

FOOD AND SOCIETY: MARKETING & ADVERTISING



SUMMARY

This lesson is designed to help students think more critically about the economic motivations of the food industry, showing that food companies do not always have consumers' best interests in mind. By highlighting the marketing and advertising strategies of food companies, we hope to make students become more informed consumers and exercise their rights to make smart choices.

Duration: 90 mins, 2 Sessions | Grade Level: 4th-7th



Module 3: Food and Society Marketing & Advertising

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LESSON RESOURCES

greenbeetz.org

our website hosts lesson slides, google forms, lesson videos, and teacher training videos, glossary, standards alignment and more

Worksheets (linked)

- Video Worksheet
- Exit Cards

MARKETING & ADVERTISING: AT A GLANCE



ESSENTIAL QUESTION

What are Food Companies exactly and what are their goals?



STUDENT LEARNING GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

After this lesson students will be able to:

- Define profit, advertising, and marketing.
- Understand how companies use advertising, celebrities and slogans to appeal to us and deceive us about how healthy a product is.
- Evaluate advertisements and understand companies' motivation in order to make informed choices about what we buy and eat.



KEY POINTS

- Food companies are a business with the goal of increasing profits first and foremost, which means selling more products. They use many tactics to appeal to us so that we will purchase their products.
- “Health” words such as organic, reduced fat, or antioxidants are terms that may be used to advertise a product. It is important to know what these words mean before purchasing an item that bears such a health claim.
- Processed foods have lots of added salts, sugars, fats, and chemical flavorings to artificially create the taste, texture, and flavor that they know will sell best.



VOCABULARY

- **Profit** - how much money is earned (once you subtract what it cost you to make, advertise, and package a product)
- **Marketing** - any kind of public announcement that tries to convince people to purchase a product
- **Advertising** - the process of making a product well known to the public so it can be sold.

LESSON BREAKDOWN

TIME	ACTIVITY	MATERIALS/RESOURCES
PART 1		
3-5 min	Introduction	Lesson Slides
5-7 min	Activity: Analyzing Packaging	Students bring packages from home
3-10 min	Video: Marketing & Advertising	Vimeo or YouTube • Video Worksheets
7-12 min	Discussion	Lesson Slides
10 min	Activity: Revisit Food Packaging	Slides
5-8 min	Food Detective Assessment	Exit Card
PART 2		
5-7 min	Introduction: Deciphering Packaging Claims	Lesson Slides
15 min	Commercials & Discussion	Select 6 commercials prior to class to screen today (as an alternative, you could use physical ads from magazines)
10 min	Snackz & Factz	A Nutrient Dense Processed Food
5 min	Test Your Noodle	Slides
5-8 min	Food Detective Assessment	Exit Card
Extension Option		Fruit & Vegetable Ads

PRIOR KNOWLEDGE AND MISCONCEPTIONS

PRIOR KNOWLEDGE

Students may never have thought about why there are celebrities in advertisements. They may also take the words in advertisements as accurate. However, when pushed as to what “natural” or “healthy” means, it may quickly become clear to them that they all have different understandings of the words, which may help them realize why using such words is not necessarily a good description.

COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS	POSSIBLE RESPONSE
Students may quickly draw the conclusions that companies are “bad” once they realize that the way they advertise can be deceptive.	Be sure to balance any analysis with the idea that while companies tend to prioritize profits, it doesn’t mean that everything about the product is false. The purpose of this lesson is so we can learn how to evaluate products effectively.
Once youth get exposed to the idea of tricks and deception, they may become overly suspicious and dismissive of things that are actually true.	Encourage students to use facts—the definitions of words and the nutrition labels—to evaluate a product, rather than offhandedly dismissing it outright if it has a celebrity or uses the word “natural.”

DETAILED LESSON SCRIPT: PART I

Introduction: Marketing & Advertising

3-5 minutes

Introduce students to today's topic by having a short discussion based on the following questions. Hopefully students will discuss that they make purchases based on "knowing the brand." If they focus on "I've had it before" you can push them to say, "why do you think you or someone you know first bought it?"

