

GUIDE 7.3: Questioning Images (Teacher Guide)

1 Describe the Situation

- Before analyzing an image for meaning, ask students to simply describe what they see. Give students time to examine the image closely. Without interpreting the image, answer the 5 Ws (Who? What? Where? When? Why?)
- Ask students to describe how the image makes them feel. If the image provokes strong emotions (positive or negative), this is a sign that it requires further investigation.

2 Identify the Source

- Establish a set of core facts about the image. Identify the type of image (Is it a tweet? An Instagram post? An image from a print publication?), as well as the source of the image. Can you determine who created the image?
- Search Google and Wikipedia to learn more about the source and its reputation.

3 Interpret the Meaning

- Now that students have established the basic facts of the image, they can begin interpreting it. Ask students to think carefully about how the image is framed by accompanying text or other contextual information.
- You may want to use this step as an opportunity to discuss what we mean when we say a message is “accurate.” Some images are completely fabricated while others may try to express a real concern about a political issue through misleading images.

4 Analyze the Purpose?

- This final step asks students to think about the image within a broader social and cultural context. Does it intend to inform, harm, mislead, influence, or entertain?
- Ask students to consider other possible interpretations of the image.