

LESSON PLAN



Lesson 2: Understanding TV Commercials

Lesson Objectives:

- Students will recognize the purpose of a commercial.
- Students will recognize some of the tricks used by advertisers to make products seem better than they really are.
- Students will understand the importance of “100% juice” on food packaging.
- Students will understand that just because the packaging or a commercial shows fruit, it does not mean that there is really a lot of fruit in the product.
- Students will begin to think about distortions in portion size shown in commercials.
- Students will identify the target audience for the commercial (children or adults).

Vocabulary:

**advertising, commercial, advertiser, tricks, fruit, 100% juice, target audience
special effects, sound effects**



Commercial 1:
Trix
(0:35)



Commercial 2:
Capri Sun
(0:20)



Commercial 3:
Pringles
(0:35)



Commercial 4:
McDonalds (Children)
(0:36)



Commercial 5:
McDonalds (Adults)
(0:35)

Materials Needed:

- *Teacher Guide* for leading analysis and discussion
- Video clips of commercials (access online or via First Grade Lesson 2 digital media folder)
- LCD Projector and computer
- Several examples of juice drink boxes, pouches, or bottled (if possible, including Capri Sun), with one that says “100% juice” and one that has only a small percentage of juice
- *How Much Sugar?* and *How Much Fruit?* charts (available in the *Resources* at the end of the kit)

Materials Needed Cont'd:

- (Optional Activities) Empty cereal packages and beverage containers for children to practice finding clues about how much sugar and juice is in the products; see Kindergarten Lessons 4 and 5 for those Activity descriptions

Time: 30-40 minutes or longer, depending on discussion

Lesson Procedures:

1. Present the *Lesson Introduction* to the class, leading an initial discussion.
2. Play video clips of Commercials 1, 2 and 3, following the *Commercial Analysis Questions & Answers* in the *Teacher Guide*, showing each commercial several times.
3. Pause each commercial as you show it the second or third time to point out specific tricks or other aspects of the commercial, including issues related to fruit, 100% juice, and portion size.
4. Introduce the concept of “target audience,” including if a commercial is aimed at boys or girls or both boys and girls. Discuss how you would know if a commercial was targeted to children or to adults.
5. Play video clips of Commercials 4 and 5, following the *Commercial Analysis Questions & Answers* in the *Teacher Guide*, stopping after each commercial to discuss the target audience.
6. Lead follow-up discussion about the purpose of commercials, the target audience (who the commercials are made for), tricks used in commercials to make products seem better, and nutritional issues (e.g., real fruit or juice versus “fruit” snacks or drinks).
7. Discuss *Action Steps* that the children might take now that they have learned this information, especially at home or in stores and in discussions with their families.

Optional Activities:

As part of this lesson, you may want to incorporate the small group activities using actual cereal packages and beverage containers introduced in the Kindergarten Lessons 4 and 5 earlier in this kit, so that children can practice finding the clues and information about sugar, fruit, juice and other nutritional messages. Because some of the information and skills introduced in those lessons is quite complex, the more that children can practice them using multiple examples and discussion geared to their age and grade level, the better.

TEACHER GUIDE



Lesson 2: Understanding TV Commercials

1. Introduce the lesson. Content written in bold is to be said or asked by the teacher.

Lesson Introduction

Today we're going to talk about TV commercials. How many of you sometimes watch television? Then you have likely seen a commercial before. A commercial is an advertisement on television or radio, usually a short segment that interrupts the program and tries to sell you something.

Lots of people are trying to get you interested in their products - such as toys, food, and restaurants. They want you to ask an adult to buy you a particular product so they can make money. Since they really want you to like their product, commercials sometimes use tricks to capture your attention and get you interested in their product. Those tricks can make a toy or food look better than it really is. They also hire people (including kids) to be in their commercials who pretend to really like that product a lot. And sometimes they might really like the product, but mostly they're acting and saying things because they get paid to do that.

Pay close attention to the commercials that I'll show you, and then be ready to tell me about some of the tricks that you see and hear.