LESSON SLIDES



- *How do you decide what brands or foods to buy?*
- *What do you think are the goals of food companies?*
- *Have you ever wanted to buy a food product because of what you saw on TV, in a magazine, or a role model or friend was eating it? If so, what was the food?*



Activity: Analyzing Packaging

5-7 minutes

If students brought in any packages today (in preparation for this lesson or maybe in their snacks or lunches) have them work in groups to evaluate those packages. Alternatively you can share packaging you brought in or bring up images from online.



Discussion questions for consideration.

Don't spend too long on this since you will revisit it at the end of the lesson.

- *Do any of the food packages try to make a product look healthy? How?*
- *Is it really healthy? How do you know?*

Lesson Video: Marketing & Advertising

3-10 minutes

DIFFERENTIATION

You should decide which structure will help your students access the information:

- Preview the worksheet as a class
- Have students watch the video and ask questions
- Watch the video more than once, pausing at key moments, etc.
- Or, you can allow their responses to be more open-ended and ask: What surprised you? What was most interesting? What was most important? Why?



Marketing & Advertising: Part 1 - Video Worksheet

Name: _____

Date: _____

Read the questions before you watch the video. You can jot down your ideas as you watch or wait until the end.

1. What words are used to describe prune juice in the old commercial?	
2. What is the purpose of advertising and the "business of food"?	
3. How do search engines on the internet help companies, rather than us?	

Class Discussion & Vocab Review

7-12 minutes

Lead a discussion after the video. Display or refer to the Key Points and Vocab as you ask the following questions:

Discussion questions for consideration:

- *What was most surprising about the "business of food"?*
- *What do you think is the most important thing you should remember about the "business of food"?*
- *Do you have any questions about the "big business of food"?*

Class Discussion & Vocab Review (CONTINUED)

KEY POINTS

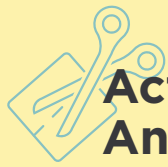


Food as a Business	The goal of food companies is to make money by selling their products. Most do this by selling as much product as they can and creating the product for as little money as they can, so their profits will be as large as possible.
Advertising Tricks	To sell as much product as they can, food companies advertise on TV and radio commercials, in magazine ads, in stores, and on their packaging. Sometimes they use celebrities and athletes to make their products seem cool, or use images that make their food look more delicious than it is. They might try to convince you that their product is healthier than it is. Sometimes they lie.
Added salts, sugars, fats and chemical flavorings	Processed Foods have lots of added salts, sugars, fats and chemical flavorings to artificially create the taste, texture, and flavor that they know will sell best. These artificial gimmicks make the food so tempting that they can become addictive—and it is hard to resist them even when we know they're not good for us.
Pesticides, Antibiotics, Hormones	There are many ways food companies cut corners to make their products cheaper to make and therefore more profitable. The most common way they do this is by using chemicals in farming and antibiotics and hormones in animal food production.
Consumer Power and Choice	Making a profit is not a bad thing, unless it is done without any consideration for the health of the consumers or the health of the environment. As consumers, we hold a lot of power over these companies in that we can choose whether or not to buy their products. These companies cannot survive without us. If we investigate the truth behind the advertising, we can make decisions that are better for our health and our environment.

VOCABULARY



Profit	How much money is earned (once you subtract what it cost you to make, advertise, package, etc) from selling a product.
Advertisement	Any kind of public announcement that tries to convince people to purchase a product.
Marketing	The process of making a product well known to the public so it can be sold.



Activity: Revisit Analyzing Packaging

10 minutes | Optional: Google Form Activity

Have your students re-examine the sample packages from earlier in the lesson and re-evaluate them using what they learned from the video and discussion. Below are some questions they can use to guide their analysis.



GUIDED QUESTIONS

What are some of the ways that the packages you brought in try to convince you to buy their food? Do some of them try to trick you? How?

