Welcome to the MLC LABS media activity deck!

LABS is a program from the Michigan Learning channel, where our goal is to get teachers collaborating around using media in K-12 classrooms statewide.

This resource is a springboard into this work. Each card has a prompt to help your students engage with media - either by viewing and reflecting, discussing, and responding, or by producing. Use the prompts to guide your lesson-planning or share them directly with students. The activities can be adapted across content areas and can be used within a class period as a lesson or even a brief warm-up or across multiple periods as a more in-depth project.

However you choose to use this deck, we want to hear from you! Share what you're practicing with us and other MLC LABS teachers so that we can grow together.
MLC LABS is a place to exchange ideas and resources, but also a place to highlight and celebrate student creators around our state!

We want to facilitate partnerships across MLC LABS classrooms so students can share their projects directly with other students and offer feedback, support, and deeper learning.

We also want to showcase projects on YouTube, social media, and our broadcast channel, so don't forget to share student-created content directly through the form on the LABS landing page.

Always get student and family consent to share their work!

Visit michiganlearning.org/LABS for more support, ways to share, and printable resources.
Use the viewing cards to facilitate watching and responding to film and video content. The prompts are designed for film and media content, but many prompts will be useful for text based and photographic content as well.

Each card includes a brief prompt and sometimes additional ideas for creative engagement or extension. How you use the prompt in your classroom (i.e. inviting students to write, discuss, draw, etc.) is completely up to you and what works in your space.

As always, stay in touch so that we can showcase how you are using these cards in your classroom!
Use the **producing** cards to invite students to create their own media, either as part of a larger project or as a short and informal opportunity.

Each card features a prompt with some ideas for application or further development. Depending on how you use the prompt, you may need to develop rubrics and assessments and support students with additional instruction and resources (we can help!).

If you're using the prompts as brief activities, give yourself permission to just offer the prompt and see what students do!

As always, be in touch - we would love to collaborate and support you as you develop larger projects and we will be excited to showcase any student work - small or large - through our platforms.
Write about or discuss the ways that tone and/or mood are conveyed in the film. How do these elements impact viewers?
Think about the message of the film or video, and then examine different elements that contribute to this message (narration, imagery, music/sounds, pacing, etc.). What is the film trying to tell us?
Think about the purpose of the film or video, and then examine different elements that contribute to this purpose (narration, imagery, music/sounds, pacing, etc.). How is the creator trying to impact audiences?
How was characterization used in the film?

Directors and producers often think of many elements as "characters", think critically about the ways "character" was developed in a person, setting, object, or idea.
What role did setting play in the film?
For narrative film, how does the time and place impact what happens?
In documentary, how does the setting connect with or impact the content?
How would a different setting change the film?
Think critically about the steps needed to take to make the film or video. What needed to be planned before they filmed the video, what steps needed to happen during filming, and what aspects had to take place after filming - such as editing.
Think critically about the budget and funding needed to produce the film or video. How are film projects paid for, and why? Research cost and rates and evaluate the investment and profit/impact for the project.
Look at the film through an accessibility lens - are there captions? What are the color levels and lighting like? Go deeper - research federal guidelines and expectations and evaluate the film for different audiences.
Evaluate how the film or video operates from a diversity and inclusion perspective. Use research to guide your inquiry around who is seen in the film, what biases and stereotypes exist, and how the film does or does not impact inclusion and justice.
Research to identify who was a part of the film’s production, from planning and funding to producing, editing, and sharing. Was the production team diverse? Were diverse viewpoints considered and uplifted during writing and advertising?
Analyze and critique an interview - what was done well? What could have been better? What was the goal of the interviewer? Did they achieve their goal? How does the way the interview was filmed impact the interview? Whose point-of-view is presented by the camera?
Imagine you need to assemble a panel to discuss the film in front of an audience. Who would you include on your panel, and why? What kinds or expertise or credentials would impact the viewing? What questions would guide discussion or provoke deeper thought in response to the film?
Listen deeply to the sounds and musical elements of the film or video. How do these elements contribute to how the film impacts viewers?

What would happen if the audio were different? Research the musical artists and composers, or develop a companion soundtrack for listening that will impact reflection around the theme or purpose of the project.
Choose clips from the film or video to cite as evidence or support for a research project you are working on, or as content to repurpose or remix into a creative project.

