

LESSON PLAN



Lesson 3: Toy Commercials & Their Tricks

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 learn about specific tricks used by advertisers: editing.

Vocabulary:

advertising, commercial, advertiser, tricks, editing, slow motion, extreme close-up, product

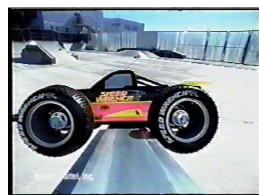
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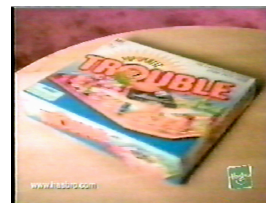
Commercial 1:
Top It!
(0:21)



Clip from *Buy Me That! How Do They Make Games Look So Easy?* (3:10)



Commercial 2:
Speed Wrench
(0:35)



Commercial 3:
Trouble
(0:20)

Materials Needed:

- *Teacher Guide* for leading analysis and discussion
- Video clips of commercials (access online or via First Grade Lesson 3 digital media folder)
- LCD Projector and computer

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 Commercial 1, following the *Commercial Analysis Questions & Answers* in the *Teacher Guide*, pausing the commercial as you show it several times to point out tricks.
3. Introduce the video clip from *Buy Me That! How Do They Make Games Look So Easy?*
4. Lead follow-up discussion about editing in commercials, following the *Video Clip Questions & Answers* in the *Teacher Guide*.
5. Play Commercials 2 and 3, following the *Commercial Analysis Questions & Answers* in the *Teacher Guide*, showing each commercial several times, and pausing the commercials to discuss the editing techniques and other tricks used.
6. Lead a follow-up discussion about the purpose of commercials, tricks used to make products look better than they really are, and editing.
7. Discuss *Action Steps* the children might take now that they have learned this information, especially at home or in stores and in discussions with their families.

TEACHER GUIDE



Video Clips

Lesson 3: Toy Commercials & Their Tricks

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

Lesson Introduction

Today we're going to watch some toy commercials and learn about a few specific tricks that advertisers like to use. **But first, does anyone want to share something you noticed about commercials you have seen since we started doing these media literacy lessons?** Let three or four students share. Keep the class involved by asking the group if they have made similar observations.

Have you ever really wanted a toy, but when you finally got it, it wasn't what you expected? Commercials often use tricks to make toys look better than they really are. I have a commercial I want to show you. It's pretty short, so watch closely and see if you can pick out some of the tricks that the advertisers are using.

2. Play Commercial 1 and lead class through the *Commercial Analysis Questions & Answers* in the *Teacher Guide*.
3. Play Commercial 1 a second time, pausing to point out tricks.
4. Play Video Clip 1 of *Buy Me That! How Do They Make Games Look So Easy?* and lead class through the *Video Clip Questions & Answers* in the *Teacher Guide*.
5. Play Commercial 2 and lead class through the *Commercial Analysis Questions & Answers* in the *Teacher Guide*. Play Commercial 2 a second time to identify editing tricks.
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 additional questions.
7. Summarize the lesson's conclusions about TV commercials.
8. Discuss *Action Steps* the children can take at home or in stores based on what they have learned.



Commercial 1: *Top It!*

Commercial 1 Introduction

Target Audience: Children

Tricks Used: Rapid-fire voiceover, lots of visual cuts (editing), pretty girl twirling the product, saying the product's name over and over, musical beat, making the product look easy to use, joke about Alaska, special effects, sound effects, saying "Everybody does it"



Commercial Analysis Questions & Answers

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

Possible Answers: Want *Top It!*, ask an adult to buy you *Top It!*

2) What did the advertiser do to try to get your attention and make the product seem fun and really great?

Possible Answers: Uses a musical beat, sound effects, narrator says "Everybody does it," toy looks easy to play, girl does not miss a throw, Alaska scene contrast

3) Who thinks that *Top It!* looks pretty easy? Anybody here own it? Is it easy to play?

Possible Answers: (Answers will vary.)

4) How does the commercial make it seem like it would be an easy game to learn?

Possible Answers: The girl catches the ball every time, she even throws it under her leg, she is concentrating but she is relaxed



Commercial 1: *Top It!* Cont'd

Commercial 1 Second Viewing

Let's watch this commercial again.

