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REALITY CHECK CARD

To understand media so that we consume it and engage with it responsibly requires critical thinking. There are several questions we can ask to determine if the information we are reading/seeing/hearing is propaganda or is biased in some way. Review the following questions to practise media literacy:

1. **Who is the author**/creator of the content I am viewing/reading? Do they have any obvious biases on the topic?
2. **What is the purpose** of the content? Is there a message (overt or implicit)?
3. **How does** the author/creator gain and hold your attention?
4. **What values and/or points of view** are represented? Is the representation accurate? Why or why not? Which points of view are excluded?
5. **How might different people interpret** the content? Could they infer a different message depending on their own background and point of view?
6. **What is omitted** from the message?

Imagine if Leah had a camera with her to record images. What do you think her images would have included? What perspective would she have shown?

Consider the following points as you examine your chosen image(s):

- What is accurate or inaccurate about the image/film or the content of its message?
- Public or private good: Consider who is benefiting from the distribution of this information/message. Is this information useful for the public to know? Who stands to gain from the ideas being presented/reinforced in the image/film?
- Notice what information is left out of the image or media. Why was this information omitted? How would the missing information change what is being presented?
- How does the message of the image you are looking at align or not align with your own values? What emotions does it inspire in you? What associations do you have with different elements in the image/film (e.g., a laughing child implies a happy scene)? Why might those elements have been chosen for this image/film?
- Reading between the lines: What ideas are implied but not stated directly? Why might the message be implied instead of stated overtly?
- Stereotype alert: Stereotypes of people and oversimplification of situations can be used to influence our emotions or perceptions. What stereotypes are present and how do they constrict the messaging or story in the image/film? What is left out? How does the image/film reinforce stereotypes about a certain group of people? Why might the author/creator choose to oversimplify a situation?
- What will this image/film tell us about ourselves as Canadians in 50 years from now? What is the overall worth and value of the message over time (what does it reveal or conceal)?