Are any of the ads or claims complete lies? Which ones? How do you know?

What kinds of things can you look for to help you figure out the real truth about a food?

Where else do food companies advertise their food? Can you think of examples of how they try to trick buyers?

What can you do so you're NOT tricked by the packaging and advertising?

Food Detective Assessment

5-8 minutes

Have students answer the following on an Exit Card:

- *What are some "tricks" do businesses use to advertise their food products? Why do they use tricks?*

DETAILED LESSON SCRIPT: PART II

Introduction: Deciphering Packaging Claims

5-7 minutes

Try having students answer these **true/false statements** with their thumbs (thumbs up if true, thumbs down if false, and sideways if unsure).

This is a good chance to go into a bit more depth about the meaning of “words” that advertisers use. You can have students explain their reasoning for each answer before revealing the answers:

(**ALL FALSE**: refer to the lesson slides for more robust explanations)

LESSON SLIDES



Sugar-Free means food isn't sweet.

A **“good source”** of vitamin C means it has over 85% of vitamin C.

Organic means that the food provides more nutrients.

If a food is labeled **“whole grains”** it has the recommended amount of fiber.

Reduced-fat means that the product has very little fat.

Commercials & Discussion

15-20 minutes

Before class, select about 6 food commercials for viewing. Select commercials to demonstrate 3-5 marketing techniques discussed in the Background Information for this lesson. Look for commercials that try to trick or “pull the wool over your eyes”, appeal to emotions, use celebrities, catchy slogans and songs, youthful themes, show a “perfect” life, etc...

Lead a discussion of the commercials as a review of the Key Points. You may screen the commercials several times if needed and you may want to record your classes' responses.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER AS YOU SCREEN THE COMMERCIALS:

What food was being advertised?

Did you like the commercial? What did you like about it?

Did the commercial make you want to eat or drink the product? How?

Did the commercial make you hungry? Why or why not?

What kinds of words were used in the commercial that might trick the buyer into thinking the food should be eaten?

Questions continue on next page...

Commercials & Discussion (CONTINUED)

Are there any outright lies in the commercials? Which ones? How do you know?

How does the commercial make you feel? (Happy? Nostalgic? Good?)

What trick(s) did the advertiser use to get you to want to eat or drink their food? In other words, how did they try to mislead you? How do you know?

If you are suspicious about the food and the advertising tricks, what could you do to find out more?

Snackz & Factz

10 minutes

Today's snack suggestion: Nutrition Dense processed food. Some suggestions: granola, granola bars, 100% fruit-juice snacks/bars.

Ask the students to read the ingredients and look at the packaging. What do they think? Are they eating a snack or a treat?



FACTZ

If the first ingredient is sugar in any form, such as syrup, it is still empty calories. Even if the sugar is organic.

Partially hydrogenated oils contain trans-fats. If the nutrition information claims that it has zero grams, that just means that it has less than .5 grams of the fat.

“Good source” can mean anything! As long as a product has 0.5% or more of an ingredient, food companies can claim it is a “good source” of that ingredient.

Organic means that a product is grown without synthetic pesticides, fertilizers or chemicals. There are lots of good reasons to choose organic, but it doesn't mean it has more nutrients.

Test Your Noodle

5 minutes

1. What is the primary goal of food companies?
(to make money by selling their products)
2. Name two methods that advertisers use to mislead you about or make you want to buy their products. (celebrities, fake food that looks delicious, catchy slogans, humor, use of healthy words, etc.)
3. List at least two things that food companies add to their food to make them more addictive. (sugar, salt, fat, chemical flavorings)
4. What is a common way for food companies to cut corners or reduce costs?
(chemical pesticides, chemical fertilizers, cheap addictive flavor additives)
5. How can we have power over the food companies? (investigate the truth in advertising and then choose to spend our money on their products or not)

Food Detective Assessment

5-8 minutes

Have students answer the following on an Exit Card:

- *What will you now ask yourself after you see a commercial and are deciding whether or not to buy the food or drink you just saw?*

Extension Option: Fruit and Vegetable Ads

Have students make their own advertisement for a fruit or vegetable in groups or individually and present to the class. Afterwards ask them:

- *Why do you think advertisements for fruits/vegetables are so uncommon?*

Marketing & Advertising: Part 1 - Video Worksheet

Name: _____

Date: _____

Read the questions before you watch the video. You can jot down your ideas as you watch or wait until the end.

