



LESSON PLAN

Level: Grades 6 to 8
About the Author: MediaSmarts

Create a Youth Consumer Magazine

Overview

In this lesson, students learn how to create their own youth consumer magazine or Internet site. The lesson begins with students being introduced to a variety of youth consumer magazines and websites. Students discuss the elements that make these effective consumer advocacy tools for youth. Then, in small groups, they create youth-oriented consumer magazines or websites of their own.

Learning Outcomes

Students will demonstrate:

- an awareness of their rights as consumer
- an understanding of the importance of being informed, active consumers
- an awareness of advocacy as a means of addressing problems, raising public awareness, and bringing about change
- an appreciation of layout and design elements of magazines and websites

Preparation and Materials

Before Class:

- Arrange for class time in a computer lab, so that students can visit the recommended websites
- Collect copies of *Zillions* and *Adbusters* magazines from school or local libraries

Procedure

Depending on the available resources, introduce your students to the following consumer magazines, Internet sites and television shows:

Zillions offers a consumer magazine and website for young people with a wealth of information on everything from sports and electronic equipment to entertainment and media aimed at kids. Consumer goods are tested and rated by kids in this youthful version of Consumer Reports.



Adbusters is an irreverent and satirical magazine and website that encourages the active participation of citizens in combating the excesses of consumer culture. Older students will enjoy the humorous parodies of well-known ad campaigns.

Have students list and discuss what makes these effective consumer advocacy resources for young people. Elements to be considered might include:

- use of parody
- tone
- pictures/illustrations
- writing style
- products selected
- use of polls and surveys
- resources or information for young people to take further action (such as starting email or letter-writing campaigns)
- product testing
- product selection (of items that would appeal to kids)
- quizzes
- "speak out" sections for kids

Activity

Using these examples as models, have the students form groups to create their own magazine or youth consumer Internet site. Acting as investigative reporters, product testers and writers, students can publish their exposés, surveys and test results in a magazine format or online. This could be a one-time activity or an ongoing project, with students choosing a new topic each month to investigate and test, such as sports equipment, food, video games, fashion or music.

Evaluation

Completed youth consumer magazine or Internet site.

