

# What Is Advertising Literacy?

## UNDERSTANDING ADVERTISING

### Objectives:

Students will be able to:

- Describe what advertisements are.
- Distinguish advertising from other messages in shows, videos, and games.
- Practice asking three questions about advertisements and messages.
- Begin identifying advertising messages they encounter.

### Challenge Overview:

- **Intro:** The Youville Detective Agency has a bunch of new cases. The Claud plasters the town with messages — in games, texts, and social media sites. The Youbies can't tell which messages are ads, and which ones aren't.
- **Challenge:** Help the Youville detectives sniff out the ads using three questions.
- **Outcome:** The Youbies learn about the different places ads appear and how to spot them. Once all groups complete the activity, the class gets a piece of the JumboFan.

### Materials:

- *What Is Advertising Literacy?* slide deck
- *Sniff Out the Ads* activity sheet
- *Thinking Outside the UNBox* activity sheet
- JumboFan sheet
- JumboFan piece
- Glue or tape

**Time:** 45 minutes

### Instruction:

#### Warm-up (5 minutes):

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1. **Project slide 3 from the *What Is Advertising Literacy?* slide deck, and say:** “How many of you have heard the word ‘advertisement’ or ‘ad’ before? What is it?” [Allow time for answers.]

2. **Say:** “Ads are messages designed to get your attention and convince you to do something. Most ads want you to buy a product or service.”
3. **Say:** “Where do you think you’ve seen ads before? Turn to the person next to you and talk about where you’ve seen ads before.” [Answers might include in games, virtual reality, social media sites, TV, radio, entertainment streaming services, and magazines.]
4. **Bring the class back together.** Spend a few minutes having students share their answers with the whole group. Write key words provided by the students on the board.

### **Mini Lesson (10 minutes):**

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1. **Project slide 4, and say:** “An advertisement, or ad, is a tool used to get people to buy or do something. Ads are all around us: in games, online, on TV, social media sites, the radio, and the list goes on.”
2. **Say:** “Most of the shows, games, and sites you love are free or affordable because they make money by selling ads. Ads can help you learn about new products, but it’s important to notice when an ad tries to get you excited about something and tells you to buy now.”
3. **Say:** “Some ads are simple to spot — imagine watching a video or a show and then a commercial about ‘Youbie Cereal’ comes on. If the box has your show’s main character on it, would you want to try that cereal? That’s advertising.”
4. **Project slide 5, and say:** “Some ads might give you clues that you are seeing an ad, but it may not be totally clear.
  - For example, online, you may see an ‘X’ that you can click on to close the ad.
  - A video may play for a few seconds and then a button with the words ‘Skip Ad’ may appear.
  - On social media sites, there may be a hashtag that says #ad, #paidpromotion, or #sponsored.
  - There may be a background in the ad which is different from the videos or shows you’re watching.”
5. **Project slide 6, and say:** “But sometimes ads are much harder to spot. They may not have any of the clues I just mentioned.
  - Think of someone who makes videos that you enjoy on a social media site. This person is called an influencer. An influencer is someone who has a large following online. A video of someone talking about their day while eating ‘Youbie Cereal’ could actually be an ad for that cereal. Many influencers get paid to advertise products to their viewers online, or to get that product for free.
  - Think about ‘unboxing’ videos. Companies often pay influencers or give them free things, so they will unbox, describe, and use their products — on camera. Influencers are required by law to tell you if it’s an ad, but they might not. Their goal is to get you, the viewer, to want and hopefully buy the item. And because they’re advertising the item, they may not be as likely to tell you if it isn’t that great.”
6. **Say:** “The goal of advertising is to convince you of something. So, it’s important to

know when an ad tries to grab your attention and gets you to buy what it's selling. These three questions will help you spot ads, think about how they work, and understand what they're doing."

