

LESSON PLAN

Marketing to Teens: Gotta Have It!

This lesson is part of *USE, UNDERSTAND & ENGAGE: A Digital Literacy Framework for Canadian Schools*: <http://mediasmarts.ca/teacher-resources/digital-literacy-framework>.



LEVEL: Grades 8 to 12

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: MediaSmarts

DURATION: 60 minutes, plus time for the assessment task

Overview

In this lesson students identify how we associate social status with brand name products, and how we believe others perceive us by what we wear. Students will also explore the notion of “brand identity” and how companies use social networks, and advertising strategies to create parasocial relationships with their consumers. To assess their learning, students then independently analyze the identity of a brand of their choice and create a mock ad that more openly communicates its implicit appeal.

Learning Outcomes

Students demonstrate:

- an understanding of the links between status, consumption and advertising
- an awareness of our own feelings and perceptions regarding what advertisers tell us we ‘must have’.
- an awareness of how brand identities are created and what effect they have on consumers
- an understanding of different advertising strategies used by brands to draw in a target audience

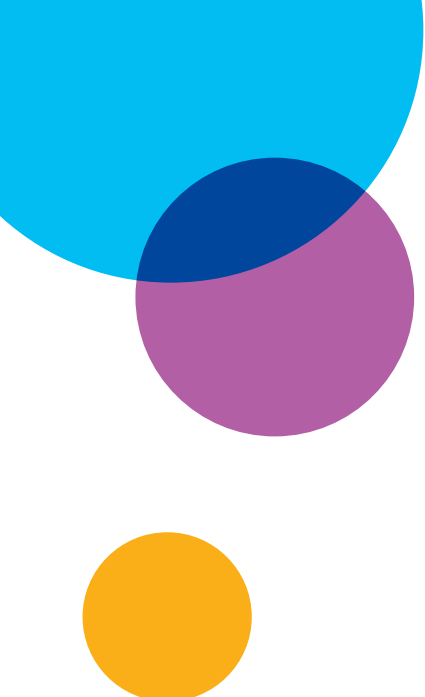
Preparation and Materials

- Prepare to project or distribute the handout *Brands: What’s Their Identity?*
- Prepare to distribute the assignment sheet *Making the Quiet Part Loud*

Procedure

DRAWN FROM MEMORY

Start by telling students to each draw a brand logo. Tell them it can be any logo they can think of, for any brand, so long as they can’t see it anywhere around them right now, and that they have one minute to draw it.



When the minute is up, have students hold up their drawings to show to each other. Then ask:

- Did anyone find it hard to remember a logo?
- Was it hard to get the logo right? (Were there any details you think you missed?)
- Why do you think the logo you drew was the first one that came to your mind?

After students have discussed the third point for a few minutes, point out that in addition to being simple and easy to recognize, a good logo is memorable because it captures something of the *feel* of a brand. (For example, the Nike “swoosh” recalls the feeling of throwing a basketball.) When a company wants to change how you feel about a brand, they may also change the logo as well: for instance, the original colourful Apple logo, which was chosen (along with the name) to make their products feel friendly, was changed to silver when iPhones started to be sold as luxury products.

BRAND IDENTITIES

Explain to students that a successful brand has an *identity* that helps you remember it. Brand identities can also make you want to buy something, either by appealing to an existing identity (by saying you are the kind of person who buys this product) or encouraging you to *aspire* to an identity (by saying you *could* be a certain kind of person if you bought it.)

Distribute the worksheet *Brands: What's Their Identity?* and have students complete the question. If you are working with younger grades, you may feel more discussion is needed or you could complete the worksheet as a class to ensure understanding.

If some students finish the questions earlier than others, have them quietly brainstorm imaginary products that they could create an advertisement for (this will be the assessment task later on.)

When students have completed the questions, take them up as a class:

1. Which brands use colour and shape to create their brand identity? How do they do it? What is the effect?

(Almost all do this. Coke may be the most famous example: the cursive writing and distinctively-shaped bottle reinforce the idea that it's unique, "the real thing." No Name does just the opposite with its generic colours and lettering. Headspace uses warm, vibrant colours to make it feel friendly. Sriracha hot sauce is an example of another brand that does this, with the colours and shape of its bottle.)

