

Media have commercial implications

GRADES 5-8 **DURATION** 45-90 minutes

OVERVIEW

In this lesson, students watch a video introducing the media literacy key concept that media have commercial implications. They then watch an ad for jeans which conceals its commercial nature, and discuss its purpose before and after being aware of its purpose. In an optional final task, students analyze an educational kids' website created by the US National Dairy Council and identify the ways in which its different elements educate, entertain, persuade and advertise to youth.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will:

- understand the key concept that media have commercial implications
- identify the commercial purpose of a media product
- understand that media products may serve multiple purposes
- apply their understanding of commercial implications of media by analyzing the multiple purposes of an educational website (optional task)

PREPARATION AND MATERIALS

- Arrange to have access to a digital projector or digital whiteboard and cue up the videos **“Media Have Commercial Implications”** [<http://bit.ly/15LZFBV>] and **“Guys Backflip into Jeans”** [<http://n.pr/15MOrSp>]
- If your students will be doing the optional task, copy the worksheet **What’s It For? Identifying a Website’s Purpose** (For background information on the **“Guys Backflip into Jeans”** video, see <http://n.pr/1fFZKj6>)

PROCEDURE

Begin by showing students the video **“Media Have Commercial Implications”** [<http://bit.ly/15LZFBV>]. When it’s done, ask students to think about the points raised in the video.

- What does it mean to say that “media have commercial implications?” (*That most media products are made to make money, which has an influence on their content.*)
- How does the audience that a media product is aimed at affect its content? (*Because the product has to be made to appeal to that audience.*)

Media have commercial implications

- Name some media products (movies, video games, etc.) that are aimed at people your age (in terms of their sex, age, interests, etc.), and some that definitely are not. *(It's common for media products to have more than one purpose: nearly all are made to make money either directly by getting you to pay for it or indirectly by selling or advertising something, but they may also be intended to entertain, educate or persuade you.)*

Now read from the screen the assignment: “Think of any ad, online video, article or website. Who is behind the message and why are they communicating it?”

Then show students the video **“Guys Backflip into Jeans”** at <http://n.pr/15MOrSp> *(Ideally, have it cued up in full-screen so that students can't see the title “Stealth Ads.”)* Play the first minute-and-a-half and then remind the students of the assignment from the previous video.

Ask students:

- Who do they think was behind the “Guys Backflip into Jeans” video?
- What do they think its purpose was?
- What, if any, message did it have?

Students are likely to say that it has no message and is just a bunch of guys doing funny stunts. Don't challenge this question for now, but instead show the last twenty seconds of the video and then ask:

- Were you surprised to learn that it was actually a professionally made ad for Levi's jeans?
- Now that you know that it was created by Levi-Strauss, what do you think its purpose and message were?

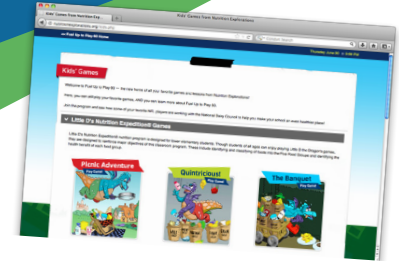
Now that they know it was created by Levi's, their answers to the other questions are likely to change to recognize that the purpose of the video is to get you to buy Levi's jeans through a message that makes them seem exciting and cool.

Ask students if they've ever played “advergames” or watched TV shows that are based on toys. If so, what do they think their purpose is? Ask students for examples of other media products that have more than one purpose: examples might include educational TV shows (which try to educate and entertain) and funny ads (which advertise and entertain). Finally, ask students how they know if a media product is trying to persuade them or advertise to them instead of (or as well as) educating them. Remind students of the importance of knowing who created a media product: do they have a reason to want you to believe a particular thing? Will they make money if the media product gets you to buy something?

OPTIONAL TASK

Distribute the worksheet **What's It For? Identifying a Website's Purpose** and have students look at the website **“Nutrition Explorations Game Page”** [<http://bit.ly/16RzLAz>]. (You may choose to have students do this on their own, either at home or in a computer lab; in pairs; or together as a class using a data projector or digital whiteboard.) Have students use the worksheet to identify the ways in which the website serves commercial, educational and other purposes and then make a judgment of what they feel the site's most important purpose is.

What's It For? Identifying a Website's Purpose



Lots of media products are made to do more than one thing. A cereal box, for example, tells you important things about what's in the cereal. It's also a kind of ad that tries to make you want to buy the cereal.

Here are some of the most common purposes a media product might have:

- To entertain you (by being funny or exciting)
- To educate you (by teaching you something) or inform you (by giving you facts that you were looking for)
- To advertise to you (by trying to get you to want to buy something)
- To persuade you of something (by trying to make you agree with an idea)

Take a look at the **Nutrition Explorations Game Page** and the activities that are on it to see what different parts of the page and activities may serve different purposes. Each part of the site may serve more than one purpose (for instance, a game might try to both entertain and educate you).

Website title: Nutrition Explorations Game Page

Web address: <http://bit.ly/16RzLAz>

A. ENTERTAINMENT

Find three things on the site that are trying to entertain you by being fun, exciting or funny. Below each one write why you think its purpose is to entertain you.

1. Why it's entertainment:

2. Why it's entertainment:

3. Why it's entertainment:

B. EDUCATION

Find three things on the site that are trying to educate or inform you. Below each one write why you think its purpose is to educate you.

1. How it's educational:

2. How it's educational:

3. How it's educational:

C. ADVERTISING

Find three things on the site that are trying to advertise to you by teaching you something or giving you the information you were looking for. Below each one write why you think its purpose is to advertise to you.

1. Why it's advertising:

2. Why it's advertising:

3. Why it's advertising:

D. PERSUASION

1. Who created this website?

How do you know?

Find three things on the site that are trying to make you think or agree with a particular thing. Below each one write why you think its purpose is to persuade you.

1. Why it's persuasive:

2. Why it's persuasive:

3. Why it's persuasive:

E. CONCLUSION

What do you think is the main purpose of this website - to entertain, educate, advertise or persuade? Why?
