

Break the Election

Purpose

This last activity asks participants to examine different media products aimed at promoting a particular political position or a candidate for office. Participants use the *MediaBreaker* platform to edit one of these products to change whatever “slant” they perceived in the production. The activity encourages participants to analyze the kinds of language, images, and the various elements/techniques used in the political realm. In using the different re-mix features, participants are encouraged to adjust media narratives and express new points of view.

Learning Goals

Participants will:

- Gain skills in online video, audio, and text editing
- Analyze production elements of specific politically-focused media products that help convince an audience of a particular viewpoint
- Develop a deeper appreciation and a keener eye for the use of these elements in political and campaign media
- Express alternative messages with these techniques and skills

Time

45 minutes to an hour

Supplies

- Computer with video/audio capabilities for each participant (if possible)
- Internet access

Facilitator Preparation

The facilitator will need to collect materials (both video and audio) beforehand and upload these into the *MediaBreaker* platform.

Campaign speeches or promotional ads or editorial commentaries on political topics can be used. Plan on uploading at least 3 to 5 media products. The time needed for this part of the preparation will depend on the facilitator's skill in using this tool.

Step-by-step instructions for using the tools are provided at <https://www.ngoconnect.net/resource/media-breaker-studios-quick-start-guide-and-instructions>. If the facilitator has already carried out Activity 1 and/or Activity 2, additional time should not be needed to become familiar with the *MediaBreaker* tools.

EXPRESS ACTIVITIES

Break the Election, *continued*

Introduce the Activity to Participants

Begin with several open-ended questions about campaign ads and other political media:

- In your experience, do political or campaign ads use any techniques more often or differently from other kinds of media?
(Examples might be dramatic voiceovers or large, directive subtitles so the audience does not miss a message. Emotional music in the background is also common.)
- Is the language in campaign ads or political editorials different?
- What kinds of visual images are often used in campaign ads or political editorials?
(In the US, for example, the stereotypical campaigner is shown kissing a baby, to make him look like a family man and someone who will protect the innocent.)

Launch the Activity

Tell participants that today they're going to use their new "hacking" skills to analyze and edit some political media. Political speech and campaigning are important forms of communication that require a special set of analytical skills. In this activity they will take a close look at some common production techniques and have a chance to try their hand at them.

Part 1:

Screen one or more political commercials or campaign ads for the participants. Ask them to point out any special techniques, images, or language. Ask them whether the ad appealed to their emotions and if so, how (e.g., with dramatic images or strong music).

Part 2:

Tell participants it is now their job to work in their teams and select any of the media products uploaded into *MediaBreaker* and do a "re-mix" of their own. They can add titles, subtitles, voice over, or even cut and paste footage or replace some images if they like. They can try to change the tone of the video with different music or alter the message in some way.

They have 30 minutes to complete their re-mix.

Part 3:

Screen all of the re-mixes the participants produced and discuss for each one:

- What were the major technical changes made?
- How did the edits change the message or impact of the product?

Debrief and Reflect

End the activity with several open-ended questions to encourage sharing and reflection, such as:

- Now that you've analyzed your own media products, do you have any different ideas about which techniques are particularly common or powerful in political media?
- Do you think you will be more aware in the future of how campaign or political features influence (or manipulate) audience mood or receptivity to messages?