

Understanding Advertising Techniques

UNDERSTANDING ADVERTISING

Objectives:

Students will be able to:

- Explain what ads are and know they're designed to persuade you to buy or do something.
- Spot common types of advertising techniques including association and hype, testimonials and endorsements, emotional and sense appeal, urgency, and repetition.
- Practice asking questions about messages and advertisements they encounter.

Challenge Overview:

- **Intro:** The Youville Detective Agency has a bunch of new cases. The Claud plasters the town with ads — in games, videos, texts, and direct messages, and on social media sites.
- **Challenge:** Identify at least one clue (ad technique) used in each advertisement.
- **Outcome:** Once all groups find all of the clues or ad techniques, the class gets a piece of the JumboFan.

Materials:

- *Understanding Advertising Techniques* slide deck
- *Ad Detective* activity sheet
- JumboFan sheet
- JumboFan piece
- Glue or tape

Time: 45 minutes

Instruction:

Warm-up (5 minutes):

1. **Project slide 3 from the *Understanding Advertising Techniques* slide deck, and ask:** “Can you think of an ad you’ve seen recently? Write down some memories of this ad, including where you saw or heard it.”
2. **Start a Think-Pair-Share exercise** where students think about the following question, “What makes an advertisement stick in your mind?” Then they pair up with the person

next to them to share their answer.

3. **Ask** one or two pairs to share their observations with the class. Listen for examples that include ads hidden in other content like ads they've seen while gaming, on video sharing platforms, in their older sibling's social media feeds, or in educational platforms.

Mini Lesson (15 minutes):

1. **Project slide 4, and say:** "Today, we're going to talk about advertisements, or ads for short. Where are some of the places you see ads?" [Listen for responses like these to call back later: "While playing video games, on shows, on social media sites, or between videos".]
2. **Say:** "Ads are all around us. But how can you tell if something you're seeing is an ad? And why is that important?" [Listen as students offer various answers.] "When you notice if someone is trying to convince you to do something or buy something, it can help you decide what you want to do."
3. **Say:** "Sometimes, people might get money or free stuff to recommend that you buy something. It might not even look like an ad. But once you recognize what's an ad, it can help you make your own decision about what you want to do. Then, you'll be able to do your own research before you buy something."
4. **Ask:** "Have you ever considered why some ads stand out to you more than others?" [Ask one or two students to share.]
5. **Project slide 5, and say:** "Most ads are directed to a target audience — a group of people that advertisers think will buy or use the product. If you're in that group, advertisers use different techniques to get your attention, make an ad memorable, or persuade you to do something. What do you think makes an ad stand out?" [Listen for responses from students as they describe ads they've seen, and the techniques the ads used.]
6. **Solicit examples** of each type of technique from the students.
 - **Association and hype:** Advertisers make it seem like everyone uses their product, so you should too, or you'll miss out.
 - **Testimonials and endorsements:** Someone — often a celebrity, influencer, athlete, or someone respected by the target audience — says they use, endorse, or promote a product or service. They suggest that if they use it, you should use it too.
 - **Emotional and sense appeal:** Advertisers tap into your feelings — like happiness, sadness, fear, excitement, or hunger — to get you to respond to the ad and influence your decisions about a product or service.
 - **Urgency:** Statements that are designed to get an immediate response or encourage an immediate action.
 - **Repetition:** An idea or message that's repeated over and over so you're more likely to remember it.
7. **Say:** "Now, let's check our understanding. I'll show you a few example ads. I'd like you to identify which technique or techniques are being used."

8. **Project slides 6-15:** Facilitate a brief discussion after each one. You may choose to place students in small groups to analyze the ads before discussing as a class. Display each ad for students to see.
9. **Project slide 16, and say:** “Some ads might not look like ads at first. Unboxing videos, ads in video games, videos by influencers, celebrities, or athletes, and even video ‘reviews’ of products are often actually ads. They’re paid for by the products featured in the ads. Have you ever seen content like any of these and wondered if it’s an ad?” [Have students lead a discussion based on their own experiences.]
10. **Ask:**
 - “Have you ever watched an unboxing video? Did it make you want to have the product? If so, why do you think you felt that way?”
 - If you saw an ad with one of your favorite celebrities or athletes using a product, would it make you more likely to buy it? Why or why not?
 - Have you ever noticed an ad or product featured inside the world of a video game? What product was it, and did it make you want the product or think about it in a positive way?”
11. **Project slide 17, and say:** “If you’re ever wondering if a message is an ad, ask these three questions:
 - **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 product 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?”

Challenge Activity (20 minutes):

1. **Project slide 18, and say:** “Now, let’s move into our challenge activity — *Ad Detective*.”
2. **Project slide 19, and say:** “The Youville Detective Agency has a bunch of new cases. The Claud is plastering the town with ads — in games, videos, texts, and direct messages, and on social media sites. Help the Youville detectives find clues to determine which advertising techniques each ad uses.”
3. **Print out the four ads** and hang them around the classroom.
4. **Project slide 20, and divide the class into groups.** Give each group time to complete the *Ad Detective* activity sheet.
5. **Bring the class back together.** Call on groups to share their findings for each advertisement. Facilitate a discussion around each ad. Which advertising techniques

did the class identify in each ad?

Wrap-up (10 minutes):

1. **Project slide 21, and say:** “Looking at the ad techniques we’ve just discussed, which one do you find most convincing, and why?”
2. **Project slide 22, and say:** “Good job! Looks like you’ve helped the Youbies identify The Claud’s advertising techniques. The Claud has moved on to another part of Youville.”
3. **Reward the class** with a piece of the JumboFan which they can decorate and glue onto the JumboFan sheet.
4. **Say:** “When we finish all of the challenges and collect all of the pieces of the JumboFan, we will 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 the written responses on the activity sheet.

Learning Standards:

International Society of Technology in Education Standards (ISTE)

1.3 Knowledge Constructor: Students critically curate a variety of resources using digital tools to construct knowledge, produce creative artifacts and make meaningful learning experiences for themselves and others.

- 1.3.b. Students evaluate the accuracy, perspective, credibility and relevance of information, media, data or other resources.

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.
- R.CCR.7 Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.

College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Writing

Production and Distribution of Writing

- W.CCR.2 Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.
- 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.2 Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

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 5

Use a decision-making process to support health and well-being of self and others.