

# Satirizing Advertising

Using humour and satire, students create a series of fictional spoof ads that exploit and poke fun at the role of marketing in consumerism.

## PRIOR KNOWLEDGE:

1. Understanding of the role of the consumer in supply/demand/productivity cycle.
2. Understand the role of advertising in the supply/demand/productivity cycle.
3. Identification and understanding of advertising techniques: <a href="http://www.foothilltech.org/rgeib/english/media_literacy/advertising_techniques.htm">http://www.foothilltech.org/rgeib/english/media_literacy/advertising_techniques.htm</a> <a href="http://www.mediaworkshop.org/bwc/johnston_gonzalez/ads/glossary.html">http://www.mediaworkshop.org/bwc/johnston_gonzalez/ads/glossary.html</a> <a href="http://www.webenglishteacher.com/media-ads.html">http://www.webenglishteacher.com/media-ads.html</a> <a href="http://webserve.govst.edu/pa/Advertising/ABCs/abc_list.htm">http://webserve.govst.edu/pa/Advertising/ABCs/abc_list.htm</a>
4. Related skill-building in the analysis, criticism, and synthesis of information.
5. Understanding of the language of advertising: demographic, target audience, captive market, emotional appeal, need vs. want...

## MATERIALS:

Computer running WinXP or higher, or Mac equivalent

Access to Macromedia Fireworks, Adobe Photoshop or Photoshop Elements, MS Paint, or MS Word

Student Handouts (in student appendix)

- Project Instructions
- Advertising Strategies
- Advertising Analysis
- Student Rubric

## TASK:

Using an image creation or modification program such as Macromedia Fireworks, Adobe Photoshop, MS Paint, or MS Word to manipulate images and text, students create a series of professional-looking spoof ads (similar to those at [www.adbusters.org/spoofads/index.php](http://www.adbusters.org/spoofads/index.php)) that alter or mimic the original ads. They can do this by:

<b>changing the text of the ad and keeping the image</b>	<b>keeping the text or slogan and putting a spin on it by changing the image</b>	<b>changing both the text and the image</b>
play with and manipulate the words in the ad to change the tone of the ad; make use of puns	take the ad literally or use a more realistic image to illustrate possible side effects	Stick to the style and font, colours and format, but put your own spin on the content

## RESOURCES:

### Free Collection of Stock Images:

Stock.xchng <http://www.sxc.hu/>

### Some Resources for Finding Advertising Online:

<http://adsoftheworld.com/> - good selection of advertising that you can browse by category and country

<http://www.adflip.com/> - requires a subscription, but can do basic searching  
<http://www.advertisingarchives.co.uk/> - comprehensive archive of ads out of the UK  
<http://www.coloribus.com/> - the biggest advertising collection in the world  
<http://www.adparade.com/> - free advertising archive

**Examples of Spoof Ads:**

[www.adbusters.com](http://www.adbusters.com)

**Comprehensive Online Tutorials for Fireworks or Photoshop**

Smashing Magazine

<http://www.smashingmagazine.com/2008/03/18/adobe-fireworks-tutorials-and-downloads-best-of/>

Tutorialized.com <http://www.tutorialized.com/tutorials/Photoshop/1>

**Curricular Outcomes:** as tied to the new Alberta Program of Studies for grade 9

**SPECIFIC OUTCOMES** (this activity meets these outcomes, though it does not necessarily formally assess for all of them)

### **VALUES AND ATTITUDES**

*Students will:*

**9.2.2 appreciate the relationship between consumerism and quality of life (C, CC)**

### **KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING**

*Students will:*

**9.2.5 assess, critically, the relationship between consumerism and quality of life in Canada and the United States by exploring and reflecting upon the following questions and issues:**

- How does marketing impact consumerism? (ER)
- How does consumerism provide opportunities for and limitations on impacting quality of life? (PADM, ER)
- How is consumerism used as a power of a collective (e.g., boycotts)? (ER, PADM, C)

