



## Lesson Ten

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# The Influence of Advertising

# the influence of advertising websites

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We're bombarded with advertising and messaging in our lives these days. Students need to be able to make sound, practical decisions about their money in light of complex and sometimes confusing consumer messages and choices.

For related links and resources on this lesson, visit:  
**[practicalmoneyskills.com/teens/10](http://practicalmoneyskills.com/teens/10)**

# the influence of advertising lesson outline

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## overview

In today's modern world, advertising seems to be everywhere we look; online, television, billboards, magazines, newspapers, on buses, grocery carts, even cell phones.

In addition, some forms of advertising can be subliminal, such as the strategically-placed soda can in a movie. We can't help but be influenced and manipulated as consumers. In this lesson, students will become aware of the various techniques and appeals used to influence consumer behavior.

Warnings must also be sounded. Unethical selling techniques such as “bait and switch,” as well as common deceptive promotions like “get rich quick schemes” are discussed here. This is followed by information on program-length commercials, also called “infomercials.”

Finally, students are asked to develop guidelines for viewing and evaluating advertising. This skill will prepare them to make rational decisions in our very complex and evolving marketplace.

## goal

Recognize how and when advertising techniques can influence buying decisions.

## lesson objectives

- Understand and identify basic advertising techniques and appeals
- Understand and identify deceptive or questionable advertising techniques
- Give examples of commonly seen misleading advertisements, and identify the deceptive or questionable appeals and techniques used in each
- Discriminate between facts and unsupported claims in print advertisements and in television commercials



## presentation slides

- 10-A** commonly used advertising techniques
- 10-B** sales techniques
- 10-C** unethical techniques
- 10-D** examples of misleading advertisements
- 10-E** program-length commercials (infomercials)
- 10-F** rules for evaluating advertisements

# the influence of advertising lesson outline

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## student activities

### 10-1 What Appeals to You? What Doesn't?

- Two weeks before giving this lesson, ask students to collect examples of ads they like and dislike. Ask students also to pay attention to TV and web ads.
- Ask students to pay particular attention to facts versus unsupported claims in ads.
- Ask students to tape up their print ads around the classroom.
- Discuss what students like and dislike about the ads they've collected or watched.

### 10-2 Examples of Fraudulent or Misleading Advertisements

- Ask students to look for and bring to class print ads that they think are fraudulent or misleading.
- Ask students to tape up the print ads they have collected around the classroom.
- Discuss what fraudulent or misleading techniques and appeals are used in each ad.

### 10-3 What Techniques Are Used in Ads You Like and Dislike?

- Discuss advertising techniques and appeals used in the print advertisements taped up around the classroom.
- If you have examples of television commercials, discuss the advertising techniques and appeals found in them.

### 10-4 Try It—Make a Commercial

- Divide the class into groups. Have each group research a product or a service.
- Ask each group to prepare a “commercial” for its product or service, using some of the techniques and appeals discussed in class.
- Have each group present its commercial to the class. Ask the class to identify the appeals and techniques each group is using.
- Review how to spot various advertising techniques and appeals that have been discussed in this lesson.
- Emphasize how to spot the difference between facts and unsupported claims.

### 10-5 Test Your Advertising Knowledge

- Have students complete the written activity to learn about various advertising techniques.

### 10-6 Lesson Ten Quiz

**For more information, please refer to the Appendix.**

# the influence of advertising target audiences

Learning activities appropriate to varied target audiences for lesson ten

			
<b>activity</b>	<b>teenagers (14-18)</b>	<b>young adults (19-25)</b>	<b>adults (26+)</b>
Student Activity 10-1	●	●	
Survey/Interview	●	●	●
Field Activity	●	●	
Student Activity 10-2	●	●	
Web Activity	●	●	●
Student Activity 10-3	●	●	
Group Activity	●	●	●
Student Activity 10-4	●	●	
Student Activity 10-5	●	●	●
Lesson Ten Quiz 10-6	●	●	●