2. Which brands connect themselves with an existing identity? How do they do it? What is the effect?

(Tim Horton's makes an explicit connection with Canadian identity, as well as referring to hockey and using the same colours found on the Canadian flag. Another example might be Gillette, which appeals to gender identity by describing its razors as "the best a man can get.")

3. Which brands use celebrities or influencers to create their brand identity? How do they do it? What is the effect?

(Estee Lauder and Apple use Kendall Jenner and Taylor Swift, respectively. Kendall Jenner's popularity with teens makes Estee Lauder seem like a more youth-focused brand, while the glamour shot of Taylor Swift underlines Apple's position as a luxury brand. Another example is Omega watches, which pay to be shown on James Bond's wrist in his movies. Who doesn't want to be like James Bond?)

4. Which brands try to make you feel good about yourself for buying them? How do they do it? What is the effect?

(Headspace and American Eagle both say they support Mental Health Day, which might make you feel like buying those products will help people living with mental health issues. Lululemon says that buying it will show off how humble you are, while No Frills makes you feel like a savvy consumer who isn't swayed by advertising. Another example is electric hand dryers, which make you feel more eco-friendly by telling you they're more energy-efficient than paper towels.)

5. Which ads are aspirational (showing you someone or something you want to be)? How do they do it? What is the effect?

(The Estee Lauder ad implies that using it will make you look as good as a heavily edited photo of Kendall Jenner, while the American Eagle Instagram feed suggests that people who wear AE are attractive but also casual, relaxed and fun-loving. Lululemon suggests that if you buy it you will be the kind of person who does yoga on a beach, while the Tundra ad suggests that if you buy it you will be the kind of person who goes whitewater kayaking. Possibly the most famous example is Nike, whose ads imply that not having their shoes is all that's stopping you from getting up on the couch and shooting baskets like your favourite basketball star.)

GOTTA HAVE IT!

Distribute the handout *Gotta Have It!* and tell students they are going to think about how the “feel” of a brand can make you want to buy it. (They can do this assignment about the brand whose logo they drew, but do not have to.) Students can work alone or in partners (each partner has to do their own work, but they might want to talk to each other about what they are writing).

- In the first section, they will write down their thoughts about what kind of person own this brand. If they imagine someone buying or wearing it, what kind of person do they imagine?
- In the second section, they will describe some positive things people might assume about them if they had or wore that particular thing.
- In the third section, they will describe some negative things people might assume about them if they had or wore that particular thing.
- In the fourth section they will write why they think other people might think some of the things they stated in sections 2 and 3 of their page.

Once your students have finished with their sections, lead a discussion about what they wrote down. You could ask some students to share their answers with the class or you could share one that you have created beforehand.

- Were many of the answers similar? What was similar about them?

- Even if the products mentioned were different, were the responses in sections 2, 3, and 4 similar?
- If you have seen any of the items people mentioned advertised, where did you see them? Were they trying to market to teens?
- How many of the things people mentioned are easily recognizable brand names?
- How can other people tell what brand it is? Is the name prominently displayed?
- Does the prominence of the brand name say anything about the person wearing it?
- Why do you think teens like brand names so much?

ASSESSMENT: SAYING THE QUIET PART LOUD

Distribute the assignment sheet *Saying the Quiet Part Loud* and go through it with the class. Explain that for this assignment they will choose a brand that has a strong *brand identity* (not one of the ones already looked at in class) and then analyze it, answering the following questions:

1. How does the brand create and communicate its identity? (Remind students to consider things like colour and shape, connecting with an existing identity, using celebrities or influencers, making the audience feel good about themselves, and showing the audience someone or something they want to be.)
2. What *target audience* is the brand trying to appeal to? Think about gender, age, class and income (how much money they make), interests and hobbies, identity (how they see themselves), etc.
3. How is the *brand identity* designed to connect to the target audience? How does it appeal to them specifically?

Students will then create a *mock* ad that “says the quiet part loud” by making a more honest statement about what the brand is selling. (You can go through the examples on the second page of the handout to explore how that is done with the brands earlier analyzed in class. If it is more convenient for you, project this page instead of copying it.) Students can create their mock ads either by modifying a real ad (either physically or with a computer graphics program) or making ad from scratch. Emphasize to students that they are not being marked on their artistic or design skills but on how well their ad shows their understanding of how advertisers create brand identities and use them to build relationships with consumers.

