



## LESSON PLAN

**Level:** Grades 4 to 8  
**About the Author:** MediaSmarts

# Kids, Alcohol and Advertising: Understanding Brands

## Overview

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*Understanding Brands* is the third in the *Kids, Alcohol and Advertising* series and is intended as a stepping stone to Lesson 4, *Interpreting Media Messages*. In this lesson, students learn about the importance of branding for developing customer loyalty and recognition of products. Through class discussion, students explore different types of brands and the ubiquitous nature of branding in North American culture. Using the work sheet *Brands All Around Us*, students further explore brand culture and their own responses to the products advertised in this manner. By helping students understand that brand culture is indiscriminate and that brand recognition is not always for products that are age-appropriate, they will be better able to understand the significance of branding in the marketing and consumption of alcoholic beverages.

## Learning Outcomes

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Students will demonstrate

an awareness of:

- how symbols, characters and logos are used to promote products
- the ubiquitous nature of product branding in North American culture

a beginning understanding of:

- their own responses to particular brands

## Preparation and Materials

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- Photocopy the overhead *Building Brands: Symbols and Characters* and, if needed, the *Building Brands: Complete Images* answer sheet.
- Photocopy the overhead *Building Brands: The Power of Words*
- Photocopy and distribute the student handout *Brands All Around Us*

## Procedure

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### Class Discussion

Ask students:



- What is the goal of advertising? (The goal of advertising is to influence *consumers to buy a particular product or service.*)

In North America, advertising is a multi-billion dollar industry.

- Take a guess. How many commercial messages does the average person in North America see every day? (*According to experts, the average North American sees over 16,000 ads daily.*)
- That's a mind-boggling number! Think about it. What are some of the ways advertisers send us messages about products? (*Answers might include: commercials on radio, television, billboards, magazines, the Internet, clothing, stores, mugs, accessories, posters, buses, bumper stickers, trucks, vending machines – even bathroom stalls!*)

On the blackboard, write the word BRAND.

- What is a brand? (*A brand is a trademark or label that is associated with a particular product.*)

Whether you're talking sneakers, potato chips or alcohol, when it comes to advertising, it all comes down to branding.

- What are some different types of brands? (*Symbols, characters, logos, and even the product itself – for instance, the Absolut vodka bottle – can all be brands.*)
- Is it enough for people merely to recognize a brand? (*Recognition is the first step. What advertisers ultimately want is loyalty to their brand or product.*)
- How do marketers develop brand loyalty? (*Marketers work hard to build positive associations around brands. This is achieved not only through formal ads, but also through strategies such as product placement, cross marketing, sponsoring sports teams, and constant exposure to brands and logos.*)
- Think about the things you own. What brands are you loyal to? Why?

What's your brand IQ? Let's take a look at a few symbols and characters that are associated with popular brands.

Put *Building Brands: Symbols and Characters* onto the overhead projector. See how many characters and symbols students can identify (that is, can they identify the product(s) or service(s) associated with the brand?). Once this is done, put the *Building Brands: Complete Images* onto the projector and see whether students recognize more brands once the words are attached.

- For the brands that mixed words and symbols, did you need the words to recognize the brand?
- Which of these brands are associated with products aimed at kids and teens?
- Which of these brands are associated with more adult-oriented products?
- Were you able to identify brands for adult products as easily as you could brands for young people?
- Do you have positive feelings about any of these brands? Which ones?

Now let's look at brands where the name of the product is the brand – this kind of brand is called a logo. Some logos become so popular that the brand name becomes synonymous with whole categories of products and activities. (An example is saying "Xeroxing" when you are photocopying something.)



- Can you think of other examples? ("*Kleenex*" for facial tissue, "*iPod*" for MP3 player, "*Googling*" for Web searching, "*windsurfer*" for sail boards)

Put *Building Brands: The Power of Words* onto the overhead projector.

- Which brands do you recognize?
- Which of these brands are associated with products aimed at kids and teens?
- Which of these brands are associated with more adult-oriented products?
- Were you able to identify brands for adult products as easily as you could brands for young people?
- Do you have positive feelings about any of these brands? Which ones?

Considering all the brands we've looked at:

- For those you like, where do your positive feelings come from? What is it that makes you like these brands?

### Homework

- Distribute the handout *Brands All Around Us* to students. (Younger students will need assistance. To get them started, you may want to have them to complete the first two rows using brands observed in the classroom.)
- Before beginning their charts, have students discuss possible places where brands might appear.

Once charts have been completed, take up students' findings in class.

- Have them compare the different places where they saw brands.
- Ask students to tally how many of the brands they recognized were for products geared towards them and how many were for products geared towards adults.

For those students who indicated they liked or disliked a product they hadn't tried or didn't own, further discussion should be encouraged to determine where their opinions come from. Do these impressions come from advertising? From friends? From parents? Compare answers and opinions.

Ask students to write a short response to this question in their journals:

"Do brands influence us to buy things?"



## Building Brands: Symbols and Characters

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## Building Brands: Complete Images



## Building Brands: The Power of Words

The Barbie logo is written in a pink, cursive script with a trademark symbol.The adidas logo features three blue stripes above the word "adidas" in a bold, black, lowercase sans-serif font.The Kellogg's logo is written in a red, cursive script with a trademark symbol.The IKEA logo consists of the word "IKEA" in a bold, blue, uppercase sans-serif font inside a yellow oval, which is set against a blue square background.The Coca-Cola logo is written in its iconic red, cursive script with a trademark symbol.The LEGO logo is written in a bold, white, uppercase sans-serif font with a black outline, set against a red square background.The Disney logo is written in a red, cursive script with a trademark symbol, set against a yellow background with a subtle pattern.The Disney Club Penguin logo features the word "Disney" in a small script above "CLUB PENGUIN" in a bold, blue and yellow, blocky font.The Pizza Hut logo features a red hat icon above the words "Pizza Hut" in a black, cursive script.The Kraft logo consists of the word "KRAFT" in a bold, blue, uppercase sans-serif font inside a red oval, with "Kraft Foods" written below it.The Marlboro logo features a red chevron shape above the word "Marlboro" in a bold, black, uppercase sans-serif font.The Google logo is written in its multi-colored, uppercase sans-serif font with a trademark symbol.The MTV logo features a large, stylized "M" and "TV" in orange and white, with "MUSIC TELEVISION" written below it.The GAP logo consists of the word "GAP" in a white, uppercase sans-serif font inside a dark blue square.The Speed Stick logo features the words "SPEED STICK" in a bold, black, uppercase sans-serif font, with "SPEED" above "STICK", set against a background of teal and white stripes.The SONY logo is written in a bold, blue, uppercase sans-serif font.The YTV logo features the letters "YTV" in a stylized, white, uppercase font inside a blue circle.The Mountain Dew logo features the words "Mountain DEW" in a stylized, white, uppercase font inside a green and yellow swirl.The NETFLIX logo is written in a bold, white, uppercase sans-serif font inside a red square.The Coca-Cola logo is written in its iconic red, cursive script with a trademark symbol.The Levi's logo is written in a white, uppercase sans-serif font inside a red vertical rectangle.

## Brands All Around Us

Over a one day period – from breakfast to bedtime – complete this chart by keeping track of brands or logos that you recognize (that is, you are familiar with the product(s) that each brand represents).

Brand	Placement (Where was it?)	Who is the product intended for?	Do you like this product? Yes/No/Neutral	Have you tried this product? Yes/No

