

Title: Truth and Advertising

Grade Ranges:

 K-4
 X 5-8
 X 9-12

Subject Tag:

Family and Consumer Sciences
Art and Music: Visual Art

Synopsis:

Teachers will work with students to analyze advertising images by looking at various fragments of images and try to determine what the whole image is. Finally, students will recontextualize fragments of advertisements into mock ads.

Keywords:

advertising, image, presentation, mock ads, culture jamming, truth in advertising, publicity, marketing, promotion, sales, consumerism, media literacy, commodity, capitalism

Body:

Prepare for this class by cutting out approximately five magazine advertisements for products that are not obviously shown in the ad. One of these advertisements should be an image with many details. Separate from all advertisements the captions that tell what the advertisements are for. (Keep both the ads and the captions in separate piles.) The detailed advertisement is the most important for the first part of this exercise. Make a copy of the image and cut it into about four fragments that offer hints to the overall image but do not reveal sufficient information for students to know what the whole image is or what it is for. You can use a copy machine to make these images larger, video tape them and show them on the classroom television, or scan them into a computer and show them using a computer monitor. Also in preparation, you may want to have students bring in magazines from home so they can look at the ads in them at the end of the lesson.

When the class meets, show the four pieces of the cut-up image one fragment at a time. Start with a small fragment and ask the students:

- ◆ Describe what you see in detail. (Prompt them to see whatever is in the picture including color and details about any people visible.)
- ◆ What do you think is going on in this image?
- ◆ What do you think the rest of the image might show? What kind of image do you think this is?
- ◆ What do you think the purpose of this image is?

Look at another section of the image and ask the same questions adding:

- ◆ What do you think the relationship to the other part of this image (the first fragment) is?

Show more, asking students to answer these questions again until you can show them the image without the words. Ask them:

- ◆ Describe the image.
- ◆ Is this image what you expected from seeing the fragments?
- ◆ What do you think the purpose of this image is?
- ◆ Where might you see this image?

If students have not already figured it out, tell them that the image is an advertisement. Give them a few minutes to make up captions for this advertisement. Then show them the caption you removed. Ask them to compare the real caption to their own captions. Show them the other images that you took captions from and ask them what they think these advertisements are for. Ask students:

- ◆ How does the image relate to the product it is advertising?
- ◆ Is the advertisement advertising a lifestyle or a product?
- ◆ If the image does not show the product in an obvious way, what is the advertisement selling?
- ◆ Do you think that the advertisement is offering something it can truly deliver?

Then move the discussion to advertising in general. Ask students:

- ◆ What is an advertisement? Make sure students do more than simply provide examples. Their answers should provide a definition that includes the functions of advertisements.
- ◆ Where do you see ads? Are there places other than those that are most obvious? Are people in the room wearing advertisements?

Show students some mock advertisements available on the Adbusters site (<http://adbusters.org/spoofads/>) as examples of images that are trying to challenge the way that products are presented to us. Ask your students to describe the ads and then ask:

- ◆ Are these mock ads fair? Are they accurate?
- ◆ How are they different from or similar to real ads for these types of products?
- ◆ What are the ideas and values promoted by these mock ads?
- ◆ Are these images effective? How might they be more effective?

To conclude this lesson, have students create advertisements based on the concept of truth in advertising. They can use already advertised products or they can create advertisements for things that might not be normally advertised such as their school or their pets. If a truthful advertisement is one similar to the mock ads, students may also create mock ads. Use collage materials, or offer them drawing materials to create their images from scratch. Put these images up around the classroom and have students answer the same set of questions that they did for the mock ads.

Related Links:

[Adbusters Spoof Ads page](#)

<http://adbusters.org/spoofads/>

Presents images of spoof advertisements commenting on ads for fashion, tobacco, alcohol, food and other things. These are flashy enough to be entertaining while making comments on the images that are ubiquitous in our surroundings.

Features:

- ___ Contains special education tips
- ___ Quick Activity (less than 30 minutes; story starter)
- ___ Requires Internet access for students to complete

Objectives:

Students will:

- look closer at advertising images and see some of the techniques used to sell products.
- use the language of advertising to create different types of messages.

Standards:

NY: Language Arts. 3. Students will read, write, listen, and speak for critical analysis and evaluation.

NYC: A3a. Gather information to assist in completing project work. **A3b.** Use information technology to assist in gathering, organizing, and presenting information.

E1c. The student reads and comprehends informational materials to develop understanding and expertise and produces written or oral work that makes connections to related topics or information.

CT: Language Arts . 1 . Reading and Responding. Students will read and respond in individual, literal, critical and evaluative ways to literary, informational and persuasive texts. **2 .** Producing Texts. Students will produce written, oral and visual texts to express, develop and substantiate ideas and experiences.

NJ: Language Arts Literacy. 3.4 All Students Will Read Various Materials And Texts With Comprehension And Critical Analysis. **3.5** All Students Will View, Understand, And Use Nontextual Visual Information.

Prerequisite Skills:

1. Students should have some exposure to advertising images.
2. Students should be moderately comfortable with working with art materials.

Time Required:

three hours

Technology and Materials Needed:

1. images of advertisements, fragmented as specified
2. magazines brought in by students from home and from your own sources
3. scissors

4. glue
5. colored pens and pencils
6. cardstock as a base for images
7. other collage materials

Procedures

Assessment Criteria:

1. Are students able to analyze the advertisements with a bit of distance from their excitement over the images or their interest in the products?
2. Are students able to create different types of images and present different messages when they make their own advertisements?
3. Do students contribute meaningfully to the discussion?

Recommended Lesson Plan Review Date:

Review Comments:

Check Web site.

FCS standards for CT are in draft form and will be finished in May or June 2002.