

5 April Lesson: Ad Smart

Goals:

- Students will be able to identify the 4 components of an advertisement.
- Students will be able to apply critical thinking skills while viewing advertisements.

Audience: 5th grade

Optional Craft, Activity or Snack:

- The Ad Critic
- Bandwagon Tag

Materials:

- Ad Smart Visual

Common Core Standards Taught:

- English Language Arts: Speaking and Listening: 5.1
 - Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on *grade 5 topics and texts*, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.
 - Pose and respond to specific questions by making comments that contribute to the discussion and elaborate on the remarks of others.
- English Language Arts: Speaking and Listening: 5.2
 - Summarize a written text read aloud or information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.
- English Language Arts: Reading Informational Text: 5.7
 - Draw on information from multiple print or digital sources, demonstrating the ability to locate an answer to a question quickly or to solve a problem.

Background:

Children are exposed to over 20,000 advertisements per year (about 55 ads per day). Many of the advertisements that are targeted to children are for food products. The purpose of this lesson is to teach children how to evaluate food advertisements so they can make informed choices.

Lesson:

(Show slide #1) I'm going to say a jingle or phrase, you tell me what brand or product I'm thinking of:

- I'm lovin' it! (McDonalds)
- Their Grrrrreat! (Kellogg's Frosted Flakes)
- Keeps you satisfied (Snickers)

How did you know what brand/product I was thinking of? Did you hear it on TV? On the radio? These food brands are so well known because of advertising. Advertising is a type of

communication (such as a flyer or commercial) that is used to persuade someone to take action (either buy a product or support an idea).

We see advertisements all the time. On TV, the radio, on buildings and buses, on people's clothes, even inside stores. Advertisements are everywhere! On average, we see about 50-60 ads per day.

Many advertisements we see on TV promote food or beverages. Think about the last time you watched TV. How many commercials did you see for fast food, soda, cereal or other 'slow' foods? Now think about 'go' foods such as apples, broccoli or grapes; have you seen many commercials for 'go' foods? Why not?

Advertising costs money. During the Super Bowl, companies pay \$2 to \$3 million dollars for every 30 second ad. Most farmers don't make enough money to pay for advertising.

Since we see so many advertisements in one day, it is important to learn how to evaluate ads so you can make better choices. (Show slide #2)

When you see an advertisement, ask yourself 4 key questions:

Question #1: What is the ad selling? Is it a product? A service?

Question #2: Who is the target audience? Is the ad for adults? Teenagers? Children? Grandparents?

Question #3: What is the hook? A hook is something that advertisers use to grab your attention. A hook might be a special coupon, a prize, a famous athlete, upbeat music, or a cartoon. Once you identify the hook, ask yourself, if there was no hook (famous athlete, cool packaging, fun music etc.), would I still be interested in this product?

Question #4: What are they not telling me?

Advertisements can't lie, but they don't have to disclose the whole truth. For example, a fruit punch beverage may have an advertisement or wrapper with images of fresh fruit, however, if you look at the ingredient list it may not contain any (or a small amount) of real fruit juice. In order to know exactly what you're getting, it is important to read the small print (such as nutrition labels or ingredient lists).

I'm going to show you a picture of an ad, and together we'll answer the 4 Ad questions.

Slide #3: What are they selling?

(Fruit snacks)

Slide #4: Who is the target audience? How can you tell?
(Children; bright colors, fun name, sweepstakes)

Slide #5: What is the hook?
(Sweepstakes for \$10,000 room makeover)

Slide #6: Finally, after viewing the ad, ask the question, what are they not telling me?
(The ad is not telling you that the product contains no real berries. They also don't tell you that your chances of winning a \$10,000 room makeover are very small).

(If there is additional time, Slide 7 contains two advertisements on YouTube you can analyze as a class. The first is a 15 second commercial for Wheat Thins, the second is a 43 second commercial for fruits and vegetables.)

Advertisements are all around us. In order to make wise consumer choices, it is important to view ads with a critical eye. Remember to ask the following questions:

- Question #1: What is the ad selling?
- Question #2: Who is the target audience?
- Question #3: What is the hook?
- Question #4: What are they not telling me?

Next month you'll be making an advertisement to promote some type of healthy behavior. Between now and then think about what you want your topic to be and the 4 questions. Pay attention to ads you enjoy. What appeals to you about that ad? How could you incorporate that idea into your advertisement?

Teaching Tips:

- Bring in magazine or newspaper ads and have kids answer the 4 ad questions.
- Not all advertising is 'evil.' Emphasize that it is up to consumers to make good choices. By asking questions, reading labels (or small print), consumers can make better choices.

Resource: <http://pbskids.org/dontbuyit/advertisingtricks/>