

LESSON PLAN

Wacky Media Songs: Consumer Awareness

This lesson is part of USE, UNDERSTAND & ENGAGE: A digital media literacy framework for Canadian schools. <http://mediasmarts.ca/teacher-resources/digital-literacy-framework>



LEVEL: Grade K to 3

DURATION: 10-15 minutes per activity

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Overview

This lesson series contains discussion topics and extension activities for teachers to integrate the TVOKids Original series *Wacky Media Songs*. This lesson focuses on recognizing and interpreting advertising, branding and consumerism.

Learning outcomes

Students will:

- Understand that media have commercial considerations
- Learn that advertisers actively target children and youth
- Understand that advertising has a persuasive intent
- Recognize and respond to common advertising strategies
- Understand that media are constructions that imperfectly reflect reality
- Identify ways in which advertising media may misrepresent products or claims

Preparation and materials

- Review the following *Wacky Media Songs* videos and prepare to show students the ones you wish to discuss:
 - [They Really Like Us!](#)
 - [Create the Hype!](#)
 - [Hit Us in the Feels!](#)
 - [Hiding in Plain Sight!](#)
 - [What a Deal!](#)
 - [Star Power!](#)
 - [We'll Make Them Want It!](#)

- [Creating a Brand!](#)
- [Words That Sell!](#)
- [What's Inside?](#)
- [Just Another Influencer!](#)
- [Hop on the Bandwagon!](#)
- [Make Me Shine!](#)

Procedure

Each of the videos in this lesson has discussion prompts for before and after viewing the lesson. Some also have extension activities to follow the lesson.

After reviewing the videos, choose which ones you feel will be most interesting and relevant to your students.

THEY REALLY LIKE US!

Marketers like kids because they spend lots of money buying their stuff. Ava sings about some of the tricks marketers use to target kids.

Before the video, ask: Why do you think marketers aim their ads at kids?
What makes kids such a valuable audience?

After the video, ask: What are some of the ways that marketers target kids? (Cute characters, video games that feature their brand, putting products at kids' eye-level.)

Why do they sometimes show you ads for things you won't be ready to buy for a long time, like cars? (So that you'll have good feelings about the brand by the time you're old enough to buy it.)

CREATE THE HYPE!

There's a whole marketing machine behind movies and they start to create the hype way before the movie even opens by selling us hoodies, toys, t-shirts and more! Guess what? We help create that hype when we wear or use their merchandise!

Before the video, ask: Do you have any clothes or toys that were made to promote a movie, a TV show or a video game? Have you first ever heard about a game, movie or show that way?

After the video, ask: Why do you think marketers use things like toys and clothes to build hype for games, movies or TV shows? How do you feel

about giving them free advertising by wearing those clothes? (It's okay if they do! Kids love media and sometimes like being "brand ambassadors." But they should understand that's what they're doing.)

HIT US IN THE FEELS!

Advertisers know that our emotions have a big impact on our buying decisions. They hit us in the feels with ads that make us feel good so that when we shop, we'll remember those good feelings and buy their stuff!

Before the video, ask: Have you ever seen an ad that made you feel sad, or happy, or excited?

After the video, ask: What are some ways that ads make us feel a certain way?

How can advertisers make something look like it's good for us when it really isn't? (They highlight one healthful thing about it without telling us about other things that make it less healthful. That's called a "health halo.")

Why might advertisers want to make us feel a certain way, instead of saying something about the thing they're selling? (Sometimes there isn't really a big difference between different products. But if advertisers can make you feel a certain way about what they're selling, you'll remember those feelings when you're shopping.)

HIDING IN PLAIN SIGHT!

Have you ever watched movies or TV shows and seen brand-name products in them? That's product placement - a sneaky way advertisers promote their products by showing them to us in the media we watch!

Before the video, ask: Have you ever noticed a product you recognized, like a cereal or a kind of chips, in a movie or TV show? Why do you think they were included?

After the video, ask: Why do you think advertisers pay to put their products in TV shows, games and movies? (They make us recognize and remember the products, and because we don't know they're ads we connect the good feeling of enjoying what we're watching with the product.)

Extension Activity: Have students watch for brands and logos in the media they watch, read and play for a week. Do you think they were product placement? (Hint: If the package or the logo is clearly visible, it was probably paid for!)

WHAT A DEAL!

“Buy one get one!”, “Free sample with purchase!”, “Limited Time Only!” Advertisers use lots of promotions to make us want to buy their stuff. They often sound like amazing deals, but buyer beware, that great deal might not be so great after all!

Before the video, ask: Have you ever seen something whose price ended in 99 cents? Why do you think they do that?

After the video, ask: What are some of the ways that sales or special offers can be misleading?

What are some ways we can keep from being tricked by misleading offers? (Remember that something is only a good deal if you would have bought it at full price!)

STAR POWER!

Look! It's a pop star, a teen idol, an actress... It's Ava! Advertisers sometimes use celebrities to help sell their products. Star power can be hard to resist. But the important thing is what WE think, not what a celebrity tells us to think when they're being paid to influence us!

