

LESSON PLAN

Alcohol Advertising Online

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: Grades 9 to 12

DURATION: 1-2 hours

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: MediaSmarts

Overview

In this lesson, students share their personal experiences with alcohol influencers and then analyze some examples of paid and unpaid influencer posts featuring alcohol. They learn about the CRTC Code for Broadcast Advertising of Alcoholic Beverages to understand current Canadian regulations and then explore the ethical and regulatory issues around regulating alcohol promotion in social media.

Learning Outcomes

Key concepts/big ideas: Students will understand...

- Media are constructions: Influencer posts about alcohol do not reflect the influencers' real lives, but are constructed texts made for specific goals
- Media have commercial considerations: Influencers share alcohol content for commercial reasons that include both paid advertising and self-branding
- Interactions through digital media have a real impact: The relationship we feel we have with influencers affects how we respond to their posts
- Digital media experiences are shaped by the tools we use: Features like "Buy Now" buttons can make it easier for posts about alcohol to convince young people to drink

Framework topics: Students will learn...

- Reading media: How influencers use imagery to communicate a personal brand
- Consumer awareness: Different reasons why influencers post about alcohol; guidelines of the CRTC code for alcohol advertising in broadcasting
- Media health: How influencer advertising influences what we think about alcohol

Core competencies: Students will be able to...

- Understand: Critically evaluate influencer posts about alcohol; demonstrate intellectual humility
- Engage: Consider the impact of influencer advertising on society and develop appropriate responses

Student-facing outcomes: We will think about what influencers say about alcohol and how that affects us. We will learn rules for alcohol advertising in broadcast media like TV. We will explore whether and how alcohol content on social media should be restricted.

Preparation and Materials

- Prepare to project or distribute *Unpaid Influencer Posts*, *Paid Influencer Posts*, and *CRTC Code for Broadcast Advertising of Alcoholic Beverages*
- Prepare to distribute the assignment sheet *Truthseeking Trio*
- Review the MediaSmarts article on [Tobacco, Alcohol and Cannabis Advertising](#)

Procedure

INFLUENCERS AND ALCOHOL

Start by asking students:

- Do you follow any influencers or creators online? If so, what do you like about them? What kinds of things do they post about?
- Have you or your friends ever seen an influencer on social media, like Instagram, using their page to advertise and promote alcohol?
- If so, what products have you seen ads for? Which influencers or celebrities have you seen promoting alcohol?
- How did they make the alcohol seem like a natural part of their personal “brand?”
- Have you seen influencer or celebrity posts that show them with alcohol, but don’t seem to be ads?
- How similar do you think those posts are to the influencers’ real lives? Why?

- How similar are they to your and your friends' lives? Why?
- Have you ever seen a post with a "Buy Now" link or button to buy the product being advertised?
- What are some things about alcohol or drinking that you have *never* seen in influencers' posts?

Next, distribute or display *Unpaid Influencer Posts* and ask:

- Do you think this accurately reflects the influencer's real life? Why or why not?
- Does this reflect your and your friends' lives? Why or why not?

Now distribute or display *Paid Influencer Posts* and ask:

- Do you think this accurately reflects the influencer's real life? Why or why not?
- Does this reflect your and your friends' lives? Why or why not?
- How are these similar to or different from the unpaid posts?
- What reasons might influencers have to make their lives seem glamorous and exciting?
- What reasons might alcohol companies have to make their products seem glamorous and exciting?

Distribute or display the *CRTC Code for Broadcast Advertising of Alcoholic Beverages* and review with students. These are the guidelines that apply to the broadcast of alcohol ads in Canada.

Tell students to think of the posts you've just looked at. In your opinion, did any violate these guidelines?

SHOULD INFLUENCER POSTS ABOUT ALCOHOL BE REGULATED?

Tell students that they are going to do an exercise called a *truth-seeking trio* to consider the question of whether influencers who are popular with children or teens should be allowed to post about alcohol. The goal of the exercise for one side or the other to win a debate, but to identify

Distribute the assignment sheet *Truth-seeking Trio* and divide the class into groups of three. (If you prefer, you can have groups of six instead. If so, each of the roles described below will have two people.)

Each group divides itself into three roles: Side A, Side B and Referee.

Side A will come up with reasons why influencers should be allowed to post about alcohol.