7. **Project slide 7, and say:** "Look at the questions on the slide and think about them as I read them out loud.
  - **WHO is responsible for this message?**
    - » Who made this message? Why did they make it? For example, is it a company trying to sell a product? Is it an influencer who was paid to say good things about it?
  - **WHAT is this message actually saying?**
    - » Is this message trying to convince me of something? Is it telling me the whole story, or only the parts that make the thing it's talking about look good? Could there be any downsides — problems or negatives — to buying this product that it's not mentioning? Should I do more research before I make a decision?
  - **WHAT does this message want me to do?**
    - » Is it trying to get me to buy or sign up for something?"
8. **Project slide 8, and say:** "When it comes to advertising, your challenge is to spot it and decide for yourself. Do you agree with what the message is asking you to do? Do you need to do more research before making a decision? A parent or trusted adult can also help you answer these questions."

### **Challenge Activity (20 minutes):**

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1. **Project slide 9, and say:** "Now, let's move to the challenge activity — *Sniff Out the Ads*."
2. **Project slide 10, and say:** "The Claud plasters the town with messages — in games, texts, and on social media sites. The Youbies can't tell which messages are ads, and which ones aren't. Help the detectives sniff out the ads using the three questions."
3. **Divide the students into small groups.** Project or pass out the *Sniff Out the Ads* activity sheet. Each contains a message that might appear in various platforms discussed above.
4. **Project slide 11, and say:** "Determine whether each message is or isn't an ad. Take turns in your groups, asking and answering the following questions.
  - **WHO** is responsible for this message?
  - **WHAT** is this message actually saying?
  - **WHAT** does this message want me to do?Finish by marking whether you think the message is an ad or not."
5. **Bring the class back together.** Call on groups to share their findings for the messages.

## Wrap-up (10 minutes):

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1. **Move students back into their groups.** Pass out one *Thinking Outside the UNBox* activity sheet to each group.
2. **Project slide 12, and say:** “Think of a time when you saw an ad but didn’t realize it was an ad at the time — it could have been an unboxing video, an ad in a game, or something else. Decide on one example. Then, answer the questions on the sheet.”
3. **Bring the class back together.** When each group finishes discussing and answering the questions, have a few groups share their findings to the full class.
4. **Project slide 13, and reward the class** with a piece of the JumboFan, which they can decorate and glue or tape onto the JumboFan sheet.
5. **Say:** “When we finish all the challenges and collect all the pieces of the JumboFan, we’ll take it up to the highest point in Youville and blow The Claud away for good.”

### Assessment:

- Monitor each student’s participation during the activities.
- Evaluate written responses to activity sheets.

### Learning Standards:

#### International Society of Technology in Education Standards (ISTE)

**1.2 Digital Citizen:** Students recognize the rights, responsibilities, and opportunities of living, learning, and working, in an interconnected digital world, and they act and model in ways that are safe, legal, and ethical.

- **1.2.b.** Students engage in positive, safe, legal, and ethical behavior when using technology, including social interactions online or when using networked devices.

#### Common Core State Standards (CCSS)

##### English Language Arts (ELA) Standards

##### College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Reading

###### *Key Ideas and Details*

R.CCR.1 Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

###### *Craft and Structure*

R.CCR.4 Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.

R.CCR.5 Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.

##### College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Writing

###### *Production and Distribution of Writing*

W.CCR.4 Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

##### College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Speaking and Listening

###### *Comprehension and Collaboration*

SL.CCR.1 Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

SL.CCR.3 Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric.

*Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas*

SL.CCR.4 Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

**American Association of School Librarians (AASL) National School Library Standards**

**I. INQUIRE:** Build new knowledge by inquiring, thinking critically, identifying problems, and developing strategies for solving problems.

**C. SHARE:** Learners adapt, communicate, and exchange learning products with others in a cycle that includes:

1. Interacting with content presented by others.

**III. COLLABORATE:** Work effectively with others to broaden perspectives and work toward common goals.

**B. CREATE:** Learners participate in personal, social, and intellectual networks by:

2. Establishing connections with other learners to build on their own prior knowledge and create new knowledge.

**V. EXPLORE:** Discover and innovate in a growth mindset developed through experience and reflection.

**D. GROW:** Learners develop through experience and reflection by:

1. Iteratively responding to challenges.

**SHAPE America National Health Education Standards**

*Standard 2*

Students will analyze the influence of family, peers, culture, media, technology, and other factors on health behaviors.

*Standard 5*

Students will demonstrate the ability to use decision-making skills to enhance health.