1. What words are used to describe prune juice in the old commercial?	
2. What is the purpose of advertising and the “business of food”?	
3. How do search engines on the internet help companies, rather than us?	
4. Why do businesses use celebrities to help advertise their products?	
5. What is “tricky” about the way advertisements use words (such as natural)?	
6. How do we make sure “the wool isn’t pulled over our eyes,” or in other words, we aren’t tricked by advertising?	

Marketing & Advertising: Part 1 - Video Worksheet

Answers will vary

<p>1. What words are used to describe prune juice in the old commercial?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sweet • Whole prune • Rich • Full of flavor • Quick energy • "Pour yourself a good day" • "To your health"
<p>2. What is the purpose of advertising and the "business of food"?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sell as much as they can while spending as little as they can • Make the most profit
<p>3. How do search engines on the internet help companies, rather than us?</p>	<p>They get to know us and begin to show us ads that they think we will really like; we don't realize that it isn't a coincidence that we are seeing ads that relate to us.</p>
<p>4. Why do businesses use celebrities to help advertise their products?</p>	<p>They are well-liked and people tend to trust that they really mean what they say about the product, rather than realizing the celebrity is getting paid to say everything and may not actually believe it and/or be an expert of authority in the product</p>
<p>5. What is "tricky" about the way advertisements use words (such as natural)?</p>	<p>They use words that make us think one thing (natural and healthy are good) but the words are meaningless and do not necessarily mean what we think.</p>
<p>6. How do we make sure "the wool isn't pulled over our eyes," or in other words, we aren't tricked by advertising?</p>	<p>Investigate the real nutrition facts and be aware that the priority of most businesses is to make money</p>

Name: _____

Date: _____

Marketing & Advertising: Part 1 - Exit Card

What “tricks” do businesses use to advertise their food products? Why do they use tricks?

Name: _____

Date: _____

Marketing & Advertising: Part 1 - Exit Card

What “tricks” do businesses use to advertise their food products? Why do they use tricks?

Marketing & Advertising: Part 2 - Commercial Activity

Names _____

Date: _____

Questions to consider after watching commercials:

- What food was being advertised?
- Did you like the commercial? What did you like about it?
- Did the commercial make you want to eat or drink the product? How?
- Did the commercial make you hungry? Why or why not?
- How does the commercial make you feel? (Happy? Nostalgic? Good?)
- What kinds of words were used in the commercial that might trick the buyer into thinking the food should be eaten?
- Are there any outright lies in the commercials? Which ones? How do you know?
- What trick (or tricks) did the advertiser use to get you to want to eat or drink their food? In other words, how did they try to mislead you? How do you know?

Examples Links: (you can use any commercial you like, these are unendorsed suggestions)

1: Diet Coke: <https://www.ispot.tv/ad/7uVa/diet-coke-taylor-swift-kittens-featuring-taylor-swift?autoplay=1>

2: Snickers : <https://www.ispot.tv/ad/Avd7/snickers-recovery-room?autoplay=1>

3: Lunchables: <https://www.ispot.tv/ad/wwfk/lunchables-with-100-juice-petting-zoo>

4: Tropicana: <https://www.ispot.tv/ad/Ae3W/tropicana-substitute>

5: Hersheys: <https://www.ispot.tv/ad/7Tdi/hersheys-spreads?autoplay=1>

6: Outshine iced fruit bars: <https://www.ispot.tv/ad/w7ZQ/outshine-refreshing-and-healthy>