Point out how the commercial uses only very short clips.

Most commercials use a trick called editing. They only show you the parts they want to see. In the *Top It!* commercial, if the girl missed the ball, they just wouldn't put that part in. Let's find out more about editing.



Buy Me That! How Do They Make Games Look So Easy?

Video Clip 1

Summary: How they use editing and other techniques to make toys and games look much easier to use than they really are; interviews with kids predicting how easy the toys will be and then showing the kids actually using the toys and finding out how hard they are to use



Video Clip Questions & Answers

1) What is editing?

Possible Answers: It is when advertisers only put in the parts they want you to see, then cut out the rest; you do not notice because of all the short clips.

2) How does editing help make the toys look better than they are?

Possible Answers: You only see the best stunts or best looking pictures of the product; editing creates a positive image of the product - which may not be true.

3) How does music help create a fun impression?

Possible Answers: Music and songs make it seem like everyone's having a good time.



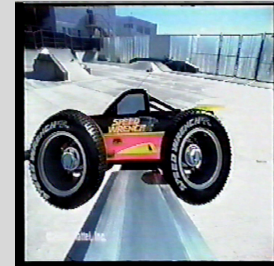
Commercial 2: *Speed Wrench*

Now we're going to watch another commercial where the editing is a very important trick.

Target Audience: Boys

Tricks Used: Exciting music, rapid-fire voiceover, lots of visual cuts (editing), slow motion, shots that make the truck look like it is going all the movement by itself (with no kids in view), saying the product's name over and over, extreme close-ups, words "No rules," "No boundaries," cool looking cartoon character, white writing in the sky.

Commercial 2 Introduction



Commercial Analysis Questions & Answers

1) What do they want you to do?

Possible Answers: Want and ask an adult to buy you Tyco's *Speed Wrench*.

2) What does the advertiser do to try and get your attention and to make the product look fun and exciting?

Possible Answers: Uses fast music, fantastic stunts, narrator tells about it, editing, white writing, extreme close-ups, special effects

3) Does anyone here have a toy like this?

Possible Answers: (Answers will vary.)



Commercial 2: *Speed Wrench* Cont'd

Commercial 2: Second Viewing

Play Commercial 2 again. Pause to show the different camera angles and evidence of editing such as where the car looks like it is making a super high jump. Point out the use of slow motion - another editing trick.

All commercials use editing, and it can make toys look better than they really are – just like they showed in *Buy Me That*.

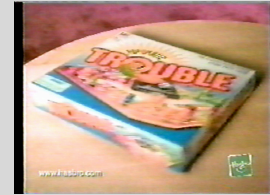


Commercial 3: *Trouble*

Target Audience: Children

Tricks Used: Box jiggles by itself, little people turn into dice when the bubble is pushed, camera makes the table look like it is moving, fun song, kids saying they are getting “In trouble,” sound effects, special visual effects of dice and game pieces floating through the air, extreme close-ups

Commercial 3 Introduction



Commercial Analysis Questions & Answers

1) What do they want you to do?

Possible Answers: Like the game *Trouble*, think it looks like fun, ask an adult to buy it for you

2) What does the advertiser do to try to get your attention and make the game look like fun?

Possible Answers: Fun song, sound effects, pun on words “Getting into Trouble,” shaking box, kids look really excited, dice and game pieces floating in background

3) Does anyone here own the game *Trouble*? Is it really that exciting?

Possible Answers: (Answers will vary.)

4) Why do those kids look like they’re having so much fun?

Possible Answers: Fun song, the kids look like they are having so much fun because they are acting and are getting paid to be in the commercial.

5) How big is the game? Look carefully when we watch it again to see how big the pieces are compared to the kids’ fingers.

Possible Answers: Really little, only about as big as a child’s hand, the bubble thing is only about as big as your thumb; the playing pieces are tiny

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. 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
- Looking for “tricks” used in TV commercials to make products look better than they might really be, especially editing and music
- Checking out the products advertised when you see them in stores to see how the real product compares with the way it was advertised, especially how big the product is
- Remembering that the kids and other people in the commercial are just actors who are paid to look excited and happy when playing with these toys