# the influence of advertising teaching notes

## what appeals to you and what doesn't

1. Print ads
  - Examples (from ads brought in by students)
  - What do you like?
  - What don't you like?
  - Would you buy the product or service?
2. TV commercials
  - Examples (from ads brought in by students)
  - What do you like?
  - What don't you like?
  - Would you buy the product or service?
3. Other (e.g., online/email advertising, billboards, radio)
  - Examples
  - What do you like?
  - What don't you like?
  - Would you buy the product or service?



discussion



student activity 10-1



survey/interview:

Have students talk to several friends or relatives to obtain information about their uses of advertisements.

### Questions could include:

*Do ads help you obtain price information?*

*What brand do you see advertised most often?*

## common advertising techniques and appeals

For each method, discuss what it is and find an example in the ads brought in by students. Also discuss which techniques tend to be most effective for teenagers.

1. Information
2. Status
3. Peer approval
4. Hero endorsement
5. Physical attraction to others
6. Entertainment
7. Intelligence
8. Independence
9. Unfinished comparison



discussion



field activity:

Have students collect examples of various advertising techniques from newspapers, magazines or videos.



slide 10-A

# the influence of advertising teaching notes

## sales techniques

For each technique, discuss what it is and find an example in the ads brought in by students. Also discuss which techniques tend to be most effective.

1. Guarantees
2. Scarcity
3. Perceptual contrast
4. Scientific or numerical claims
5. Negative option



discussion



slide 10-B

## unethical techniques

For each practice, discuss what it is and find an example in the ads brought in by students. Also discuss which techniques tend to be most effective.

1. “Bait and switch”
2. Exploitation of fears and misgivings
3. Subliminal advertising
4. Overstated claims



discussion



student activity 10-2



slide 10-C

## common misleading advertisements

For each type of ad, discuss what it is, which techniques it tends to use, and warning signs to look for.

1. “Get rich quick” schemes
2. Health fraud
3. Credit repair
4. Product misrepresentations



discussion



web activity:

Go to **fraud.org** to obtain information on common consumer frauds.



slide 10-D

## what techniques appeal to you?



student activity 10-3

# the influence of advertising teaching notes

## about program-length commercials (infomercials)

1. What they are
2. How to spot one
3. Appeals and techniques used



discussion



slide 10-E

## basic rules for evaluating advertisements

1. Does the ad appeal to your emotions? Try to look beyond the appeal to your vanity and find out what the ad is really saying (or isn't saying) about the product or service.
2. What are the special features of the product? Do you need those features?
3. Search for fraud and deception in the ad.
4. Be alert to ads that are misleading (those that make unreasonable claims about the product or service).
5. Read the fine print or listen carefully.



discussion



group activity:

Have students develop a form for evaluating the usefulness of advertisements.



slide 10-F

## try it— make a commercial!

1. Group project
2. Class presentations
3. Class discussion



student activity 10-4

## test your knowledge of advertising

1. Written quiz



student activity 10-5

## lesson ten quiz



quiz 10-6



# test your advertising knowledge

## answer key

In the space provided, write the letter of the advertising technique or appeal the statement represents.

- |                                    |                              |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| a) Join the gang                   | h) Negative option           |
| b) Hero endorsement                | i) Credit repair             |
| c) Unfinished comparison           | j) Numerical claims          |
| d) Independence                    | k) Guarantees                |
| e) "Get rich quick"                | l) Bargain appeals           |
| f) Exploiting fears and misgivings | m) Scientific claims         |
| g) Physical attraction appeal      | n) Catch phrases and slogans |