### **DIMENSIONS OF THINKING**

*Students will:*

**9.S.1 develop skills of critical thinking and creative thinking:**

- determine the validity of information based on context, bias, source, objectivity, evidence or reliability to broaden understanding of a topic or an issue
- evaluate, critically, ideas, information and positions from multiple perspectives
- generate creative ideas and strategies in individual and group activities

### **RESEARCH FOR DELIBERATIVE INQUIRY**

*Students will:*

**9.S.7 apply the research process:**

- integrate and synthesize concepts to provide an informed point of view on a research question or an issue
- practise responsible and ethical use of information and technology
- draw conclusions based upon research and evidence
- include and organize references as part of research
- demonstrate the advanced search skills necessary to limit the number of hits desired

for online and offline databases; for example, the use of "and" or "or" between search topics and the choice of appropriate search engines for the topic

- evaluate the relevance of electronically accessed information to a particular topic
- make connections among related, organized data, and assemble various pieces into a unified message
- analyze and synthesize information to create a product

### **COMMUNICATION**

*Students will:*

**9.S.8 demonstrate skills of oral, written and visual literacy:**

- communicate in a persuasive and engaging manner through speeches, multimedia presentations and written and oral reports, taking particular audiences and purposes into consideration

**9.S.9 develop skills of media literacy:**

- examine the values, lifestyles and points of view represented in a media message

**ICT OUTCOMES** (this activity meets these outcomes, though it does not necessarily formally assess for all of them)

C.1 - Students will access, use and communicate information from a variety of technologies.

C.3 - Students will critically assess information accessed through the use of a variety of technologies.

F.4 - Students will become discerning consumers of mass media and electronic information.

F.6 - Students will demonstrate a basic understanding of the operating skills required in a variety of technologies.

P.1 - Students will compose, revise and edit text.

P.2 - Students will organize and manipulate data.

P.3 - Students will communicate through multimedia.

P.4 - Students will integrate various applications.

## **EVALUATION:**

Student rubric in appendix, assessing for content management, application of skill, presentation design and effectiveness.

## **OPPORTUNITIES FOR EXTENSION AND ENRICHMENT:**

Students can post their ads on an application such as D2L or Voicethread (<http://www.voicethread.com> ) and invite commentary and/or critique from others.

Students dig deeper into the corporate profile and look for company values to satirize as part of the ad series – similar to the Nike campaign of a few years ago around drive, ambition, desire, etc.,

Students create the ad series as satirical social commentary on the public profile of a corporation, for example: add a sweatshop twist to the GAP celebrity denim series, or spoof the environmental concern of a company such as Exxon.

Extend the activity and have students build a manual for advertisers using the ads they create to demonstrate effective advertising techniques, or twist it and put it to use as a guide for what to watch out for as consumers.

## **TEACHER RESOURCES FOR MEDIA LITERACY AND CONSUMERISM:**

Critical Consumerism

<http://urbandreams.ousd.k12.ca.us/lessonplans/consumerism/index.html>

Media Awareness Network

<http://www.media-awareness.ca/>

PBS Kids: Don't Buy It, Get Media Smart!

<http://pbskids.org/dontbuyit/>

Center for Media Literacy

<http://www.medialit.org/>

Campaign for a Commercial-Free Childhood

<http://www.commercialexploitation.org/>

# **Appendix**

## **Student Materials**

1. Student Instructions
2. Ad Analysis Chart
3. Advertising Strategies Glossary
4. Spoof Ad Rubric

## Satirizing Advertising

Advertising is nothing new in your world. In fact, it could be argued that teens are some of the most ad-targeted people on the planet. Part of being an individual member of a capitalist economy is the understanding that producers have to sell products to consumers to stay in business, and that they have to compete for your business. Often, those with the best advertising win that competition. Here is your opportunity to look a little deeper into what those ads are asking you to do, and to put your own new twist on an old game.

Here's your chance to tell us what the advertisers tend to leave out...

