

LESSON: Advertising: It's Everywhere!

Overview

This lesson is designed to introduce participants to the basics of advertising. Participants engage in discussion around advertising, including its purpose, power, and techniques. After learning how teens are targets, participants complete simple advertising deconstruction. Finally, participants apply their knowledge of advertising by trying to convince their peers to buy a common object.

Objectives:

- Understanding of the basic concepts of advertising
- Awareness of common techniques used in advertising to teens
- Application of techniques of persuasion

Level: Middle / High School

Time: 60 minutes

Preparation and Materials:

- Slogan Stumpers Handout
- Media Critic Questions Handout
- You've Gotta Have This! Explanation Sheet Handout
- Advertising Sleuth Video Clip ###
- Advertising FAQs Slide
- Advertising FAQs Teacher's Guide
- Advertising Burger Handout
- Reality Burger Handout
- Examples of beer ads: Budweiser Ad, Sapporo Ad, Vintage Beer Ad
- Branding Video
- Teen Targets Handout
- Ad examples: X-Games, 7-Up Ad, Tommy Hilfiger Ad, Ad 1

Procedures

1. Call out popular company advertising slogans from the Slogan Stumpers (link listed above) List, inviting participants to give the company names to match the slogans. Ask participants how they knew these slogans. The answer, of course, is advertising. Through advertising, companies turn ordinary words into memorable slogans.
2. View the Advertising Sleuth Video Clip. This clip makes the point that although advertising is all around us, we don't often take the time to think about it. Following the clip, use the Advertising FAQs slide to generate a brief (5 minute) discussion. This could be utilized by showing a question, asking for input, then covering the answer blurb given. A main point is that advertising is carefully constructed at a high cost. Companies want (and expect) it to work.
3. State that when examining advertising, it is important to remember that advertising is not reality. Show the Advertising Burger. Stress how good it looks with its perfect bun, condiments, and patty. Although this is the way burgers look in the ads, ask participants if this is what the typical fast food burger looks like when it comes out of the bag. Show the Reality Burger as a reminder of what we get. Inquire as to why advertisers might show us a fantasy.
4. Ask: What must an ad do to be successful? A successful ad makes us want the product. Ask whether

participants believe most advertising focuses on the quality of the product or on an emotional appeal. View one or more of the following beer ads: Budweiser Ad, Sapporo Ad, Vintage Beer Ad. Elicit responses about how the companies are trying to sell the beer. Do these ads mention the ingredients? Most are just emotional appeals that are trying to sell an image of what it's like to drink beer. What image do the companies hope to associate with drinking?

5. Remind participants that companies spend large amounts of money to figure out the most effective ways to persuade consumers. Ask participants if ads for children's toys (e.g., Teletubbies) look the same as ads for adult items (e.g., Lincoln Town Car). Usually they don't because companies aim for a certain type of audience. Most ads have a target market, a demographic they intend to persuade to use the product or service. Inquire as to whether teens are a target market. Look at the Teen Targets handout, starting a discussion about why companies might aim advertising at teens.
6. Review the basic points that have been covered, making the point that to avoid falling for all the ploys of advertisers, everyone needs to learn to "read" ads. Inform participants that they will now be taking a closer look at specific ads. Examine the Media Critic Questions, as these will be the questions asked for each example. Show one or more of the ad examples, using the Media Critic Questions to discuss them.

There are many possible answers for the questions—make sure participants support their answers. Some common techniques include humor (7-Up Ad), rebellion (X-Games Ad), belonging (Tommy Hilfiger Ad), and sex (Guess Ad 1). Advertising can be very powerful, especially if we think we're not paying attention to it. To avoid just being a target, it's important to learn to take a closer look.

Activities

YOU'VE GOTTA HAVE THIS!

Remind participants that advertising works. When done well, it can convince us to buy just about anything. That's the challenge of the activity. Divide the participants into small groups. Follow directions on the You've Gotta Have This! Explanation Sheet. As participants present their ads, other groups can rate them as to their persuasive power.

Extension Activity

YOU'VE GOTTA HAVE THIS!

Have participants work in small groups to develop their own piece of social marketing about advertising. Their job is to design a poster or dramatic presentation entitled, Bullseye-The Target is You! This is intended to teach other teens about advertising, especially ways in which advertisers target youth.

Assessment

You've Gotta Have This! Presentation should include one or more techniques that would appeal to teens (e.g. humor, rebellion, belonging, sex).

Use the Media Critic Questions as a quiz for an ad. Make sure participants support their answers with evidence from the ad.