Sporting events have become media extravaganzas providing a mediated experience to home viewers. What we see on TV is a highly choreographed block of time in which a game is played. There are commercial breaks, game-play graphics, close-ups and audio of coaches and players, with running commentary about every aspect of the game. What we experience via TV is vastly different from the experience of the fans in the stadium. Fans in the stadium are also treated to a media extravaganza with kiss-cams and music videos but it’s a different “show.” Stadium fans see live half-time shows and hear the crowd roar, but they also patiently wait for action to resume after commercial breaks, and they pay large sums of money for seats that sometimes require binoculars to see the action on the field.

Ask students to compare and contrast their experiences as sports fans.

AHA! Watching my favorite team on TV is way different than going to the game.

Grade Level: 7-9

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 #5: Why is this message being sent?
Core Concept #5: Most media messages are organized to gain profit and/or power.

Materials: Access to article below

Activity: Ask your students if they saw any of the “big” games this year for baseball, football, basketball...Did they attend in person or watch on TV? What do they like about being in the stadium at the event? What do they like about watching on TV? Do they like or dislike the commercial breaks and running commentary? Do they like or dislike the camera coverage and
replays available for home viewers? Why are coaches and team owners willing to stop play for commercial breaks? Why are sporting events scheduled to meet the needs of the TV audience?

Hint: Approx. 100 million people watched the Super Bowl in 2017 and saw the commercials. This exposure is worth millions of dollars to advertisers.

Ask your students to read the WSJ article My $170 NCAA Championship Nosebleed. This is an entertaining viewpoint about sitting in the last rows of the stadium and needing binoculars to see the field. Is just being at the event with the energy of the crowd worth it regardless of the seat? Or do your students prefer the media event via TV viewing?

The Five Core Concepts and Five Key Questions of media literacy were developed as part of the Center for Media Literacy’s MediaLit KitTM and Questions/TIPS (Q/TIPS)TM framework. Used with permission, © 2002-2017, Center for Media Literacy, http://www.medialit.com