



Lesson: Ads Add Up

Grade: 2-3

Subject: Social Science, English

Objectives:

Students will:

- identify the purpose of advertising and the messages conveyed by advertising;
- identify the ways people are influenced to buy products and the negative aspects of overpurchasing or buying overpackaged products

Teaching Time: 30 minutes

Materials: Two apples; attractive ribbon; magazine ads (i.e. cereal boxes, beverage containers, snack cakes--things that kids use)

(Optional): video "Time's A Wasting in Oregon"; your own video: copy ads targeting children from television and have the class discuss (See Resource section for availability.)

Concept adapted from the Washington Department of Ecology and the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (see Acknowledgements)

REDUCE
REUSE
RECYCLE

Background:

Prerequisite: Needs and Wants. Advertising and packaging influences what people buy. More and more, advertisers are finding savvy ways to reach the child audience. Research has shown that children as young as 5 years old can understand and recognize commercials that are trying to sell them products.

The following is a quote from a Direct Marketing Association brochure, "Power brands attract new customers more easily and then convert them into loyal, long-term 'brand demanders'. [B]rands are not products, [it] is the personality that animates a product, that brings it to a life in a thousand ways for the consumer." Of course, there is nothing wrong with this type of marketing philosophy, except that these strategies often lead consumers into buying things they don't really need; that may be hard to dispose of properly; that only have a onetime use, etc.

This lesson is designed to help students understand that people have choices when buying products that can affect their personal health (see also, Household Hazardous Waste Lessons), the environment, and can also reduce the amount of garbage they generate. Learning to analyze and evaluate information and to make wise choices when shopping, is a valuable life long skill for students.

Procedures:

- Bring two apples to class and a fancy bow ribbon. Show the apples to the children, placing the bow on one of them. **Which one of these apples would you like to buy?** Many will answer the one with the bow. **What made you want one apple over the other?**
- **What material is the ribbon made of?** Let the class know that the ribbon originated from a petroleum-based material that had to be taken from the Earth's crust. Discuss with the class how packaging eventually ends up in our landfills and uses up our natural resources. **How are products packaged to make you want to buy them?**
- Show a magazine ad that would appeal to the students. **What are the people in this ad doing? Would you like to be one of these people? Why or Why not? Why was this picture taken?**
- **How does advertising try to get you to buy a product?** Make the connection that radio, television and print ads are similar to packaging--all are designed to get you to the store and to buy the product once you are there.
- **How does the ad convince you that this item is a "Need" when perhaps it is really just a "Want"?** **Have you ever wanted something you saw on television, purchased the item and were disappointed with it because it wasn't as good as promised?**
- Continue to evaluate magazine ads, or have students find ads in newspapers or magazines to discuss with the class. Explore with the class how the advertisement makes them feel and what it seems to be saying or promising.

- (Optional) Show a video that you have made with TV commercials that target kids. Discuss the methods that advertisers use to make their product seem “cool” or “necessary” or “fun”. In each case, ask the students to decide whether or not they feel these products would live up to the claims in the ad.

Vocabulary:

advertisement
durable
disposable
commercial
packaging

Reflection/Response:

- Because packaging winds up in our landfills, have students consider ways to reduce the amount of packaging in their garbage can. (*Buy items with less packaging and packaging that can be recycled, buy packaging that can be reused, consider if the item is a want or a need, avoid onetime use items.*)
- Discuss the concept of durable v. disposable. Help students think of alternatives to disposable products that they might use.
- Ask students to create an ad that encourages people to buy a product that lasts.
- Have older students write a persuasive essay to convince others to consider carefully before buying an item.

Extensions:

- Review the end of the video “Time’s A Wasting in Oregon” that shows people thinking about the products they buy and their impacts on the environment.

Common Curriculum Goals:**Social Science:**

- Explain various perspectives on an event or issue and the reasoning behind them.

English: Writing

- Use a variety of modes (e.g., narrative, imaginative, expository, persuasive) in appropriate context.

Grade 3 Benchmark:

- Identify and compare different ways of looking at an event, issue, or problem.
- Write in a variety of modes (e.g., narrative, imaginative, expository,