Side B will come up with reasons why influencers should **not** be allowed to post about alcohol.

The Referee will prepare at least three challenging questions for each side.

If they have difficulty coming up with questions, you can prompt them with one of these:

For side A:

Should influencers who are popular with children be allowed to post about alcohol?

Why should influencers not have to follow the same rules as other advertisers?

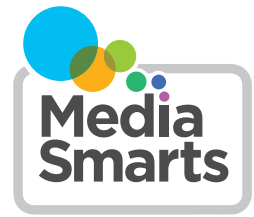
For side B:

Should influencers be able to post about alcohol if they're not being paid?

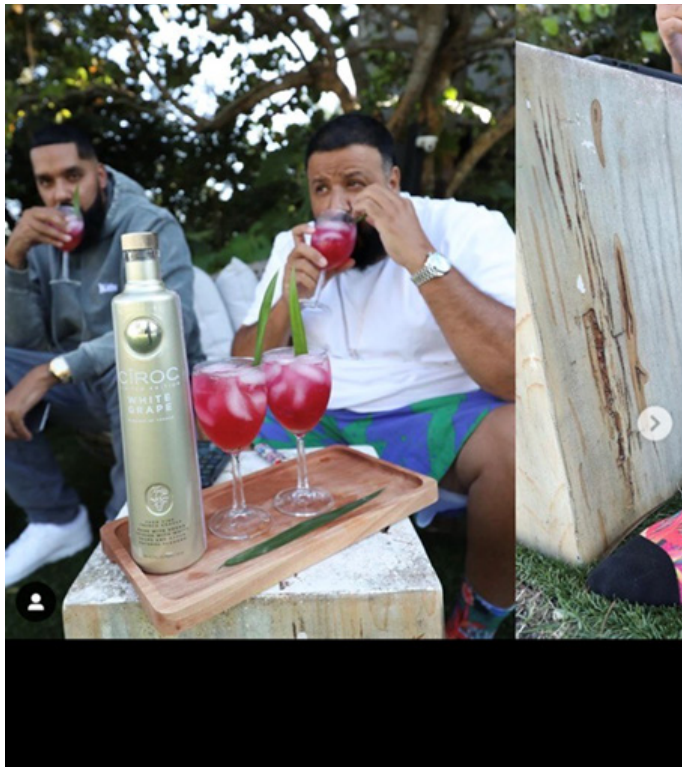
How much do influencers know about who follows them?

When the groups have finished preparing, have each one of them present their work: sides A and B should present their arguments. The Referee should then give a summary of the other two sides and explain the group's final position (which does not have to be the same as either side's original position.)

ALCOHOL ADVERTISING ONLINE



Unpaid Advertising Posts



djkhaled • Follow

djkhaled CIROC MIXED WITH STARR FRUIT AND PASSION FRUIT I CALL IT UNBELIEVABLE!!!!!! SWIPE SO YOU KNOW Bless @dreday3000

4d

4d 7 likes Reply

View replies (2)

Liked by [redacted] and 65,550 others

4 DAYS AGO



brookehogan1 • Follow

brookehogan1 Pool side refreshments courtesy of @greygooseau the drink of summer! Ingredients below!

- Shot (and a bit) of @greygooseau (45ml)
- St Germain elderflower liqueur (20ml)
- Dash of soda (60ml)
- Freshly squeezed lime juice (10ml)
- Few lime wedges.

Voila, delish! #celebrategreygoose

Load more comments

blouaustralia @elmomosez elderflower goose!

patinocristian

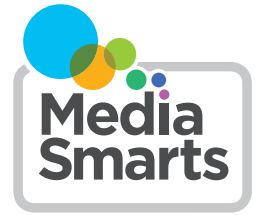
melissagr_n6 9 o'clock shrub @dsielski

park.circle123 You are so adorable and delicious

13,881 likes

JANUARY 29

ALCOHOL ADVERTISING ONLINE



Paid Advertising Posts



katiecung • Montreal, Quebec

My fall essentials include chunky knits and @grandmaniercanada's cuvée Louis-Alexandre 🍊 Its unique cognac and bitter oranges blend makes for the best warmth-in-a-glass drink for those cozy fall evenings ❤️ #ad #WeLiveGrand #GrandMarnier