### YOUR TASK:

1. Collect a number of print ads (5-10) based on one of the themes given here:

Fashion  
Food and Beverage  
Fast Food  
Toys  
Pharmaceuticals  
Cars  
Travel

Alcohol  
Tobacco  
Insurance  
Financial  
Consumer Electronics  
Gaming  
Cosmetics

**You can find your ads in these archives, often by searching product names, brands, or categories:**

<http://adsoftheworld.com/> - good selection of advertising that you can browse by category and country

<http://www.adflip.com/> - you can do basic searching without a subscription

<http://www.advertisingarchives.co.uk/> - comprehensive archive of ads out of the UK, free sign-up and search

<http://www.adparade.com/> - free advertising archive

2. Save the ads as image files in a folder named "advertising" on your student drive. Make sure the images are saved with .jpg file extensions.

3. Select at least 3 of the ads to analyze critically, using the advertising strategies and analysis sheets provided. This will provide the foundation or inspiration for the ad you will create.

4. Select one of the saved ads to spoof using an image creation or modification program such as Macromedia Fireworks, Adobe Photoshop, MS Paint, or MS Word to manipulate images and text (similar to those at [www.adbusters.org/spoofads/index.php](http://www.adbusters.org/spoofads/index.php)).

5. As you build your spoof ad, keep your work within the stylistic framework of the original ad. Your job is to create a professional-looking alternate as you play with the original. You can do this by:

<b>changing the text of the ad and keeping the image</b>	<b>keeping the text or slogan and putting a spin on it by changing the image</b>	<b>changing both the text and the image</b>
Play with and manipulate the words in the ad to change the tone of the ad; make use of puns.	Take the ad literally or use a more realistic image to illustrate possible side effects.	Stick to the style and font, colours and format, but put your own spin on the content

# Advertising Strategies

(modified from original content at

[http://www.mediaawareness.ca/english/resources/educational/handouts/advertising\\_marketing/mtt\\_advertising\\_strategies.cfm?RenderForPrint=1](http://www.mediaawareness.ca/english/resources/educational/handouts/advertising_marketing/mtt_advertising_strategies.cfm?RenderForPrint=1))

**Advertisers have many methods to try and get you to buy their products. Lots of times, what they are selling is a lifestyle, or an image, rather than the product. Here are some tricks of the trade.**

**Ideal People** - always seem perfect. Men and women are flawlessly perfect; the kids are really hip looking, with the hottest fashions, haircuts and toys. Ideal families are all attractive and pleasant looking -- and everyone seems to get along! Ideal people represent the types of people that people watching the ad would like themselves or their families to be.

**Family Fun** - a product is shown as something that brings families together, or helps them have fun together; all it takes is for Mum or Dad to bring home the "right" food, and a ho-hum dinner turns into a family party.

**Excitement** - who could ever have imagined that food could be so much fun? One bite of a snack food and you're surfing in California, or soaring on your skateboard!

**Star Power** - your favorite sports star or celebrity is telling you that their product is the best!

**Bandwagon** - join the crowd! Don't be left out! Everyone is buying the latest gadget: aren't you?

**Scale** - is when advertisers make a product look bigger or smaller than it actually is. Think of restaurant commercials and serving sizes.

**Put Downs** - when you put down your competition's product to make your own product seem better.

**Facts and Figures** - when you use facts and statistics to enhance your product's credibility. As in: 9 out of 10 dentists prefer Toothbrite toothpaste.

**Repetition** - advertisers hope that if you see a product, or hear its name over and over again, you will be more likely to buy it. Sometimes the same commercial will be repeated over and over again.

**Heart Strings** - ads that draw you into a story and make you feel good, like the McDonalds commercial where the dad and his son are shoveling their driveway and the son treats his poor old dad to lunch at McDonalds when they are done.