- h Return this card today and begin receiving three CDs every month. If, at any time, you decide you don't want a CD, just return it within ten days.
- d If you're the type of person who can think and act for yourself, drive one of our cars and you'll be convinced you can't buy a smoother ride.
- k We promise your new battery will last a lifetime, or your money back.
- c This detergent works better on grease and stains.
- j Three-out-of-four dentists recommend this toothpaste.
- a Everyone else is using this product. Why aren't you?
- l At this price for a limited time only! So buy now, because you won't see a value like this again.
- m After years of research by leading physicians, we've formulated a pill that, taken one hour before each meal, allows you to eat anything you want without gaining weight.
- n You find yourself unconsciously singing the tune to the commercial.
- b If Mr./Ms. Famous Athlete wears this type of underwear, shouldn't you?
- g Just one spray of our cologne, and you'll never have to spend another Saturday alone!
- e Work in your home, part-time, and earn up to \$10,000 per week.
- i No matter how bad your credit is, for one small fee, we can help you get that car or van you've always wanted.
- f Our complete-at-home course, which comes with a supplemental videotape and a workbook, is designed to increase your chances of getting better grades regardless of the subject.

# test your advertising knowledge answer key

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**Answer each of the following questions in the space provided.**

- 15.** Explain and give an example of the “bait and switch” advertising technique.  
*Designed to get you into the store by advertising a bargain. Once you’re in the store, you’re told the item is unavailable. Then you’re shown a similar item of higher quality that costs more.*
- 16.** Explain and give an example of the “supermarket special” advertising technique.  
*Advertisement of products that aren’t in stock, or aren’t readily available to consumers at the advertised price.*
- 17.** Explain and give an example of an advertisement that uses “scientific claims.”  
*Claims of “scientific proof” that are made without the substantiation required by law.*
- 18.** Explain and give an example of an advertisement that uses “bargain appeals.”  
*Plays on human tendency to want a bargain. Lots of so-called “bargains” aren’t really bargains at all.*
- 19.** List three ways to spot program-length commercials.  
*Look for commercials that are similar to the program content.*  
  
*Check for sponsor identification.*  
  
*Be wary of programs where one product is represented as “better” than others.*
- 20.** List two things you can do to protect yourself if you buy something from a program-length commercial.  
*Use a credit card to pay for the item.*  
  
*Order or pay by mail.*



## lesson ten quiz: the influence of advertising *answer key*

### true-false

1.   t   An “unfinished comparison” in an advertisement provides consumers with incomplete information.
2.   t   Out-of-stock advertised specials are considered to be an unethical technique.
3.   t   Credit repair service advertisements may be misleading due to the promises made to consumers in credit trouble.
4.   f   An infomercial is a type of “bait and switch.”
5.   f   Comments from buyers of a product in a commercial usually provide useful information.

### multiple choice

6.   D   Advertisements using a well-known person are examples of the \_\_\_\_\_ advertising technique.  
**A.** peer approval  
**B.** unfinished comparison  
**C.** status  
**D.** endorsement
7.   D   Books, tapes, and music CDs are commonly sold using:  
**A.** a perceptual contrast  
**B.** numerical claims  
**C.** unfinished comparisons  
**D.** a negative option
8.   B   \_\_\_\_\_ would be an example of an unethical action.  
**A.** An infomercial  
**B.** An out-of-context quote  
**C.** An offer to work at home  
**D.** Comparison pricing in an advertisement
9.   C   A program-length commercial is commonly called:  
**A.** “bait and switch”  
**B.** a perceptual contrast  
**C.** an infomercial  
**D.** an action guarantee
10.   A   The most useful information in an advertisement would be:  
**A.** the price  
**B.** comments from production users  
**C.** a list of product accessories  
**D.** an endorsement from a well-known person

### case application

Recent television programs and commercials have provided information on a new method of cooking to save money, reduce fat, and improve the flavor. This cooking equipment seems to be quite good. What actions should a person take before spending money on this type of product? *Before making such a purchase, several types of research should be conducted. Contact local or state consumer agencies to determine if there are complaints against the company. Talk to others who have purchased this item or similar products. Conduct library research or an internet search to gather additional information.*