



LESSON PLAN

Level:	Grades 8 to 12
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Duration:	20 minutes

Marketing to Teens: Gender Roles in Advertising

Overview

In this lesson students explore gender roles in advertising by taking an ad campaign they have seen, which is specifically directed to one gender, and redesigning the campaign to target the opposite gender.

Learning Outcomes

Students will demonstrate:

- an awareness of gender stereotypes that are used by advertisers to sell products
- an understanding that advertisements are designed to deliver very specific messages to consumers

Preparation and Materials

- paper and markers

Procedure

Guided Discussion

Advertisers create campaigns directed at girls that are different from campaigns directed at guys. Often an ad will tell you whether a product is something "masculine" or "feminine," even though the product could be used by either gender. This activity explores some of the ways advertisements tell us which gender a product is being marketed to.

Begin by asking students for a definition of "stereotypes." (Stereotypes are assumptions we make about people based on generalisations about groups of people.)

- What are some common gender stereotypes associated with guys and girls? (*For example, guys are "tough and aggressive" and girls are "sweet and passive."*)
- Do students believe these gender stereotypes to be accurate?
- Where do they think these stereotypes come from?



Activity

- If possible, show students the video “Gender Making in Moonsand” (available on YouTube at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zgdj5FXOOp8>). Ask students to identify ways in which the two commercials for the same product are different: examples are colours, music, tone of voice, gender of the narrator, suggested activities (building and knocking things down in the first commercial, molding shapes in the second one) and accessories (trucks in the first commercial, mermaids and princesses in the second one.) Who is each commercial aimed at? How do you know?
- Divide the class into groups of 4 or 5. (*Each group will have a large piece of paper and some markers.*)
- Explain that each group is to think of a product that is advertised specifically to either guys or girls.
- Ask students to design an ad that would appeal to the opposite gender. For example, we've all seen Doritos ads on TV - for years they have been directed at teenage boys. Imagine what these ads would be like if McCain decided to shift its focus and try to sell Doritos to teenage girls. Students have to consider what type of ad they would create, what techniques they would use to reach a particular gender and where they would place the ad in order to reach their target market (*i.e. for girls, advertisements would be placed in girls' magazines, or during popular shows like Pretty Little Liars, Vampire Diaries and 90210*).
- Ask students to create an outline and storyboard for a TV commercial or a print ad campaign. They only have 5 minutes, so ask them to illustrate their ideas in quick sketches to be able to explain them verbally to the class. Also have them decide during which shows, or in which magazines this ad would appear. (*If you have more time, students can develop their ad campaign more fully.*)
- Have each group explain their work to the rest of the class.
Questions for discussion:
 - How is marketing to guys different to marketing to girls?
 - Does gender-based marketing reinforce stereotypes?
 - What types of ads appeal to both sexes?
- If time permits, allow students to fully develop their campaigns and present the finished product to the class.

This lesson has been adapted from *Seeing Beyond the Glam*, a peer education workshop from the *Expecting Respect Peer Education Program*. The original workshop is designed for secondary students who want to conduct workshops with other students about advertising and its impact on teenagers. Adapted with permission.

For more information about the *Expecting Respect Peer Education Program* program or to obtain a copy of *Seeing Beyond the Glam*, email sthompson@mcd.gov.ab.ca.

