

Exploring the influence of advertisements

Students create a short public service announcement about techniques advertisers use to persuade people to buy things.

Learning goals

Big idea

Marketing and advertising may influence spending decisions.

Essential questions

- What are some ways that advertisers persuade people to buy things?
- How can I inform other people about advertising tactics?

Objectives

- Learn techniques advertisers use to entice consumers
- Write and perform a public service announcement script about advertising tactics

What students will do



- Learn about advertising techniques.
- Create a public service announcement about advertising techniques targeting kids and teens.

NOTE

Please remember to consider your students' accommodations and special needs to ensure that all students are able to participate in a meaningful way.

KEY INFORMATION

Building block:

-  Executive function
-  Financial knowledge and decision-making skills

Grade level: Middle school (6-8)

Age range: 11-14

Topic: Spend (Buying things)

School subject: CTE (Career and technical education), English or language arts, Fine arts and performing arts, Social studies or history

Teaching strategy: Competency-based learning, Cooperative learning, Personalized instruction, Project-based learning

Bloom's Taxonomy level: Apply, Create

Activity duration: 75-90 minutes

National Standards for Personal Financial Education, 2021

Spending: 4-5, 8-2, 8-3, 12-5

Saving: 4-1, 12-9

These standards are cumulative, and topics are not repeated in each grade level. This activity may include information students need to understand before exploring this topic in more detail.

Preparing for this activity

- While it's not necessary, completing the "[Understanding who shapes your money decisions](#)" activity first may make this one more meaningful.
- Print copies of all student materials for each student, or prepare for students to access them electronically.

What you'll need

THIS TEACHER GUIDE

- [Exploring the influence of advertisements \(guide\)](#)
[cfpb_building_block_activities_exploring-influence-advertisements_guide.pdf](#)

STUDENT MATERIALS

- [Exploring the influence of advertisements \(worksheet\)](#)
[cfpb_building_block_activities_exploring-influence-advertisements_worksheet.pdf](#)

Exploring key financial concepts*

Businesses use advertisements to promote products we might need or want – or things we never even knew we wanted – in hopes that we'll buy them. Everywhere you look, you see advertisements – not just on TV and online but also on buses, buildings, clothing, and scoreboards. Many ads target kids and teenagers. Ads are sometimes helpful. They let us know when and where to find a new product and how much it costs. And they give us an idea of what to expect from that product. But it's a good idea to think carefully about the details in an ad. Some ads may not tell the whole story. Some might exaggerate what the product can do, and you might find that the ad doesn't say exactly what you thought it did at first glance. And still others might try to get you to want to buy things you really don't need. Knowing the techniques advertisers use to persuade you to buy things will help you make informed spending decisions.

*Source: Federal Trade Commission

TIP

Because terms and laws about advertising change, students should be encouraged to always look for the most up-to-date information.

TIP

Be sure to explain that it's illegal for advertisers to use deception to sell their products and services.

Public service announcements (PSAs) are messages that are created for the good of the public. They are often delivered on the radio or television.

Teaching this activity

Whole-class introduction

- Explain to students about how advertisers try to persuade people to buy products and services. You can use the “Exploring key financial concepts” section for this.
- Ask students to consider how it might help to think about whether something being advertised is a need or a want.
 - You might explain that when deciding whether to buy something, it can be helpful to consider whether something is a need (basic things people must have to survive, to do their job, or to protect what they have) or a want (things that people might like to have but that aren’t necessary for living, earning, or protecting what they have).
- Explain that students will create a television PSA that explains some techniques advertisers use to get people to buy things.
- Be sure students understand key vocabulary:
 - **Advertisement:** Posters, signs, television commercials, radio spots, and other media that businesses use to promote products or services.
 - **Public service announcement (PSA):** An announcement or message delivered, often on radio or television, for the good of the public.
- Ask students to brainstorm a few examples of PSAs they might have seen or heard.
 - If they get stuck, share some examples you might know, such as PSAs on seat belt use, crime prevention, bullying prevention, and the importance of reading.
 - You can also show students examples of PSAs from the Social Security Administration at <https://www.ssa.gov/news/psa.html>.
- Distribute the “Exploring the influence of advertisements” worksheet.

TIP

Visit CFPB’s financial education glossary at consumerfinance.gov/financial-education-glossary/.

Group work

- Students can work in pairs or small groups to create their PSA.
- Make sure students understand each step they'll need to complete:
 - Review the advertising techniques on their worksheet and choose two to include in their PSA.
 - Create a storyboard that uses both words and images.
 - Write a 20-second script.
 - Practice presenting the PSA.
 - Present or record the PSA.
- Provide time for students to practice their PSAs.

Wrap-up

- Have students present or perform their PSAs for the class.
 - If there's not enough time to do the presentations during the initial class period, schedule a follow-up session.
- If time allows, have students share something they learned from the PSAs.

Suggested next steps

Consider searching for other [CFPB activities](#) that address the topic of spending, including buying things. Suggested activities include "[Budgeting for needs and wants](#)" and "[Practicing comparison shopping](#)." You might also consider visiting the [Federal Trade Commission's Admongo website](#) for more activities and resources on advertising literacy.

Measuring student learning

Students' PSAs and answers during discussion can give you a sense of their understanding.

Keep in mind that students' PSAs may vary, as there may not be only one right approach. The important thing is for students to have reasonable justification for their approach.

If you choose to use the scoring rubric below to grade this activity, be sure to share it with all students so they know what criteria matter most and they can plan accordingly.

Scoring rubric

PSA criteria	Does not meet expectations (0 points)	Includes some key criteria (1-2 points)	Meets expectations (3-4 points)	Exceeds expectations (5-6 points)	Student's score
Advertising techniques are well explained	The two advertising techniques are not clearly explained.	One of the advertising techniques is not clearly explained.	There is a basic explanation of the two techniques.	Two different techniques are clearly explained and the viewer can see how those techniques can be persuasive.	
Storyboard uses words and images	The storyboard does not use both words and images to communicate a message.	The words or images on the storyboard don't communicate a complete message.	The storyboard uses words and images to communicate a message that helps people understand advertising.	The storyboard's message uses both words and images to effectively communicate the ways advertising can persuade people to buy things.	
Creativity of the PSA	The PSA does not have new ideas for the intended audience.	The PSA has a basic message but clearly borrows from overused ideas.	Some creative and/or original ideas are included in the message.	The PSA includes an engaging and/or innovative message.	
Delivery of the PSA	The delivery is not engaging, or students do not take the presentation seriously.	Delivery is acceptable but could be clearer or more engaging.	Delivery is effective (clear and engaging) and takes no more than 20 seconds.	The delivery is exceptional (very clear and engaging) and takes no more than 20 seconds.	