When we think of media as only the physical or technological channels that transmit messages and information, we can agree that media is neither "good" nor "bad," though they may transmit messages we find good or bad.



The channels themselves do not have beliefs, values, ideologies or intentions. But when we use the word media to refer to the businesses and industry that own the mass media channels and create and deliver the mass media messages, we must recognize that human nature plays a role.

Each of us has our own set of beliefs and experiences that shape our view of our world. They affect our views on politics, social issues, authority figures and each other. People often form or join groups that share ***particular beliefs, expressed as ideologies and values.*** Common values and ideologies can explain the purpose and actions of many groups, including families, church groups, service clubs, communities, political parties, and even businesses and corporations. Understanding a person's or group's values and ideologies can help you better understand what they do and say.



When we examine the messages received through mass media, we should consider that the sender's ideologies and values can influence their messages in two ways:

**Directly –** The purpose of the message may be to promote the sender's values and ideology.

**Indirectly** – While the purpose may not be to promote specific beliefs, the sender's values and ideology will almost certainly influence what messages are—and are not—sent, and how they are presented.

When we say that the media presents ideologies and value messages, we are not speaking only of obvious messages focusing on beliefs. We are also saying that ideologies and value messages (i.e., "This is good" and "That is bad" messages) can be delivered subtly and over a long time through the mass media messages that fill our days.

Some messages sent by media are almost invisible – we are so used to the conventions that we may not be aware of any message. For example, in advertising, cars are often associated with beautiful women or men; beer is associated with a “party-time” lifestyle; and more women than men are concerned with clean clothes and sparkling dishes. Are these accurate representations? Do you agree with the values suggested by such commercials? How do American viewpoints affect Canadian values? **Recognizing these invisible messages and the values they promote is part of being media literate**. The checklist for Ideology and Values below will help you analyze the ideology and values in media text.

***Assignment (To be completed as Word document and submitted in your student folder)***

*Select and study a media text (magazine ad, television show, a film, a music video, or commercial). Use the checklist for Ideology and Values to help you interpret their ideological messages. In addition, answer the following questions:*

*What social issues are dealt with?*

*How might those ideological messages change if people of a different social class or race were included, or if male and female characters switched roles?*

**Checklist for Ideology and Values**

1. **Does the text present the beliefs of one particular group?**
2. **Who is in position of power? Who is not?**
3. **Does the text exclude any groups of people or their beliefs?**
4. **What stereotypes, if any, are used? To what effect?**
5. **What definitions of happiness, success, or morality are implied?**