2. Play Commercial 1 and lead class through the *Commercial Analysis Questions & Answers* in the *Teacher Guide*.
3. Play Commercial 1 two more times, leading the class through additional *Commercial Analysis Questions & Answers* from the *Teacher Guide*.
4. Explain briefly about fruit and fruit juice, referring back to Commercial 1 and explaining the importance of the phrase "100% juice."
5. Play Commercial 2 and lead class through the *Commercial Analysis Questions & Answers* in the *Teacher Guide*. Play the commercial again, looking for more tricks and discussing whether the product is a fruit juice or just a fruit drink with little or no fruit in it.
6. Play Commercial 3 and lead class through the *Commercial Analysis Questions & Answers* in the *Teacher Guide*. Play Commercial 3 again and lead class through the additional questions.
7. Explain the concept of "target audience" and ask who the target audience was for the three commercials they just saw. Discuss how to tell if the target audience is children or adults using the *Discussion Questions & Answers* in the *Teacher Guide*.
8. Show Commercials 4 and 5, discussing the target audience for each one using the *Commercial Analysis Questions & Answers* in the *Teacher Guide*.
9. Summarize the issues important for understanding about TV commercials.
10. Discuss *Action Steps* the children can take at home or in stores based on what they have learned.



Commercial 1: *Trix*

Commercial 1 Introduction

Target Audience: Children

Tricks Used: Lots of swirling fruit coming out of the water, water turning different colors, special effects, music, funny looking and sounding rabbit, cool surfing tricks, words like “gnarly” and “dude,” huge bowl of cereal, sound effects



Commercial Analysis Questions & Answers

1) What do the makers of this commercial want you to do?

Possible Answers: Ask an adult to buy you *Trix* cereal, eat *Trix* cereal

2) Now think really hard: What kinds of tricks did the advertiser use to get your attention and to make the cereal look really fun and great?

Possible Answers: Used cartoon characters, music and sound effects, cool surfing, slogan “*Trix* are for kids,” swirling pictures of fruit

3) They showed a lot of images of fruit in this commercial. Does *Trix* cereal contain fruit?

Possible Answers: Yes some, no not any, not sure.

4) Actually *Trix* has no fruit at all in it. What else did the advertiser do to make you think that *Trix* contains fruit?

Possible Answers: The rabbit talks about raspberry red, lemon yellow, wildberry blue; the kids say it is a “totally fruity part of this good breakfast”



Commercial 1: *Trix* Cont'd

Commercial 1: Second Viewing

I'm going to show you the commercial again. Look for those tricks that we've discussed.

Pause during the commercial to point out some of the tricks.

Commercial Analysis Questions & Answers

1) What food group do cereals belong in on *ChooseMyPlate*?

Possible Answers: Many cereals belong in the grains food group, but some cereals also have lots of extra sugar.

2) Has anyone here ever eaten *Trix* cereal? What's it like? Do you think that *Trix* contains a lot of sugar? How can you tell?

Possible Answers: (Answers will vary.) Yes it has a lot of sugar in it. You could ask an adult to read what it says on the side of the box, because it is made with bright colors, because it tastes really sweet

3) Where does sugar fall on *ChooseMyPlate*?

Possible Answers: Sugar is not on *ChooseMyPlate* because it is not healthy for you, and you should not have too much of it.

4) Do we need a lot of sugar in order to eat a healthy breakfast?

Possible Answers: No, eating too much sugar is not healthy, and eating other foods that belong on *ChooseMyPlate* are better for us to eat and provide us with more energy.

Recommended Activity 1

Provide examples of empty, flattened cereal packages for the children to examine in pairs or small groups to identify how much sugar is in the cereal. See Kindergarten Lesson 4 *Teacher Guide*, Activity 1 for more information.



Commercial 1: *Trix* Cont'd

Commercial 1: Third Viewing

Play Commercial 1 for a third time. Pause on the “complete breakfast” picture.

