



LESSON PLAN

Level:	Grades 11 to 12
About the Author:	Adapted by MediaSmarts from a unit created by P. Gray and A. Gray in the Saskatoon Board of Education's <i>Media Literacy Guide</i> , 1994. Used with permission.

Magazine Production

Overview

In this lesson, students explore how magazines are developed to reach specific target markets. They begin with a class discussion about consumer magazines, and deconstruct magazines they have brought to class. In groups, students will learn about the publishing industry by assuming the roles of editors, writers, marketing staff and graphic designers to create a magazine geared to adolescents, young parents or seniors.

Learning Outcomes

Students will:

- demonstrate understanding of the ways in which magazines, their sponsors and their advertisers target and attract audiences
- adapt messages for different audiences and explain how the characteristics of media forms and audiences influence production decisions and shape content
- select and use the conventions of magazine publishing and appropriate techniques to produce a magazine
- practice appropriate research and information handling and processing skills, including locating, analyzing, evaluating and communicating information from a variety of print and non-print sources
- practice specific skills involved in reading (locating key words, skimming and scanning, etc.), writing (a variety of literary forms including formal and personal essay, poetry, short story, report, etc.), listening, speaking, viewing and visual expression

Preparation and Materials

- Prior to class, have students collect magazines geared to a variety of target audiences.
- Photocopy the *Evaluation Criteria* form to review with students. (educational handout)

Photocopy and distribute the following student handouts:

- *Senior Magazines* (educational handout)
- *Adolescent Magazines* (educational handout)
- *Parent Magazines* (educational handout)



Procedure

Introduction:

It's estimated that there are over 24,000 general and special interest periodicals and newspapers published in the US and Canada - with new publications appearing, and others folding, every day. Some of these magazines, such as academic journals and trade magazines, are highly specialized publications that are not intended for the general public. But what you're most likely to encounter in the magazine racks of your local grocery store, are consumer magazines.

Consumer magazines appeal to a specific audience by demographic. For example, *Seventeen* is targeted to teenage girls and *Nintendo Power* is targeted primarily to teenage boys. Consumer magazines are supported by advertising dollars, and many will sell advertising on approximately 50 per cent of their pages. Consumer magazines appeal to marketers, because they help them reach their desired target audiences. (However, despite advertising, many consumer magazines do publish interesting, meaningful and thought-provoking articles.)

Give students several minutes to look at the magazines they've brought to class. While they are looking through their magazines, ask them to note:

- The demographic or target market of the magazine.
- How they know what the target audience is.
- A rough estimate of the number of pages dedicated to ads.
- A rough estimate of the number of pages dedicated to content.
- The number of staff and their different roles (i.e. in addition to contributing writers, you also need editors, managers, publishers, advertising staff, marketing staff, finance officers, production staff, art design, copy staff etc.)
- Topics that appear in magazine articles.
- Products that are advertised.
- The general tone of the magazine, and why it might appeal to the target audience. (*Include references to language, images, layout, colour, type-face - any elements that would contribute to an overall "tone."*)

Once students have had a chance to look through their magazines, discuss their findings.

Activity

Explain to students that they're now going to assume the role of a small publishing company. They've developed a concept for a new magazine and have to "sell" their concept to advertisers.

- Divide your class into three groups.
- Distribute a magazine overview to each group:
 - *Senior Magazines* (educational handout)
 - *Adolescent Magazines* (educational handout)
 - *Parent Magazines* (educational handout)



- Within each group, one person will act as editor-in-chief and one person as an assistant. All group members are expected to contribute to the magazine, but the editor and his/her assistant will make final decisions regarding layout, content, etc.
- Before groups begin, review the *Evaluation Criteria* with students
- Decide on the individual articles each member will write. Each article should be approximately 500 - 750 words and the author should take a definite stance on the topic to be investigated (e.g., "Teen Diets: Nutrition or Junk Food?").
- In preparing the articles, library and Internet research should be undertaken, using current materials. At the conclusion of each article, sources (at least three) should be cited, using proper referencing format.
- First drafts will be submitted the editor and his/her assistant for revising, proofing, and editing.
- Once the revisions have been completed, articles will be rewritten and typed for publication.
- Each group member will then work on advertising, cover design and layout as assigned by the editor or his/her assistant and on optional articles if needed. (*Every member of the group must contribute at least one article and one advertisement or visual element - such as the cover - to the magazine.*)
- Once the editor and assistant editor have received the final draft of all articles and visuals, the group will assemble the magazine for publication. Typed copy and coloured artwork are preferred.
- Using the group reflection criteria on the *Evaluation Criteria* form, ask students to submit their feedback on how they felt their group performed in this assignment.

