *audio* media like radio broadcasts and songs; *visual media* like photographs, comics, and videos; and *interactive media* like video games, websites, and multimedia.

2. Do I need state-of-the-art technology and web access to do the activities in this discussion guide?

No. Good media literacy education emphasizes the ways in which we think about, create, and share media in our everyday lives, but it does not require any particular kind of technology. Though there is an engaging multimedia and online component of the Spaceheadz series, media literacy begins with inquiry and reflective practice, not the use of technology tools.

3. I don’t know anything about (or don’t like) the popular culture and digital media my students bring in to our discussions. What can I do?

Remember that media literacy begins with inquiry about our own values, and does not assume that there’s any such thing as “expertise” in children’s popular culture. Giving students a space to share, ask questions, and become mindful of their own media habits is always the first step in the critical thinking process. Ask lots of “how and why” questions and be ready and willing to learn more from your students.

4. How can I deal with controversial media that might come up in the classroom?

Try to keep conversations based on students’ experiences. Don’t feel compelled to bring any media that students mention into the classroom. Students are usually aware of boundaries for appropriate and inappropriate media material. Making a shared set of classroom rules about content can help to create agreed-upon boundaries for conversations about media and opportunities to analyze media.

5. Does media literacy align with the Common Core State Standards?

Yes. Common Core recognizes the need to incorporate multimedia and media literacy as a foundation for the composition and communication skills of today’s learners. You can read more about how media literacy and new literacies align with Common Core in William Kist’s article for *Educational Leadership*:

ASCD.org/Publications/Educational-Leadership/mar13/vol70/num06/New-Literacies-and-the-Common-Core.aspx

6. Is it legal to use copyrighted imagery from popular culture in my lessons?

Yes. Teachers have a wide latitude to incorporate copyrighted media for analysis, curriculum development, and instruction according to the Best Practices in Fair Use for Media Literacy Education. You can learn more at the Center for Social Media: CenterForSocialMedia.org/Fair-Use/Related-Materials/Codes/Fair-Use-and-Media-Literacy-Education

OTHER MEDIA LITERACY RESOURCES

There are a wide variety of resources that teachers can turn to in order to learn more about media literacy education.

The National Association for Media Literacy Education (NAMLE) is the professional association of educators, researchers, media-makers, and policy experts who incorporate key principles in media literacy education into their practice. You can learn more about NAMLE’s members and core principles at NAMLE.net

The Media Education Lab at the University of Rhode Island is home to resources, research, and curricula in media literacy education. Of note are the Media Education Lab’s resources in copyright and fair use (MediaEducationLab.com/Copyright) and a national media literacy policy white paper, “Digital and Media Literacy” (MediaEducationLab.com/Digital-and-Media-Literacy-Plan-Action).

Admongo (Admongo.gov) is an interactive game and curriculum guide from the Federal Trade Commission designed to teach elementary and middle learners about the role of advertising in their everyday lives.

Common Sense Media (CommonSenseMedia.org) provides teachers and parents with information about content appropriateness in a variety of media, along with innovative curriculum in digital citizenship and 1:1 laptop programs.

The **Digital Media and Learning Research Hub** (DMLHub.net) offers resources, videos, research, and more that will deepen your understanding of the power of digital media to transform education in and out of school.

The Joan Ganz Cooney Center at Sesame Workshop (<http://www.JoanGanzCooneyCenter.org>) is a research institution dedicated to exploring how children learn with and about digital media.

KidzVuz (KidzVuz.com) is a platform for elementary and middle school students to share their analysis and opinions about the media they use in a public forum.

The Media Literacy Clearinghouse (FrankWBaker.com/Default1.htm) is a treasure trove of media literacy resources compiled and curated by media educator Frank W. Baker.

Powerful Voices for Kids (PowerfulVoicesForKids.com) is a national network and professional development model for media literacy integration in K–8 settings.

