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# Advertising and Its Effects on American Life and Personal Choices

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## Advertising and Its Effects on American Life and Personal Choices

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Clothing store advertisement from early 20th century, small version

For a larger image.

Subject: Social Studies  
Category: History and sociology

Students will learn how advertising in the United States affects their lives and influences their choices.

- History of advertising in the United States
- Analysis of advertising principles
- Critique of past and current ads

Students will learn how to capture and properly cite images from the Library of Congress to use in their own research.

Students will learn what a primary source is.

Students will use the Internet, the Library of Congress website, digital cameras, and PowerPoint to explore the world of advertising both in the past and in contemporary American society, and to compile their own primary sources.

At the end of the unit students will produce a PowerPoint presentation using their own photos (primary sources) to give a summary of what they have learned to fourth and fifth grade classes. Assessment tools include class participation, completion of assignments and quality of two paragraph summary at end of unit

ISBE Curriculum Standards Used

## ADVERTISING AND ITS EFFECTS ON AMERICAN LIFE AND PERSONAL CHOICES

[DIANE BOUTET, O.P.](#)

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Lesson I: Advertising: Has it always been around?

Aim: To introduce the [Library of Congress](#) web site and collections, specifically that of "[The Emergence of Advertising in America \(1850-1920\)](#)" and to introduce the history of advertising in the United States.

Procedure:

Teacher shows [PowerPoint presentation](#) on the ways ads were placed in the past. [When people lived in small communities there was one blacksmith, one tailor, etc. No need to advertise. Also, people were very self-reliant.] *PowerPoint presentation will be stored on the server and the students may access it and click on links.*

*[Wall Drugstore in SD – famous only because of advertising.]*  
*[Recent political campaign – over a billion dollars spent on advertising!]*

*In computer lab: introduce LOC and search LOC for specific sites in the collection: "The Emergence of Advertising In America (1850 – 1920)"*

- [poster collection](#)*
- [cookbook collection](#)*
- [outdoor advertising / billboards](#)*
- [the Coca Cola ad](#) ("teach the world to sing...")*

*These are "primary sources." (explain) It is important to use primary sources when doing research.*

*Talk about citing sources.*

*Demonstrate how to download an image and how to properly cite it.*

*Assignment: Find one ad from LOC site, download it and cite it. Keep it in a special folder [Advertising assignments] on the server. Students name the file with their last name, first name – citation. (Teacher checks as they are working, and checks all afterwards.)*

## **Lesson II: How Advertisers Appeal to Us**

*Aim: To understand the different ways advertisers use to sell their products.*

*Procedure:*

*In computer lab: go to LOC site and find particular ads. (certain billboards, and other ads) What is the appeal the promise to the buyer? How do the advertisers try to get us to buy their products, to convince us that we NEED this product?*

*Be sure the following points are raised:*

*Name recognition ("branding")*

*Use of humor*

*Fear*

*Argument / persuasion*

*Glamour / sex appeal*

*Promises of cleaner / bigger / stronger / better / healthier / sexier / happier / more beautiful / etc.*

*Assignment: Select a modern day ad from any media. Describe it in detail. Tell what the advertiser is appealing to in the customer. Be ready to present to the class tomorrow.*

## **Lesson III: Advertising: It's Everywhere!**

*Aim: To begin to critique advertising methods and techniques.*

*Procedure:*

*Students present homework assignments and discuss the advertising they see and hear every day. Brainstorm the different ways ads come to us today. Include these and any others the students mention:*

*-signs*

*-billboards*

*-TV*

*-posters*

*-CTA buses/trains*

*-Radio*

*-fliers (inside / outside stations, vehicles, tracks)*

- Online websites & pop-ups
- Movies (product placement)
- displays in store windows -print: newspapers / magazines
- free cookbooks with appliances

*What is the advertiser interested in? Your health and welfare? Their profit?*

*Assignment: Working in teams of 2 or 3, take a digital picture of a local billboard, storefront ad or some other place where you find advertising in your neighborhood or around school. Be ready to tell where it is located, why you chose it, what the appeal is. (What is the message the advertiser is trying to communicate?)*

*Your photo becomes a primary source. We will compile our primary sources in a PowerPoint presentation. This will be shown to 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> graders to help them understand the power of advertising in our lives. Your photos will be saved in a special folder on the server.*

#### ***Lesson IV: Summary: How Can We Be "Smart" in Our Choices?***

*Aim: To articulate the ways we can be careful when exposed to advertising and making choices based on the ads we encounter.*

*Procedure:*

*Discuss: Often we are addressed as "consumers" – what does that mean?*

*What does it say about how advertisers and merchants see the public?*

*What are some things we should consider when viewing / hearing advertising?*

*Answers should include:*

*Knowing the differences between truth and hype*

*What is the appeal being made?*

*Why should I spend my hard-earned money on this product?*

*Can they deliver what they promise?*

*Does anyone I know use this product and what do they think about it? Tell students about "Consumer Reports"*

*Prepare a [PowerPoint presentation](#) on advertising using images from the students' digital photos to show to another class.*

*Assignment: Each student writes two paragraphs telling what he or she learned about advertising and what he or she learned about the Library of Congress website.*

***Lesson V: Show PowerPoint presentation to 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grades***

*Aim: To share the knowledge we gained with younger students to help them begin to think more critically about advertising.*

*Procedure:*

*Show [PowerPoint presentation](#) on advertising prepared by older students. Discuss and expand on each point with younger students.*