A logo for a tv show

Description automatically generated

Library Extension Project

Activity: If I were a Media Boss/Media Ownership

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Description:

A sorting game with discussion and online extras that highlights the concentration of media ownership in the world in U.S. conglomerates.

Target audience: Teens

Objectives: To encourage critical thinking about the concentrated ownership of major media companies through an interactive sorting game.

Text:“Who controls the content that you watch, play, listen to, read? Where do your parents get their news? Where do you get your information? What is your go-to platform for media entertainment?”

Most of our media comes from six media giants – called conglomerates because they own many smaller companies that are not exactly small. For example, ESPN is one of those “smaller companies” owned by the Disney Corporation.  While people access several different outlets for their media, the media outlets may all be owned by the same massive corporation.

“How do you think this concentrated, U.S.-based ownership influences the way that stories from around the globe are told?”

Program details: *General overview introduction - 15 minutes*

* Start by discussing what media is and have a brief discussion about what large corporations are versus an independent media producer or a public media outlet.
* Ask group of students to list where/what sources they go to view media. What streaming sources do they use? Where do they or their grownups go to get their news? Write the list down on a white board or place where the group can see.
* Most media comes from the Big Six media companies. See the latest statistics [here](https://www.fool.com/investing/stock-market/market-sectors/communication/media-stocks/big-6/).
* Media is divided into for-profit media and publicly-funded media. Show participants the Media is a Business graphic (available in Printables) to illustrate the huge difference between the two types in terms of proportions. It’s from 2021, but the point remains the same.
* Play a matching game that pairs media giants with their net worth at this WonderMediaLibrary [page](https://www.wondermedialibrary.com/the-business-of-media/) to appreciate the wealth of these conglomerates.

*Sorting game - 20 minutes*

* Who owns the media you watch? Pass out copies of the Fill-in-the-Owner sheets (available in Printables). Have participants identify three of their favorite TV shows, movies or video games and for each one, write the title in the smallest circle on the fill-in sheet. Do this on three separate sheets for three pieces of media.

For example, if the media is “Game of Thrones,” participants would look online (if they didn’t already know) to find out that HBO owns the series. Participants then draw or write the HBO icon in the middle circle. In turn, HBO is owned by . . . What company? They conduct another search online to discover that Warner Brothers/Discovery owns HBO. That icon is drawn or written into the largest circle. Participants can search major holdings of media giants with this handy [search engine](https://beta.cjr.org/resources).

(Participants may enjoy copying the graphics of various media logos, it’s a choice.) In the Printables section is a page of Media Company Logos of familiar media companies that teens likely access often. Create headings for the Big 6 media conglomerates on a whiteboard, bulletin board or wall and have students place their company icons under the correct heading.

* Once the sorting game is complete, discuss media ownership and control, and how little media consumers know of who produces, distributes and owns the media they consume. “Even though you think you’re getting information from different outlets, it might be ultimately coming from the same place.”

NOTE: This is also an opportunity to discuss **what is lost** by having so few companies. Who controls the narrative? Could be a segue into representation in the media and the *Whose Story Gets Told?* [webpage](https://www.wondermedialibrary.com/whose-story-gets-told/).

*If I Were a Media Boss online game – 10 minutes*

* Go to the If I Were a Media Boss [webpage](https://www.wondermedialibrary.com/if-i-were-a-media-company-boss/).
* Once the matching/sorting game is done, have each teen fill out the reflection card asking them what they would do if they owned their own media corporation. (See Printables below.) Go over the answers when everyone is finished.

Materials needed: Computers, wi-fi, whiteboards or bulletin board, tape, markers or crayons; Fill-in-the-Owner sheets, enough for three for each participant (in Printables), Media is a Business graphic (in Printables), Media Company Logos printout for free-hand copying (in Printables).

Suggested runtime: 1 hour

Youth adaptation or extension activity: Media boss: Design your own company! *How would you take care of your employees? What kind of products would you produce?*

*Make your own YouTube channel! Who would you invite to be on it? What kind of content would you create?*

Adaptation for adults: Discussion opportunity. This can include the breadth of media representation when ownership is U.S.-centric; the high production quality audiences expect from multi-billion-dollar conglomerates; the support and content focus of public media programming in the U.S. compared to other countries; the impact of diversity in media creation (writers, producers, authors, directors).  Show the 30-second video on diversity in media to make the point that audiences want diverse representation and that diverse content sells well globally.

An [alphabetical listing](https://projects.iq.harvard.edu/futureofmedia/index-us-mainstream-media-ownership) of major media companies, dated to 2021. Interesting for adult participants is to look at the main stockholders (in the second column from left) and how just a few individuals or families control massive amount of content production and focus.

Unique Space or Personnel Needs: Meeting room or ability to take activity into the classroom

Resources:

A [searchable index](https://beta.cjr.org/resources) of up-to-date media ownership

Make sure this [listing of the six largest](https://www.fool.com/investing/stock-market/market-sectors/communication/media-stocks/big-6/) media conglomerates in the U.S. is current; Motley Fool usually updates yearly

An [alphabetical listing](https://projects.iq.harvard.edu/futureofmedia/index-us-mainstream-media-ownership) of major media companies, dated to 2021.

Printables: Media Company Logos; Fill-in-the-Owner worksheet; Media is a Business PDF

A yellow and brown logo

Description automatically generated A logo for a museum

Description automatically generated A blue and black logo

Description automatically generated



A logo with a mountain and stars

Description automatically generatedA red letter on a black background

Description automatically generatedA black circle with white circle and white circle with white circle and white circle and white circle with white circle and black circle with white circle and white circle and white circle with white circle and black circle

Description automatically generated A white text with a star on a black background

Description automatically generatedA red logo with white background

Description automatically generatedA logo of a company

Description automatically generated A logo of a person sitting on a moon

Description automatically generatedA lamp and a lamp on the water

Description automatically generated with medium confidenceA logo of a music television company

Description automatically generatedA close up of a logo

Description automatically generatedA logo of a company

Description automatically generated A colorful logo with black text

Description automatically generated A red and white sign with white letters

Description automatically generatedA logo with black text

Description automatically generated A blue and white logo

Description automatically generatedA white text on a background of trees

Description automatically generated A green text on a black background

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**Media Company Logos**

SAMPLE

WALT DISNEY

Parent company

HULU

Subsidiary

RICK AND MORTY

Specific Media

**Fill-in-the-Owner:** Put the names of each under its correct heading to show ownership

Parent company

Subsidiary

Specific Media

**Fill-in-the-Owner:** Put the names of each under its correct heading to show ownership