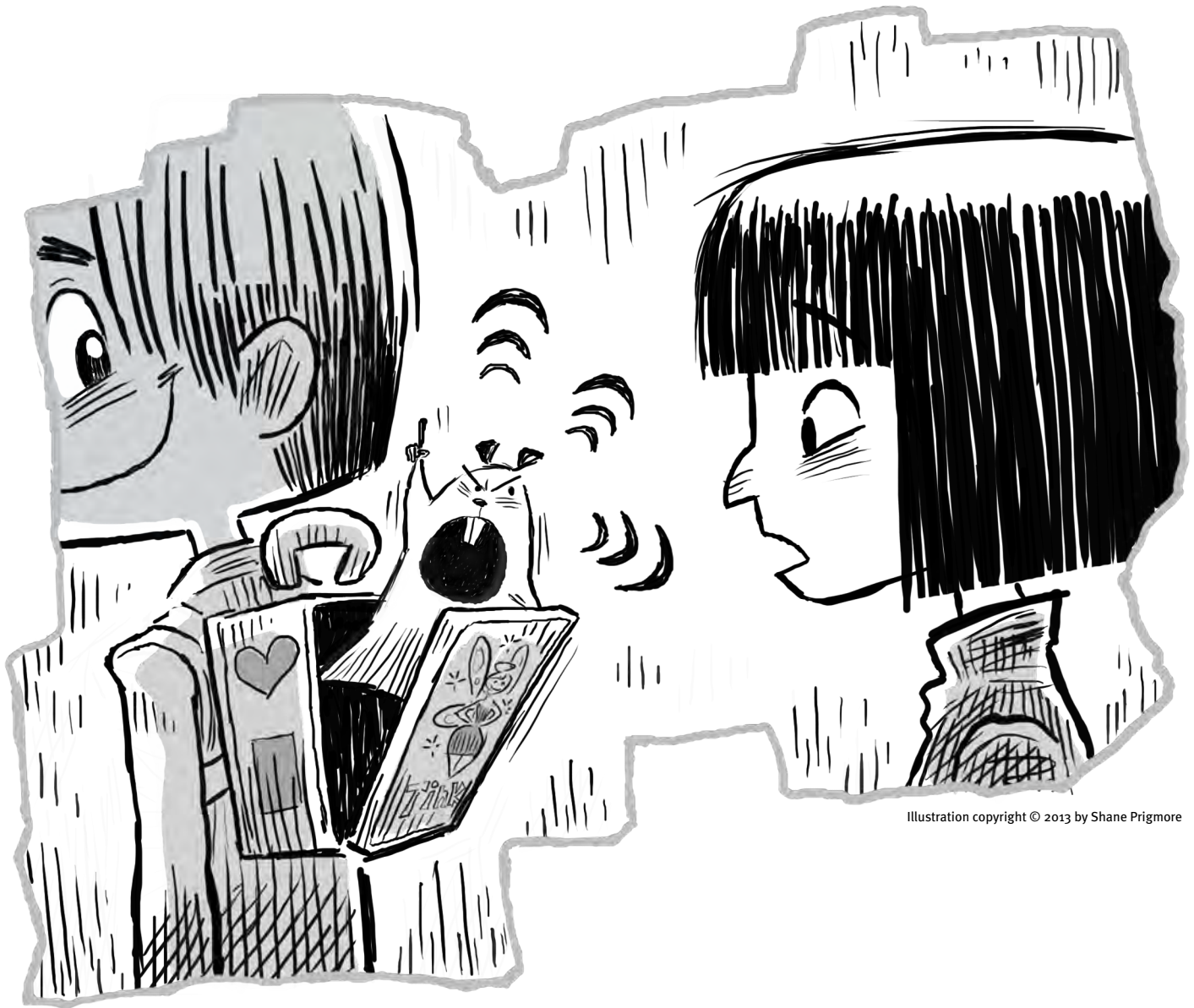


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