Why did you chose these specific clips and what they offer to your work?
Identifying literary or rhetorical elements such as symbolism, repetition, or irony. Cite specific examples and think about how these elements impact purpose and reception of the film.
Try a different point of view

View the film through the perspective of someone else. How might the meaning of the film change if your perspective was different?

How would the film be different if it was told through the eyes of a different character?
Identify the major plot points or moments of transition in the film or video. How do these transitions impact the mood or purpose of the film? Does the film utilize the beginning-middle-end structure? Is it effective for the propose of the film? effective for the identified purpose.
Write a two sentence summary for the film - maybe imagine you’re writing a headline for your review. What elements are the most important to convey to your reader in describing the film?
Write a critical review of the film for a popular publication like the New York Times. Write a review of the film from the perspective of the films protagonist. Now write a review from the perspective of the antagonist. How does their perspective change the events of the film?
Work with a classmate to generate a list of questions to help someone openly and speak deeply about a topic of your choosing. Record an interview with your classmate using your camera. Review the interview. Did the questions prompt meaningful discussion? What questions would help the interview to go deeper?
Tell a story

Create a short documentary about a historical event. Include background, timeline, and details that connect to what you are studying in class.

Use visuals and voice over or deliver the documentary as an engaging speech.
Record a science documentary

Research an environmental issue or showcase an ecosystem in your local community.

How can you use images and sound (narration, sound effects, natural sound, music) to document your topic and have an impact?
Produce a video exposing a social or environmental issue and examining what can be done for positive change. How can you use logic and persuasion to help craft a story that drives change in the viewer?
Work with a small group of classmates to organize and host a short film festival for your class. Think critically about how films work together, what messages they send to the attendees, and how they facilitate discussion and reflection as a part of the live or virtual event.
Translate a video to another language. How does translation impact the film? What is the best way to translate the film, subtitles, dubbing, or remaking? What are the advantages and disadvantages of each method?
Create a budget and treatment for a project. Pick your medium - animation, documentary, live debate, feature length narrative, - and research how to budget for its production. Once you have a budget how do you pitch it to funders and make it happen?
Craft a proposal for a new movie about a subject you are studying in class. It could be a novel adaptation, an explainer video, or maybe a biopic. Think critically about all components - production, casting, script writing, set, marketing. Would your classmates buy a ticket to your movie? Why or why not?
Interview a historical figure

Work with a classmate to create an interview about a historical figure from your class. One partner will be the historical figure, the other the host. Generate a list of questions that will help contextualize the historical figure. Use research to answer the questions just as your historical figure would. Record your interview using your camera or present it live in front of the class. How might visual clue help support the context of your interview?
Record a read-aloud of a picture book to be shared with a younger grade of students. How can you make the read-aloud engaging for the audience? What elements might help translate key images, characters, and settings of the book from the page to the screen?
Record a live experiment with a small group of classmates. Think through what you'll need to not only perform the experiment but record it. What materials do you need? Do you need a specific space? What is the best way to capture the results of the experiment? Once the experiment is recorded how can editing and post production help showcase the experiment and the results?
Create a training video

Produce a training video with a small group of classmates. How can you use images and sound to help instruct the viewer on how to do something? What materials will you need to complete the project? How do you make sure that the viewer gets all of the required details and processes? Once your video is complete, show it to a classmate and see if they learn the skill!
Host a cooking show

Record a five minute video about how to cook your favorite dish or recipe. Think critically about how you can show the process in 5 minutes. How can your props, set, script, and editing and effects help you tell your cooking story in five minutes? Once your video is done show it to your class and have a potluck!
Produce a local feature story

Profile a local business, restaurant, or organization and share their story. What is important to tell the story of your subject - history, challenges and success, unique personalities or characters, community impact? How can you use images and sound to represent your subject in the best way?
Make a video about an urban legend, weird historical event, random fun fact, infamous person, or cool subculture. Use interviews, music, images, sounds, editing and effects to help bring these lesser known things to the light!
Record "unboxing" style videos about a subject from your class. How might you use the "unboxing" format to communicate a topic from your class? What materials, stories, fact and figures, details, and events do you need to "unbox."
Host a virtual tour

