

# The Medium & The Message

This trimester, media will be a common thread in all four classes. There are many definitions of the word *media*\*. We will consider media as "a means of mass communication such as newspapers, magazines, radio, and television." ([www.dictionary.com](http://www.dictionary.com)) We will extend this definition to include visual art media and musical instruments.

## Main Project

In groups of two, you will design and implement your own medium. You will then compose one significant message specifically for your medium.

The medium will be a physical construction which must be capable of rendering a significantly wide range of possible compositions. The medium must be able to express either visual and/or auditory (possibly musical) information.

The message might be a narrative, an expression of opinion, or an aesthetically motivated composition.

## Connections

### *Physics*

In Physics, you will be studying light and sound. Understanding how a given medium works, oftentimes requires understanding properties of either light or sound or even both (as in the case of television.)

### *Humanities*

In Humanities, you will learn about the history and sociological effects of media, from ancient to modern times. There will be a focus on mass media in your own lives.

### *Spanish*

In Spanish, you may examine Spanish-language media and compare it to English-language media. For example, how do Spanish-language sitcoms or news programs compare to their English equivalents?

### *Mathematics*

In Mathematics, you will learn about the mathematics that is necessary to represent information (such as text, audio or video), both in analog and digital forms.

## Schedule

You will have the first five weeks of the trimester to complete the physical device, the medium, which you will present on Friday, May 31. You will then have the next three weeks to complete your composition, the message for your medium, which you will present on Tuesday, June 24. On every Wednesday of the trimester, a status report will be due. Please consult the Third Trimester Project Calendar for more information.

*\*While the word media was once strictly the plural form of medium, it is now accepted to use it in singular form in many contexts according [www.dictionary.com](http://www.dictionary.com).*

## **Examples of Media**

Below is a list of media devices. These examples are meant to serve as suggestions, and by no means do they represent a complete list of possible projects. Most of the examples below are media devices that already exist. However, you should feel free to think of an entirely new kind of medium. Be creative.

### **audio**

- microphone
- speaker
- audio tape recorder
- Edison-style recorder
- AM radio
- musical instrument
  - wind instrument
  - string instrument
  - percussion instrument
  - theremin (50's era electric instrument)
  - totally new kind of instrument

### **visual**

- zoetrope (old-style rotating animation viewer)
- camera (still photographic image type)
- printing press (with movable type)
- image halftoner (photos into dots)
- dot-matrix electrical printer
- recorded LED / light bulb theater
- puppet / marionette theater
- art making machine (think spyrograph)
- laser-light show

### **other**

- Morse encoder / decoder
- secret encryptor / decryptor
- lighthouse

## **Examples of Messages**

For a well-designed medium, there are almost infinite numbers of possible messages which may be composed for that medium. Of course, every medium has certain kinds of messages that are more appropriate than others. Here is a list of various kinds of messages.

- story / narrative
- dialogue / play
- opinion / editorial
- advertisement
- instruction / manual
- technical description
- historical account
- purely artistic expression

## **The Medium and the Message**

Project Proposal Assignment

9<sup>th</sup> Grade Humanities

Due: 5/08/02

Project proposals are plans you make before beginning a project. A good project proposal clearly communicates your vision, goals, and methods for the project. Careful planning before you start your project will make your process smoother and your final product higher quality.

You have already joined with another student to make a project pair, and you and your partner have thought about what kind of medium you would like to create, as well as how you intend to go about creating it. Now your job is to describe in detail exactly what you plan to do and how you plan to do it.

Your project proposal should:

1. Describe the medium that you plan to create.
2. Describe the body of knowledge and/or the skills you have or will need in order to create an effective and interesting medium. You will need to name sources which you will use to achieve this, or describe where you plan to find these sources if you do not already have them.
3. List materials you need.
4. List group members.
5. Consider how much time you will need to complete your project. (Class time will be given to this project, but you will need to consider if you will need more time and how you plan to manage work outside of school)
6. Include a timeline for the project with specific dates by which you will have completed interim tasks throughout the process.
7. Be of a manageable size and scope. Too big or too small will make problems for you later. Think about how to focus your project.
8. Describe how you plan to achieve a "museum quality" piece of work with this project.
9. Be well-written, logically ordered, and cleanly formatted.

Your project proposal is due on Wednesday, May 8 in class. You will be graded on how thorough and well thought out your plan is. As you write your proposal, think about exactly how you will go about completing your project. The more detail, the better.

Good luck!

## Message Essay

The message my partner K H and I decided to communicate was "communication leads to success". We came up with this message because during this whole project my partner and I communication was great. We always talked about everything. For example, we talked about how we can both do the work on the project equally. Another example, was when we had to write a project description and my partner Kellen had a lot of other work but he did not want to ask me to do it but I communicated to him that if he had a lot of work I can do it. This is why we think communication leads to success.

We choose this message because my partner and I had worked together on a previous project and the project was not that good. We came to the conclusion that it was not that good because we lacked communication. On the project we did not communicate with our other team mates causing our project not be as good as it could have been. It is relevant because my partner and I both think communication has a big impact on how good our project is. We think this because of our previous project. After doing this project or completing the medium part of it we know that the lack of communication has a big impact on how good the project will be. It is meaningful to us because being able to communicate with your partner is hard. It isn't easy to just always being able to talk to one another but with my partner and I it wasn't very hard and we strongly believe because we communicated so well our project was the best that it could be.

The range of expression our medium is capable of creating would be anything without feeling or emotion unless you can see that person. But the way we built our medium you don't have to be in the same room as that person. The medium can create different expressions like poems, letters, conversations, and or anything that you can write because all you would do is type what you are trying to say to that person.

We had trouble coming up with a message to communicate, because we had trouble on agreeing on a message that was both relevant and creative. We started with "Fear is from within" but we decided that it was not relevant to our medium. We tried revising this message but could not make it relevant to our medium. We then came up with the idea of creating a message with something dealing with circuits since our medium is composed of over 50 circuits. Once again our idea was not used, mostly because we thought we could make our message more relevant. From this we came up with "communication leads to success".

We were not constrained too much by our medium, as it communicates using the simplest form of communication, words. One thing that we were constrained by was that we did not include keys for punctuation. This isn't too big of a constraint, but if we were to continue the project, we would add these keys.