EXTENSION ACTIVITY

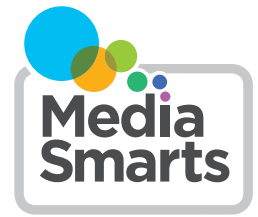
Tell students that tomorrow is “no logo” day. The challenge is for each student to come to school in clothing that has no identifiable brand labels or logos. When students come to class next day, see who has the fewest logos showing.

- In their media journals have students reflect on how easy or difficult this was for them to do, and how they felt about dressing in this manner.
- How did their friends react when they found out students were doing this?

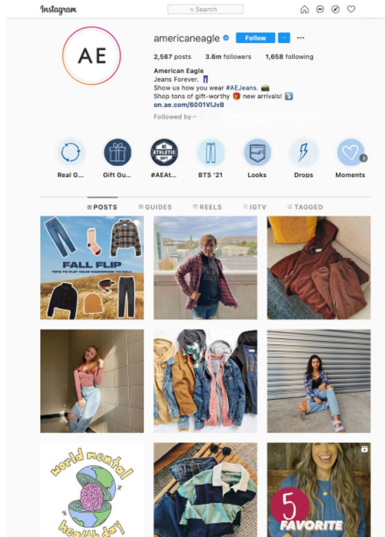
This lesson has been adapted from Seeing Beyond the Glam, a peer education workshop from the Expecting Respect Peer Education Program. The original workshop is designed for secondary students who want to conduct workshops with other students about advertising and its impact on teenagers. Adapted with permission.

For more information about the Expecting Respect Peer Education Program program or to obtain a copy of Seeing Beyond the Glam, e-mail sthompson@mcd.gov.ab.ca

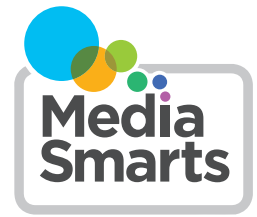
MARKETING TO TEENS: GOTTA HAVE IT!



Brands: What's Their Identity?



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Brands: What's Their Identity?

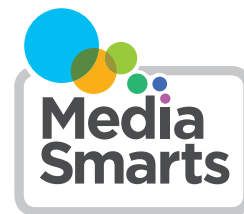
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Successful brands have identities: they make you think that a certain kind of person buys them, or that you could be a certain kind of person if you bought them.

Take a look at these ads and answer the following questions about their brand identity:

1. Which brands use *colour* and *shape* to create their brand identity? How do they do it? What is the effect? Can you think of another brand not shown here that does this?
2. Which brands *connect themselves with an existing identity*? How do they do it? What is the effect? Can you think of another brand not shown here that does this?
3. Which brands use *celebrities* or *influencers* to create their brand identity? How do they do it? What is the effect? Can you think of another brand not shown here that does this?
4. Which brands try to *make you feel good about yourself* for buying them? How do they do it? What is the effect? Can you think of another brand not shown here that does this?
5. Which ads are *aspirational* (showing you someone or something you want to be)? How do they do it? What is the effect? Can you think of another brand not shown here that does this?

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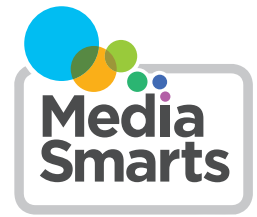
Gotta Have It!

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BRAND NAME:

<p>What kind of person owns this brand? What kind of person <i>doesn't</i> buy it?</p>	<p>What are some positive things you might think about someone who owned or wore this brand?</p>
<p>What are some <i>negative</i> things you might think about someone who owned or wore this brand?</p>	<p>What about the brand (logo, advertising, endorsers, etc.) tells you this?</p>

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Saying the Quiet Part Loud

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For this assignment you will choose a brand that has a strong *brand identity* (not one of the ones we already looked at) and then analyze it.

