Most science and media literacy activities are based on news stories, which are rich fields for questions about the agendas of scientific researchers, and the agendas of media producers. But what about science as entertainment? The recent re-boot of the classic science television series *Cosmos* uses many eye-catching media techniques to inform, to inspire wonder, and occasionally to persuade. What would it be like to speak not just the language of science, but to speak the visual language of this series? In this MediaLit Moment, your middle level students will learn how to conceptualize and use these techniques to inform, to persuade, and to provide audience opportunities for perspective taking.

*Ask students to create a storyboard or produce a visual that uses perspective or scale to reinforce the purpose of their media message*

*AHA!: With a show like *Cosmos*, it's the use of scale and perspective that really grabs my attention!*

**Grade Level:** 6-9

**Key Question #2:** What creative techniques are used to attract my attention?
Core Concept #2: Media messages are constructed using a creative language with its own rules.

Key Question #2 for Producers: Does my message reflect understanding in format, creativity and technology?

Key Question #5: Why is this message being sent?

Core Concept #5: Most media messages are organized to gain profit and/or power

Key Question #5 for Producers: Have I communicated my purpose effectively?

Materials: Computer with high speed internet access, LCD projector and screen. OR DVD player and television.

Activity: Engage students in a conversation about the new Cosmos series. Have they seen it? Did they like it? If they did, what did they like about it? What really grabbed their attention? Depending on your schedule (and depending on whether you teach science or some other subject), screen the entire Cosmos episode 12, "The Worlds Set Free," about global warming. Single episodes are available to stream on Amazon and other platforms for about $2. A DVD of the entire series would require an investment of about $50. Alternatively, screen clips. In any case, find sequences which illustrate the problems of or solutions to global warming; for example, the cliffs of Dover rising to illustrate the world's increasing carbon output, or a massive wind farm in the ocean illustrating wind power as an alternative energy source.

Screen these sequences at least a couple of times. Ask students, what kinds of visual
techniques were used? How are they different from the kinds of visuals presented in other TV series? You may want to discuss KQ#2 with students. You may need to introduce the concepts of scale and perspective. Also ask, for what purpose were these techniques used? Direct students' attention to KQ#5.

Next, ask students to write a comment about global warming. They can comment on problems, or solutions. They may also write a comment intended to help audiences comprehend the planetary scale of the issue. Students can use their comments as the basis for creating a storyboard - a visual sequence which reinforces their ideas. Direct the attention of students to KQ#2 for Producers and KQ#5 for Producers. If media production tools are available in your school, so much the better. If students are allowed to bring their own device to school, this may provide an avenue for production as well. Make production feedback available in whatever format is desired--individual, online, group, whole-class, etc.

**Extended Activity:** You may wish to screen the sequence of deGrasse Tyson's commentary on the change of perspective brought by images of Earth sent back from Apollo lunar missions.

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