

Awareness of Advertising: 6th Class



Teacher Resources

Ad-Aware Activity Sheet

Materials: Homework activity sheet

Description:

Students record food adverts that they are exposed to (television, radio and print media). Students reflect on the appropriateness of the product being marketed.

Overview:

Children are growing up in a media saturated environment, and are the target of numerous marketing campaigns for products ranging from toys to food. Research has shown that a high proportion of marketing to children focuses on inappropriate food products such as carbonated soft drinks, sweets, crisps, and sugary/high sodium breakfast cereals. Marketing to children often involves linkage to popular childrens' characters (e.g. Star Wars, Shrek, Barbie, etc).

The Ad-Aware exercise requires students to identify food adverts that target children in the context of the SPHE curricular guidelines on media awareness. The products being advertised are recorded, along with the context of the advert. The exercise should help the teacher facilitate a reflective process, where children are encouraged to question the motives of advertisers and to discuss their reactions to adverts.

Possible questions might include: What is advertising? Why do food companies spend large amounts of money on advertising? Why is there advertising on TV/radio/magazines (to pay for programmes, publications etc)? How many different types of advertising can you think of? How do you know the information in an ad is true? Why might ads not always tell the truth? How can you find out whether ads are true before you buy a product? Is there anything that the advert is not telling you? What is your favourite advert, and why do you like it? Methods used by advertisers could be discussed in conjunction with the student handout "Gimmicks used by advertisers".

Learning Outcomes:

Awareness of some of the techniques used in adverts. Children should gain an understanding of their own reactions to adverts.

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Ad-Aware



Homework Sheet

Use this sheet to record three of your favourite food adverts. If you are watching a favourite TV programme, keep this sheet handy (along with a pencil!). Make a quick note while you are watching, and when the programme is over, spend a few minutes carefully filling in the boxes. Make a note of any childrens characters in the advert (like "Darth Vader", or "Robots"). Do you think the product being advertised is good for you? Do you believe what the advert tells you?

| Thing Being Advertised | TV Programme Name of Comic/Magazine | Children's characters in advert | Do you think this product is good for children? |
|--------------------------|---|---------------------------------------|--|
| Mc Donalds Happy Meal | Malcolm in the middle | Tarzan | Don't know |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |

Student Handout

Gimmicks Used By Advertisers



Children's Characters

Shrek is used to sell Mud and Worms, and Darth Vader is used to sell Mc Donald's. Characters like these try to make children identify with products, and younger children may pester parents for the product.

Omission

Advertisers often don't give you the full story about their product. For example, when Coco-Pops claim to be "virtually fat free" they don't mention that they are very high in sugar (they are almost 40% sugar...which is bad for your health).

Free Gifts

Road Dahl books are given away "free" with Honey Nut Shredded Wheat. Are you buying toys/books, food, or both?

Competitions

"Win a signed light sabre when you buy Rice Krispies"...advertisers try to make us focus on the competition rather than the product.

Excitement

Snack foods adverts show children surfing or skateboarding...one bite of the snack and you're surfing in California. Is this reality?

Plastic People

Families and kids are always perfect in adverts! Is this true to life? Advertisers use ideal imagery to sell their product.

Family Fun

Products are shown as magical ways for families to have fun together; do you think this is real? Do we really get so excited over frozen pizza?

Stars in Their Eyes!

Sports stars and celebrities tell you that their product is the best! Ronan O'Gara and Peter Stringer are being **paid** to say that Lucozade sport keeps you going "33% longer".

Bandwagon

Advertisers try to make you think that everyone is buying the latest snack food...they are trying to make you feel inadequate unless you have their product...

Facts and Figures

Advertisers sometimes use facts and statistics to make a product look good. Sometimes these figures are misleading. For example: "Lucozade sport helps top athletes go 33% longer" (this statement is not true. The "athletes" in question had been starving themselves!).

Repetition

Adverts keep popping up...the same one over and over again... If you hear the name of a product over and over again, manufacturers think you might be more likely to buy it.

Turn it down!

Sometimes the volume of the adverts is louder than the sound for the programme, and adverts often contain cool music!

Lies?

The law requires advertisers to tell the truth, but they often use tricky techniques. For example, most breakfast cereals contain very little fat...and adverts make a big deal about this...even though the cereal in question may be full of unhealthy sugar and salt. They're not lying, but they're not telling the whole truth either.

Are You Cool?

Advertisers often show people suddenly becoming cool when they try a product. Are they trying to say that you are a nerd unless you buy their product?