Evaluation

Use the templates on the *Evaluation Criteria* form to determine:

- A group mark will for the finished magazine (including student reflections)
- An individual mark for articles and advertisements



Evaluation Criteria: Magazine Production

Group Evaluation:

	Level 1 Does not meet expectations	Level 2 Generally, meets expectations	Level 3 Meets expectations	Level 4 Exceeds expectations
Magazine is professional looking				
Magazine layout is well organized				
Articles are well written, thoroughly researched, properly referenced, and suited to the target audience				
Advertisements are well designed, engaging, and the products would appeal to the target audience				
The over all tone of magazine would appeal to the target audience				
Magazine cover is engaging and well designed				
Production team worked efficiently and cooperatively (This will be based on Group Reflection .)				

Group Reflection:

Ask students to complete and submit the following:

Members of our group contributed equally to complete this assignment: **Yes No Sometimes**

Feedback from the editor(s) was constructive: **Yes No Sometimes**

Writers responded to editorial feedback: **Yes No Sometimes**

Individual Student Evaluation:

	Level 1 Does not meet expectations	Level 2 Generally, meets expectations	Level 3 Meets expectations	Level 4 Exceeds expectations
The article is well written				
The article is thoroughly researched, using a variety of print and electronic resources				
Article is properly referenced and cited				
Article is suited to the target audience				
Advertisement is well designed, engaging, and would appeal to the target audience				



Magazine Production: Senior Magazines

There are more elderly people today than there have ever been. And in the future the numbers will not diminish but will, in fact, increase as the Baby Boomers age. That means that there is a very large segment of society with concerns and interests which up to now, has not been addressed by the magazine industry.

As enterprising young publishers, you realize that a magazine gap exists, and that you can fill it with a monthly publication aimed directly at today's senior population.

Potential topics in each publication might include:

- coping with an aging parent; factors affecting retirement (e.g., financial security, planning for retirement, involvement in activities)
- housing (affordability, home maintenance, companionship at the expense of independence)
- health (diet and fitness, home care)
- nursing care; coping with loneliness and depression; death (attitude towards, preparation for)
- exploitation of the elderly (psychological or financial by children, by society, by business)
- growing old with dignity (cultural differences in treatment of the elderly)
- Alzheimer's Disease (How can families cope?)
- personal growth and age
- fiction
- poetry



Magazine Production: Adolescent Magazines

PST, GST, a sagging job market, prohibitive post-secondary academic requirements, AIDS, drugs, alcohol, peer pressure... Even though many feel that to be a teen today must be a living nightmare, as recently as 2001, a national survey of adolescents indicated that today's teens are more optimistic than ever about themselves and their futures (*Macleans*, April 2001). And yet, despite their hopeful outlook, today's adolescents have more issues to confront than adolescents of the past.

As an enterprising young publisher, you realize that a magazine market window exists, and that you can draw in a large teen readership with a monthly publication aimed directly at adolescents.

Potential topics to be covered in each issue might include:

- teen diet; eating disorders; teen pregnancy and parenting; jobs and careers
- youth unemployment; educational goals, programs and planning; teen consumerism (e.g., shopping, cost of living, cost effective buying)
- chemical misuse
- AIDS
- peer pressure
- self-concept and esteem
- dysfunctional families
- relationships (parents, friends, boyfriends/girlfriends)
- teen sex
- teen political views
- leisure activities
- values and attitudes
- teen prostitution
- youth and the law
- personal appearance (e.g., fashion consciousness, skin problems)
- health and fitness



Magazine Production: Parent Magazines

It's the new millennium! The basic necessities have expanded far beyond food, shelter and clothing. Now it's daycare, surrogate parents, leisure-time activities for kids and so on.

As an enterprising young publisher, you realize that a magazine market gap exists, and that you can fill it with a monthly publication aimed directly at young, working parents.

Potential topics to be covered in each issue might include:

- childhood nutrition
- daycare
- pre-schools
- abortion
- verbal and sexual abuse
- adoption
- surrogate parents
- kids and drugs
- AIDS
- traditional sex roles
- kids' clothing styles
- toys and other leisure activities (e.g., video ratings and reviews)
- single parents
- fiction
- poetry
- behaviour training
- dealing with special needs children