Commercial Analysis Questions & Answers

- 1) Check out the complete breakfast pictured here. Where does each thing fall in the food pyramid?
- 2) Do we have a complete breakfast without this sugary cereal?
- 3) *Trix* is an extra, sort of like a breakfast dessert. Is it okay to eat it sometimes?
- 4) Who do you think would like this commercial more, children or adults? Why?

Possible Answers: Juice = fruit; milk = dairy; muffin = grains (and maybe a little sugar or fruit).

Possible Answers: Yes.

Possible Answers: Yes, as long as you eat all the healthy food groups first.

Possible Answers: Children: the advertisers know that kids like cartoons, it's funny, kids like *Trix*

One of the tricks we talked about in this commercial was the ways the advertiser implied that there was a lot of fruit in *Trix* cereal, when there really isn't any fruit at all. That same issue comes up in commercials for things to drink – and sometimes it's hard to tell how much fruit juice there really is in a product based on the commercial. Let's watch another commercial, and this time look for the tricks they are using to make the product look really fun and exciting, and also see if you think the product has a lot of fruit juice in it.



Commercial 2: *Capri Sun*

Commercial 2 Introduction

Target Audience: Children

Tricks Used: Exciting music, snowboarding, special effects, snowboarders turn into silver rockets, huge pictures of the *Capri Sun* pouch and fruit, snow scene turning into a beach scene, teens in swimming suits, words “all natural” and “liquid cool”



Commercial Analysis Questions & Answers

1) What do they want you to do?

Possible Answers: Drink *Capri Sun*, ask an adult to buy you *Capri Sun*

2) What kinds of tricks do they use to get your attention?

Possible Answers: Exciting music, good looking athletic teens having a great time, snow scene and beach scene, teens turn into liquid metal as they race, big pictures of fruit, slogan “liquid cool”

3) Do you think *Capri Sun* is a fruit juice?

Possible Answers: Maybe there is some juice in it.

4) Actually, this *Capri Sun* has only 10% fruit juice in it; the rest is sugar, water, and artificial colors and flavors. What did they do to try to get you to think that *Capri Sun* is a fruit juice?

Possible Answers: Showed big pictures of fruit on the billboard, the words “all natural”

5) Does anyone know how you can tell if a drink is made up of all fruit juice and nothing else added except water?

Possible Answers: 100% juice

If you see “100% juice” or “100% fruit” on a product, then you know that it is made only of fruit and maybe some water added. Often “fruit snacks” and “fruit drinks” have only 5%, 10%, or 15% fruit, and cereals like *Trix* don’t have any fruit at all. Introduce the *How Much Fruit?* chart and show several examples of beverage containers, asking children to find the statement(s) on the container that identifies how much fruit juice the product contains. Discuss the ways that the packaging implies that there is a lot of fruit in the beverage when there really is not (including the name itself and showing images of fruit). **Another trick that advertisers sometimes use on packages is to say something like “100% Vitamin C” or “100% natural flavors.” Is that the same thing as 100% juice?** Discuss why advertisers might put that on the package.

Recommended Activity 2

Provide examples of empty beverage containers for the children to examine in pairs or small groups to identify how much juice is in the product. See Kindergarten Lesson 5 *Teacher Guide*, Activity 1 for more information.

**Commercial 3: *Pringles*****Commercial 3
Introduction**

Target Audience: Children and teens

Tricks Used: Exciting music, swirling *Pringles* can, lots of different unusual scenes, special effects, girl with potato chip lips, people eating chips, sound effects, singing "I want *Pringles*," phrase "Once you pop the fun don't stop"

**Commercial Analysis Questions & Answers**

1) **What do the makers of this commercial want you to do?**

Possible Answers: Eat *Pringles*, think *Pringles* are fun, ask an adult to buy you *Pringles*

2) **What kinds of tricks do they use to get your attention?**

Possible Answers: Music, song "I love *Pringles*," dancing kids, kids having a really great time, different time periods shown, everyone eating *Pringles*, sound effects of chips crunching, bright colors

3) **What food group would *Pringles* be located on a food group diagram or *ChooseMyPlate*?**

Possible Answers: It would not really be on *ChooseMyPlate*, because even though it contains some potatoes, which are vegetables, it has so much fat that it would not be healthy for you.



