



LESSON PLAN

Level:	Primary/Junior
About the Author:	MediaSmarts
Duration:	40 minutes

Looking at Food Advertising

Overview

This lesson introduces students to the ways in which advertising can affect their food choices. Working from television and magazine ads, students discuss the techniques used by advertisers to engage kids with products. Specifically, they assess the importance of "spokescharacters" and jingles as effective ways to build relationships with kids. As a class exercise, they create jingles and spokescharacters themselves for the foods they enjoy.

Learning Outcomes

Students demonstrate:

- awareness of the methods used by advertisers to sell food products.
- beginning awareness of how they are affected by food advertising.

Preparation and Materials

- Tape TV commercials targeted towards children. (Saturday mornings usually offer a wide variety of snack and cereal ads.)
- Collect food ads from magazines.

The Lesson

Guided Discussion: Advertisements

A good way to begin evaluating food advertising messages is to point out products in television and magazine ads.

While discussing the ads ask:

- How many different techniques can you spot in these advertisements? For example, do the manufacturers use animation, filming tricks, music, bright colours or celebrities?
- How do these techniques make you *feel* about the product? Do they make you *want* to have it? (One way they do this is to imply that the product gives children 'power'.)
- Why is it good for the manufacturers if their advertisements make you want to buy their product?



Activity 1

Brand Characters

One method used by food companies to attract kids is to create characters that are associated with their product or brand. On the blackboard, have the children come up with a list of their favourite "food" characters, such as *Tony The Tiger*, *The Honey Comb Kid*, *The Nestle Quick Bunny*.

- Why might companies create "spokescharacters" like *Captain Crunch* or *Toucan Sam*? (*They give products a friendly face that kids can relate to; they make a product appear fun and exciting.*)
- Have your students ever wanted to try a product because they like its "spokescharacter?"

Using the list on the board, ask students to identify what they like best about each of these characters. Have them vote on which is their favourite.

Have students think of their favourite food and ask them create and name their own food character. Let them draw or paint a picture of their new character with their favourite food.

Activity 2

Jingles

Explain that manufacturers create *jingles*, or catchy sayings, to encourage customers to think of their products. See how many students can complete the following food jingles and identify the food product that is connected to:

"Betcha can't eat just one....." (Frito Lay) "It's a honey of an O, its....." (Honey-nut Cheerios) "Good, good, whole wheat...." (Shreddies) "You can't drink it slow, if it's...." (Quick) "Leggo my...." (Eggo) "I gotta have my...." (Corn Pops) "Silly Rabbit,.....Are for kids!" (Trix) "When you've got the munchies, nothing else will do...." (Hostess Potato Chips)

Ask students what makes these jingles so effective. (*Answers may include: short, catchy phrases and simple music that make them easy to remember; continual repetition of the jingle in television and radio ads.*)

- Tell students to record other popular food jingles (or jingles for other products) in their media journals or, have them create a food jingle of their own.
- As an extension activity, have children record their original jingles for their favorite foods and play them to the class.

Evaluation

- Original food character
- Media Journal entries

