

Media Discourse and Migrant Categories

Activity #1

Teacher Instructions

1. Overview & Learning Objectives

Estimated Time: 60 – 90 minutes

Context: This assignment encourages students to critically analyze how media (news, images, advertisements, public announcements) frames the issue of migration, focusing specifically on the language and terminology used to categorize and refer to migrants.

Learning Objectives (LOs): Upon completion, students will be able to:

- Identify and differentiate between various terms and legal/social categories used to describe migrants.
- Analyze the connotative meaning (positive, negative, neutral) of media language and visuals regarding migration.
- Compare and contrast migration coverage across different media types and geographical locations (domestic vs. international).

2. Materials and Preparation

- **Student Pre-Work:** Students must gather at least **three** distinct media items addressing migration (e.g.: a news article, an image from a major publication, a public billboard/advertisement).
- **Required Resources:** Access to internet/library for gathering media sources.
- **Setup:** The seminar can be conducted in small groups (2-3 students) or as a full-class discussion, depending on the desired depth of analysis.

3. Activity Flow

Stage	Time	Teacher Role / Instructions
A. Preparation (Pre-Seminar)	Assigned	Students collect and annotate their three media sources based on the seminar questions. They should bring physical copies or links to class.
B. Group Analysis	30 min	Students divide into small groups and share their collected materials. They discuss the three core questions, synthesizing their individual findings into a single group answer/presentation outline.
C. Presentation & Discussion	30-60 min	Each group presents their analysis, focusing on examples from their media items. The teacher guides the discussion, ensuring key concepts like legal categories (e.g.: refugee, asylum seeker, economic migrant) and connotative language are addressed.

4. Assessment / Key Discussion Points

- **Terminology:** Discuss the difference between neutral terms (e.g.: "international migrant," "mover") and terms with legal status (e.g.: "asylum seeker," "refugee," "displaced person") vs. emotionally charged terms (e.g.: "alien," "illegal.")
- **Visual Analysis:** How do the images/visuals reinforce or contradict the text? E.g.: are people depicted as victims, threats, or contributors?
- **Media Bias:** Encourage a discussion on why different outlets might use different language (e.g.: political leaning, target audience).

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Student Materials

Submission Type: Group discussion/presentation, based on individual pre-work.

Part 1: Preparation (Individual Pre-Work)

Task: Before the seminar, you must independently find and analyze at least **three distinct media items** that address migration. Your sources must include at least one text-based article and one visual/image source.

Examples of Media Items:

- A recent online or print news article.
- A photo used by a major news agency or publication.
- A public billboard, poster, or social media campaign/advertisement.

Bring copies (physical or digital links) of your three chosen items to the seminar.

Part 2: Seminar Questions (Group Analysis & Discussion)

Use your collected materials to prepare answers to the following three questions. You should be prepared to present your findings and justify your answers with specific references to the words and visuals you have found.

1. Migrant Categories and Labels

Which different **terms, labels, and categories** are used to refer to migrants in the articles you have chosen? Explain the potential differences in meaning or legal status between these terms (e.g.: “refugee” vs. “economic migrant” vs. “expat”).

2. Connotation and Framing

Are migrants referred to with more **positive, negative, or neutral connotation** in the chosen articles? Justify your answer by making specific references to the **words** (e.g.: “stream,” “flood,” “burden,” “talent,” “opportunity”) and **visuals** found in your articles/images.

3. Media Comparison

Based on your findings and research, are there any fundamental **differences on how the issue of migration is covered** in different media outlets (e.g.: mainstream vs. independent, or national vs. international outlets)? Provide examples to support your explanation.



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