Talk Time Topic: Mass Media

Let's get started….

There are many ways to get information. What do you think is the best way? Talk with your group and number these ways from 1 (best) to 5 (worst):

____television
____radio
____computer (internet)
____magazines
____newspapers

Background:

"Mass Media" or "media" means a system of public communication. There are many forms of media – television, Internet, billboards, packaging, video games, etc. Media is very powerful. People enjoy media. Media informs and entertains us and helps us stay connected to the world and our local community. But often media does not give us true information. News bias, digital photo manipulation, paid product placement (advertising), violence, and other issues provide many reasons why both children and adults need to be careful. They need to be "media literate."

In pairs, for 5 minutes ask and answer the following questions:

What media do you use? Do you watch television, listen to the radio, surf the Internet, play computer games, watch movies, or read magazines or newspapers? Do you use media in English or in your native language?

Share your answers with the group.

Discussion questions:

Is it difficult to learn about current events when you live in the US? How do you learn about current events? Is there a way for you to listen to or read about the news in your native language?

How is American TV news different from the TV news in your home country?

How many hours each day do you and/or your family watch TV?

Do you watch any American TV programs? Which ones do you like to watch?

Are American movies popular in your home country? Do American movies influence the culture in your home country?

What kinds of movies do you like? (action, drama, comedy, horror, mystery, romance, etc.)

What types of media do you miss from your home country? (a favorite magazine, TV program or radio station, etc.)

Do you think that watching movies and TV changes the way that people think they should look?

- Media can make a picture of a perfect-looking person by cutting up pictures of several people. This "person" is not real. The picture is created by using body doubles, airbrushing, and computer-graphics.

- Sometimes people who look at the beautiful picture want to change their own bodies to look like that beautiful person. (They want to lose weight, dye their hair, etc.)

What do you think about these "false" images? Do you think that advertisers should be required to tell people that the pictures are not real?

Do you think that watching movies and TV changes the way that people act? (about crime, drugs and alcohol, violence, relationships, etc.)

Is there too much violence in movies and on TV? How about in video games?

How do you think that the media influences children? Is that good or bad?

Do you think that it is okay to have commercials during children's television programs? Why or why not?

Do you or your family members use the Internet?

In the past 50 years there have been many changes in technology and media. What kinds of changes have there been in family lifestyles during the past 50 years in your home country? Do you think these changes are good or bad?

New words and idioms:

billboards, stay connected, news bias, manipulation, surfing the net, influence, impact, tube, spin, target market, the web, Google, Craig's list, satellite, cable, online gaming, chat room, etc.