Commercial 3: *Pringles* Cont'd

Commercial 3: Second Viewing

Here's the commercial again. See how many tricks you can notice.

Commercial Analysis Questions & Answers

1) Why do you think those kids in the commercial look like they're having such a great time?

Possible Answers: They are being paid, they are hired as actors and actresses to make it look like they love *Pringles*.

2) Do the actors and actresses do a good job getting you interested in the potato chips?

Possible Answers: Yes.

3) Do you think children or adults would like this commercial more. Why?

Possible Answers: Children and teens, because kids are in the commercial, they show a lot of fun things to do, kids and teens like potato chips

Advertisers sometimes make commercials where children are the target audience, and sometimes they even make commercials specifically targeted only to girls or only to boys. We're going to talk about that next time we do a media literacy lesson. But advertisers also sometimes make commercials where the target audience is adults. Sometimes they even have the same exact product, and some of the commercials are targeted to children and other commercials are targeted to adults. The last two commercials I'm going to show you are both for McDonald's. See if you can figure out who the target audience is for each one, and the different types of tricks they use for children and for adults.



Commercial 4: *McDonald's* (Kids)

Commercial 4

Target Audience: Children

Tricks Used: Ronald McDonald (a clown), funny music, sound effects, funny dancing, special visual effects, phrase "Made you smile!," boys playing with Happy Meal toys, spooky arrival of girl with green cream on her face, the word "Attack!"



Commercial Analysis Questions & Answers

1) **Who is the target audience? What makes you think that?**

Possible Answers: Children, because they show Ronald McDonald and Happy Meal toys, boys (because they only show a "boy" toy and the boys are "attacking" a girl)

2) **What kinds of tricks do they use to get your attention?**

Possible Answers: Funny music, sound effects, funny dancing, Ronald McDonald (clown), girl with green cream on her face, free toys, special effects



Commercial 5: *McDonald's* (Adults)

Commercial 5

Target Audience: Adults

Tricks Used: Close-ups of burgers, tomatoes, Lettuce, cute boy riding bicycle, pleasant older woman, woman kissing boy on the cheek, boy eating huge burger, music, voiceover talking about healthy ingredients



Commercial Analysis Questions & Answers

1) **Who is the target audience?
What makes you think that?**

Possible Answers: Adults, real-looking scene, boy is getting McDonald's for his grandmother or adult who is his friend, they talk about 100% beef and healthy ingredients, they show the grandmother and boy eating in her house

2) **What kinds of tricks did they use to get an adult's attention and to make them want the product?**

Possible Answers: Music, close-up images of healthy-looking burgers and tomatoes, voice saying they use healthy ingredients, happy boy eating an enormous burger

Action Steps

Brainstorm with the students. **So what can you do, now that you know all of this about TV commercials?** List suggestions on a chart, if possible. Give each student a copy of the *How Much Fruit?* chart and introduce the *How Much Sugar?* chart, explaining they can be used to figure out whether the amount of sugar in a product is only a little bit or a lot. Ideas might include:

- Being like a detective, looking for clues about what is really true about the product being advertised
- Talking about this with your families
- Figuring out what TV commercials are selling and who their target audience is
- Thinking and talking about how advertising in TV commercials and on packages uses specific techniques to target children versus adults
- Looking for “tricks” used in TV commercials to make products look better than they might really be
- Checking out the products advertised when you see them in stores to see how the real product compares with the way it was advertised
- Figuring out how much sugar is in different cereals and other products we see at the store, in TV commercials, or that we have at home by looking at the images and words on the box, or asking an adult to look on the side panel
- Put up a copy of the *How Much Fruit?* and *How Much Sugar?* charts at home to check out different foods and beverages
- Pay attention to the “complete breakfast” messages in TV commercial for cereals, and noticing other breakfast foods that are shown besides the cereal
- Finding “tricks” used in food and drink TV commercials to make them seem like products have a lot of fruit in them when they really do not
- Looking for “100% juice” or “100% fruit” on package labels