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## PICTURING OPPRESSION

**Grades:** 7 and up

**Time:** 60-90 minutes

**Materials:** An assortment of current magazines (if possible, ask the students to bring a couple of magazines each to class with them); several pairs of scissors; sample images of human and animal oppression and exploitation (e.g., modern and historical human slavery, animals in factory farms, people working in sweatshops, animal experimentation, animals in circuses/rodeos, child labor); black/white board and chalk/markers

**Relevant Subjects:** Social Studies and Language Arts

This activity is meant to encourage students to think about the oppression that is still prevalent in our society and to begin thinking of ways to move toward helping to create a kinder society.

1. Show students the sample pictures of human and animal oppression and initiate a discussion about the history and similarities between the exploitation and oppression of humans and nonhuman animals. Discuss the recurring theme of dominance and power in exploitative and oppressive practices.
2. Make two columns on the chalk board, one titled "Oppression of Humans" and the other titled "Oppression of Animals." Have students think of additional current examples and write these ideas on the board under the appropriate column(s).
3. Divide students into groups of four or five, ensuring that each group has a stack of magazines and at least one pair of scissors. Have each group look through their magazines to find images that suggest oppression, exploitation, or dominance.
4. Have each group choose a few of their collected images and share them with the class, explaining how they suggest oppression, exploitation or dominance.
5. Use these presentations to initiate further discussion about the prevalence of oppressive images in our society, and have students suggest ways that these advertisements or images could be changed to create a more positive message.

**Extension:** Have students create their own images or advertisements that reflect a positive message.

**Activity by Liberty Mulkani (M.Ed. Student)**