127w

vencathleen How gorgeous ❤️ ❤️

125w Reply

itsberlyn Love this 🍊 🍊

125w Reply

Liked by underrated.dj and others

OCTOBER 27, 2019



davidbeckham • Following Paid partnership with haigclub

davidbeckham Loving the new @MacandWild x @HaigClub cocktails 🍷

34w

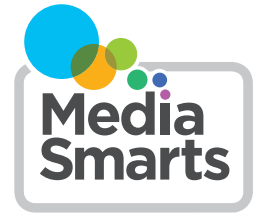
34w

Liked by 691,223 others and

JULY 9, 2020

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ALCOHOL ADVERTISING ONLINE



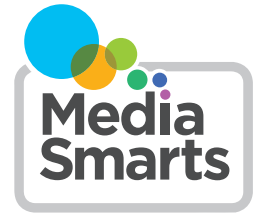
CRTC Code for Broadcast Advertising of Alcoholic Beverages

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The CRTC's Code for Broadcast Advertising of Alcoholic Beverages contains 17 guidelines that outline what commercial messages for alcoholic beverages may and may not do. According to the code, ads for alcohol should not:

- attempt to influence non-drinkers of any age to drink or to purchase alcoholic beverages
- be directed at persons under the legal drinking age, associate any such product with youth or youth symbols, or portray persons under the legal drinking age or persons who could reasonably be mistaken for such persons in a context where any such product is being shown or promoted
- portray the product in the context of, or in relation to, an activity attractive primarily to people under the legal drinking age
- contain an endorsement of the product, personally or by implication, either directly or indirectly, by any person, character or group who is, or is likely to be, a role model for minors because of a past or present position of public trust, special achievement in any field of endeavour, association with charities and/or advocacy activities benefitting children, reputation or exposure in the mass media
- attempt to establish the product as a status symbol, a necessity for the enjoyment of life or an escape from life's problems, or attempt to establish that consumption of the product should take precedence over other activities
- imply directly or indirectly that social acceptance, social status, personal success or business or athletic achievement may be acquired, enhanced or reinforced through consumption of the product
- imply directly or indirectly that the presence or consumption of alcohol is, in any way, essential to the enjoyment of an activity or an event
- portray any such product, or its consumption, in an immoderate way
- exaggerate the importance or effect of any aspect of the product or its packaging
- show or use language that suggests, in any way, product misuse or product dependency, compulsive behaviour, urgency of need or urgency of use
- use imperative language to urge people to purchase or consume the product
- introduce the product in such a way or at such a time that it may be associated with the operation of any vehicle or conveyance requiring skill
- introduce the product in such a way or at such a time as may associate the product with any activity requiring a significant degree of skill, care or mental alertness or involving an obvious element of danger
- contain inducements to prefer an alcoholic beverage because of its higher alcohol content
- refer to the feeling and effect caused by alcohol consumption or show or convey the impression, by behaviour or comportment, that the people depicted in the message are under the influence of alcohol
- portray persons with any such product in situations in which the consumption of alcohol is prohibited, or
- contain scenes in which any such product is consumed or that give the impression, visually or in sound, that it is being or has been consumed

Source: <https://crtc.gc.ca/eng/television/publicit/codesalco.htm>



ALCOHOL ADVERTISING ONLINE

Truthseeking Trio

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Your team is an advisory board. You aren't here to win an argument; you are here to find the "truth" about whether or not influencers who are popular with children and teens should be allowed to post about alcohol.

You will take positions on both sides of this issue, but you do **not have to end with those positions**.

This is not a debate, but an exercise to find the position you feel is closest to the truth.

You can prepare together, but when you share your work each of you will take one of three roles:

Side A/Pro: You are arguing that influencers **should** be allowed to post about alcohol.

Side B/Con: You are arguing that influencers **should not** be allowed to post about alcohol.

The Referee: You will judge the **validity** of the others' points, ask them **challenging questions** and share your group's **final position**.

You should prepare at least **three** questions for each side. Your questions should challenge them by making them think about things they had not considered.

Follow these steps:

1. Analyze the "Why": Think about the alcohol posts we looked at in class, and any influencer posts or videos you have seen that included or referred to alcohol. How was it presented? Who was the audience?
2. Build Arguments: What reasons can you think of to support each side?
3. Consider Challenges: How do the questions challenge your arguments and assumptions? What are you thinking now that you did not think before?
4. Final Consensus: Share your group's final position on the question.