Before the video, ask: Have you ever wanted to buy something because it had a picture of a famous person on it, or because you heard a famous person used it?

After the video, ask: Do you think famous people really use the things they endorse? Can you ever trust an endorsement if someone got paid to do it?

What's the difference between an endorsement and a review? How could you find out if something is an honest review and not an endorsement?

WE'LL MAKE THEM WANT IT!

Packaging is the marketers' last chance to convince us to buy their product. They have to grab our attention right away. Ava designs a package as she sings about the different packaging tricks marketers use to make kids say: “Wow! I want that!”

Before the video, ask: Have you ever seen something in a store that made you want to buy it (or ask for it)? What about it made you want it?

After the video, ask: Pause on this part of the video. Which box makes you want the cookies more? Why? (For example, bright colours, cartoon characters, fun logos and lettering.) Does it make any difference to how the cookies taste?

Extension Activity. Do a “media literacy field trip” to a grocery store. Look for packages that are aimed at kids and ask your kids how the packages try to make them notice and ask for the products. Look for things like bright colours, cartoon characters, and giveaways. Now look at products aimed at adults and talk about how they’re different. What about packages is aimed at different audiences besides the packaging? (For example, kids’ food is usually lower down on the shelf, at kids’ eye-level.)

CREATING A BRAND!

From packaging to creating a cool mascot, everything about a brand should give us good feelings. Ava creates her own brand of cereal. Plus, she plays a wacky, singing llama!

Before the video, ask: What does it mean when we talk about a “brand” in ads?

After the video, ask: Can you think of any ads that try to make you like the brand instead of telling you what’s good about the product? What are some ways that they do that?

Extension Activity: Have students play the MediaSmarts game [Co-Co’s AdverSmarts](#) and talk about the ways that companies build their brands online.

WORDS THAT SELL!

Risk-free! Virtually unbreakable! Once-in-a-lifetime! Marketers use words to sell us products and sometimes those words don’t even mean anything, but they can still have the power to persuade us!

Before the video, ask: Do you think ads have to tell the truth about what they’re selling? How might they say something misleading without actually lying?

After the video, ask: Can you think of any other examples of “weasel words” that make something sound good without actually saying something?

Why could an ad say a product is “the best” but not say it’s “better” than another product? (A lot of products are basically the same. So any of them could say they’re the “best” but none of them can say they’re “better” than any other.)

Extension Activity. Bring ad flyers or at packaging into the classroom. Can you spot any examples of “weasel words” like these? Do you see examples of claims that could actually be tested?

WHAT'S INSIDE?

Ava loves watching unboxing videos. It's almost like opening gifts on your birthday! But we should be aware that sometimes unboxers get stuff for free and all the views their videos get are like free advertising for the people who make the products.

Before the video, ask: Do you ever watch unboxing videos? What do you like about them? Do you think unboxing videos are ads?

After the video, ask: How do unboxing videos make you want to buy things? Does it make you feel differently if the people who made them got the things they unbox for free? How could you find out if they did or not?

Extension Activity: Have students make an unboxing video for something in the classroom. Let them explain to you the ways that unboxing videos get the viewer's interest, build suspense and show off the product.

JUST ANOTHER INFLUENCER!

Ava sings a duet with Vava, her favorite influencer! An influencer can feel like a friend, but we should always keep in mind that they're not necessarily authorities and it's okay to question what they say.

Before the video, ask: Do you or your friends follow any influencers online? (Make sure to include streamers and YouTubers.)

After the video, ask: What are some things that make us feel like influencers are our friends? How does that make us want to buy things they talk about?

What are some differences between influencers and real friends?

HOP ON THE BANDWAGON!

The goal of bandwagon advertising is to convince us that if we buy a product, we'll be part of a special group. Advertisers want us to think we'll be left out if we don't jump on the bandwagon. But you can hop on this bandwagon with Ava and her catchy song!

Before the video, ask: Has it ever felt to you like everybody was buying or doing something?

After the video, ask: Why do you think advertisers want you to feel that something is really popular? Can you think of anything that was super popular for a little while but nobody likes anymore?

MAKE ME SHINE!

The burger Ava bought doesn't look like the picture in the ad. That's because advertisers use all kinds of tricks to make food look amazing so that we'll buy it. And sometimes the food in ads isn't even edible! Sing along with Ava as she reveals some of coolest food styling secrets!

Before the video, ask: Do you think advertisers use real food in ads? What might be some reasons why they would, and some reasons why they wouldn't?

After the video, ask: What are some of the ways that people make food look good in ads? Do you think it's fair that they do that?

Extension Activity: Find an ad for fast food and then buy and take a picture of the food being advertised. Then compare the real thing to the food in the ad. (Remember that kids like fast food, so make sure they don't think you're telling them not to like it – just that they shouldn't count on ads to tell them what food really looks or tastes like.)