ANALYSIS

Answer the following questions on separate paper:

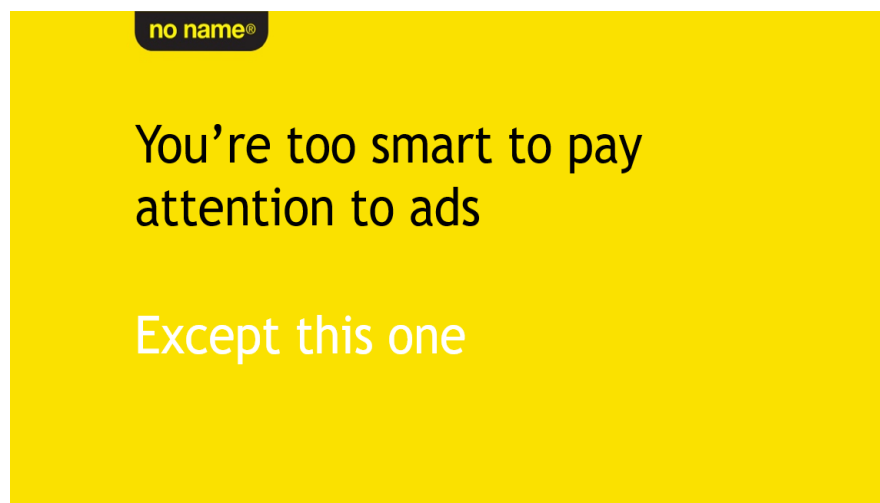
1. How does the brand create and communicate its identity? Consider things like:
 - colour and shape
 - connecting with an existing identity
 - using celebrities or influencers
 - making the audience feel good about themselves
 - and showing the audience someone or something they want to be.
2. What *target audience* is the brand trying to appeal to? Think about gender, age, class and income (how much money they make), interests and hobbies, identity (how they see themselves), etc.
3. How is the *brand identity* designed to connect to the *target audience*? How does it appeal to them specifically?

CREATION

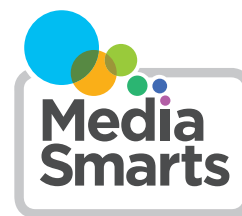
Next, you will do a mock ad that includes a more honest statement about what the brand is selling. (You can take a look at some examples, based on brands we've already looked at, on the other side of this page.)

To make your mock ad, you can either start with a real ad and cut-and-paste (either physically or with a computer graphics program) or make your ad from scratch.

You are not being marked on your artistic or design skills—only how well you show your understanding of how advertisers create brand identities and use them to build relationships with consumers.



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Assessment Task Rubric

	LEARNING EXPECTATIONS	ACHIEVEMENT
Access	<p><i>Reading Media</i></p> <p>Interpret medium and genre elements that direct attention, communicate meaning and provoke inference</p> <p><i>Making and Remixing</i></p> <p>Access digital tools and media to meet your needs, including free and non-profit options and options with differing business models</p>	<p>Insufficient (R);</p> <p>Beginning (1);</p> <p>Developing (2);</p> <p>Competent (3)</p> <p>Confident (4)</p>
Use	<p><i>Consumer Awareness</i></p> <p>Create a media work that makes effective use of the codes and conventions of a commercial genre, such as advertising</p> <p><i>Making and Remixing</i></p> <p>Use medium and genre elements to direct attention, communicate meaning and provoke inference</p>	<p>Insufficient (R);</p> <p>Beginning (1);</p> <p>Developing (2);</p> <p>Competent (3)</p> <p>Confident (4)</p>
Understand	<p><i>Reading Media</i></p> <p>Recognize how different audiences consume and engage with media works in different ways</p> <p>Identify the explicit and implicit meanings of a media work to its intended audience</p> <p><i>Consumer Awareness</i></p> <p>Understand the norms and practices of key media industries such as advertising</p> <p>Analyze the impact of commercial purposes and pressures on the meaning and influence of a media work</p> <p><i>Making and Remixing</i></p> <p>Create a media work that communicates an understanding and analysis of the commercial considerations of a work or genre</p>	<p>Insufficient (R);</p> <p>Beginning (1);</p> <p>Developing (2);</p> <p>Competent (3)</p> <p>Confident (4)</p>
Engage	<p><i>Reading Media</i></p> <p>Explore alternative readings of a media work</p> <p><i>Consumer Awareness</i></p> <p>Respond to commercial messages in media</p> <p><i>Making and Remixing</i></p> <p>Remix a media work</p> <p>Create a media work that challenges commercial or social messages in media</p>	<p>Insufficient (R);</p> <p>Beginning (1);</p> <p>Developing (2);</p> <p>Competent (3)</p> <p>Confident (4)</p>