Produce a virtual tour of your school, place in your community, or homes. Map your route through the space, what are important stops to make? What makes this space unique and interesting? Are there good stories to tell as you walk through the space? How do you make the video compelling? How would music, sound, editing and effects help make the tour engaging?
Use a green screen (or make your own) to record a weather report. How does the green screen effect help with communicating the weather? Why is this the industry standard? What other ways can you use the green screen to help communicate your ideas? Can you use it to help a speech, or interview?
Use whiteboard animation to summarize a topic from your class. Record a real whiteboard animation using your camera or use an online program to generate your animation. What drawings help communicate your topic? How does zooming, scrolling, erasing and editing help to tell the story of your subject? What kinds of stories become more powerful to tell through animation?
Record a performance of your talent. Using your camera, record yourself reading a poem, performing music or dance, or giving a speech related to your class. How does the record differ from the live performance? How can you use the qualities of video recording to enhance the performance? Can music, sound, editing, or effects be used to help take the performance to the next level?
Record a speech from the point of view of a political candidate in your area. How can you translate their viewpoint on the issues to talking points for a speech? How can you use the video medium to make your candidate appear down-to-earth, authoritative, intelligent, or qualified. How does the way you deliver information, or the words you choose to say, impact the your message is received?
Record a dedication to a local monument. Research the monument. Why was it erected? Who funded it? Who is it for? Use these details to write a dedication speech for the monument and then record a video.
Design a museum exhibit related to your class study and record an audio guide to go along with it. What objects, and information need to be in the exhibit to communicate your topic? How can you use audio to help elevate or deepen understanding of the topic?
Record a podcast about a topic from your class in the style of your favorite podcast. How can you tell a story from your class in the podcast format? What are the popular podcast genres and which would be best to communicate your topic? How can you use only audio (voice over, interview, discussion, sound effects, recording effects) to help tell your story?
Record a 30 second video or audio promotion, or advertisement, for an event or object you are excited about. Research the event or object and think critically about the best way to present it to your audience. Research who the target audience is and craft your message to that audience. How can the elements of your medium (video or audio) be used to best sell your event or object?
Create a video for social media about a character from a recent reading in class. How might this character communicate who they are via social media? What would they think of social media? What topics are important to this character, and how do they want to communicate that to the world?
Tips for watching film or video:

- Watch the film or video all the way through with no discussion or interruptions and record initial responses.
- Watch the film or video more than once with a different focus each time.
- Offer students specific things to look for during a particular viewing.
- Be aware of the film's context (where and when it was produced, who played a role, what the intended purpose is).
- Balance time for individual reflection, pair and small group dialogue, and large group discussion after viewing.
- Watch "around" the film - watch other projects from the same director or organization and watch other projects that examine the content from a different perspective.
Tips for producing film or video:

- Don't be afraid to let students lead - many of them already create content and are just looking to be seen and celebrated.
- Don't get too hung up on content looking polished - learning still happened!
- Do your research to find great equipment, but recognize that smartphones, ordinary lamps, and natural backdrops can do a lot!
- Watch several different kinds of videos to get a sense for style and technique.
- Spend time planning so that you don't have to spend as much time recording or editing.
- Think about audience and what will be engaging and impactful.
- Lighting, sound, placement - learn the vocabulary of production and check all of your boxes before turning on the camera or the microphone.
Tools for basic video creation:

- Canva (canva.com)
- Adobe Express (adobe.com/express/create/video)
- Flip (info.flip.com)
- WeVideo (wevideo.com)
- Vimeo Create (vimeo.com/create)
- Animoto (animoto.com)
- Loom (loom.com/education)
- Screencastify (screencastify.com)
- Screencast-o-matic (screencast-o-matic.com)
- Green Screen by Do Ink (iOS app)
- iMovie (iOS app)
- Explain Everything (iOS app)
Tools for basic podcast creation:

- Soundtrap EDU (soundtrap.com/edu)
- Anchor FM (anchor.fm)
- Audacity (audacityteam.org)
- Synth (gosynth.com)
- Squadcast (squadcast.fm)
- GarageBand (iOS app)
For more media and learning:

- MLC LABS (michiganlearning.org/labs)
- StoryMaker (story-maker.org)
- KQED Learn (learn.kqed.org)
- NPR Student Podcast Challenge
- Common Sense Education (commonsensemedia.org)
- Edutopia (edutopia.org)
- ISTE (iste.org)
- PBS Learning Media
- pbs.org
For publishing and sharing:

- Youtube
- Soundcloud
- Anchor
- Vimeo
- iTunes
- Spotify
- Flip
- Social media