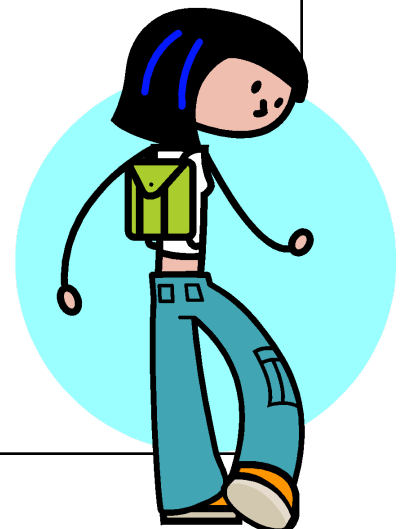
**Sounds Good** - music and other sound effects add to the excitement of commercials, especially commercials aimed at kids. Those little jingles that you just can't get out of your head are another type of music used to make you think of a product. Have you ever noticed that the volume of commercials is higher than the sound for the program that follows?

**Cartoon Characters** - Tony the Tiger sells cereal and the Nestlé's Quik Bunny sells chocolate milk. Cartoons like these are designed to make kids identify with products.

**Weasel Words** - by law, advertisers have to tell the truth, but sometimes, they use words that can mislead viewers. Look for words in commercials like: "Part of..." "The taste of real...." "Natural...." "New, better tasting...." "Because we care..." There are hundreds of these deceptive phrases -- how many more can you think of?

**Omission** - where advertisers don't give you the full story about their product. For example, when a Pop Tart claims to be "part" of a healthy breakfast, it doesn't mention that the breakfast might still be healthy whether this product is there or not.

**Are You Cool Enough?** - this is when advertisers try to convince you that if you don't use their products, you are a nerd. Usually advertisers do this by showing people who look un-cool trying a product and then suddenly become hip looking and do cool things.





## Ad Analysis Chart

<b>Study your chosen ads for the following details:</b>	<b>Ad 1</b>	<b>Ad 2</b>	<b>Ad 3</b>
Product, service or idea being sold			
Brand, Company, or Designer			
Target Audience (age, gender, culture, lifestyle)			
What is the emotional appeal?			
Look beyond any emotional appeal. What does the ad really say (or not say) about the product or service. Do you detect any exaggeration or suspicious promises? If so, describe the "hidden message."			
What is the intended use(s) of the product? Does the advertiser point out special features of the product that distract from the intended use? If so, explain the distractions.			
Are there any signs or symbols in the ad? If so, what are they trying to tell you?			
What advertising techniques are being used to sell the product (see glossary of terms)? Explain how each technique is being used.			
Is the ad effective? Does it work? Why?			



**Spoof Ad Rubric** (modified from original content at <http://www.curriculum.org/csc/library/profiles/10/html/ELDBOP1.htm>)

Categories	Level One (50-59%)	Level Two (60-69%)	Level Three (70-79%)	Level Four (80-100%)
<b>Knowledge/Understanding</b>				
Demonstrates an understanding of the target audience	- limited understanding of target audience	- some understanding of the target audience	- considerable understanding of the target audience	- thorough understanding of the target audience
Demonstrates an understanding of persuasive techniques	- limited understanding of persuasive techniques	- some of understanding of persuasive techniques	- considerable understanding of persuasive techniques	- thorough understanding of persuasive techniques
<b>Thinking/ Inquiry</b>				
Organizes information	- limited organization	- some organization	- considerable organization	- thorough organization
Selects relevant information to enhance satire in ad	- limited use of relevant information	- some use of relevant information	- considerable use of relevant information	- thorough use of relevant information
<b>Communication</b>				
Visuals add to effectiveness	- limited contribution	- visuals make some contribution	- considerable contribution	- visuals make thorough contribution
Text supports message	- limited use of persuasive language	- some use of persuasive language	- considerable use of persuasive language	- thorough use of persuasive language
<b>Application</b>				
Spoof ad clearly satirizes techniques of original	- limited satire identified	- some satire identified	- considerable satire identified	- satire thoroughly identified and/or sophisticated
Satirizes persuasive techniques (endorsement, coupon, slogans)	- limited use of persuasive techniques	- some use of persuasive techniques	- considerable use of persuasive techniques	- thorough use of persuasive techniques

**Note:** A student whose achievement is below level 1 (50%) has not met the expectations for this assignment or activity

