

# *Skills for Healthy Living*

## *Analyzing Media Influences*

### Teacher's Guide

**Grade Level:** 9-12

**Curriculum Focus:** Health

**Lesson Duration:** Two class periods

#### **Program Description**

Whether we realize it or not, the media exert tremendous influence over how we look, what we wear, the foods we eat, and even our self-image. Explore how advertising manipulates teens' perceptions, and discover how they can make better-informed choices and develop more realistic expectations.

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#### **Discussion Questions**

##### *Body Image*

- How do the media influence the perceptions teenagers have of themselves?
- What can be done to counter the impact of idealized body images often seen in ads?

##### *Eating It Up*

- What are common themes seen in food advertising?
  - When you see an ad for a particular food or restaurant, how does it make you feel?
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#### **Lesson Plan**

##### *Student Objectives*

- Describe how the media influences our attitudes towards lifestyle.
- Explain how advertising uses images of pretty girls or muscular guys to sell products and why "seeing isn't always believing."
- Consider the media's influence on their own life and self-image.

##### *Materials*

- *Analyzing Media Influences: Body Image*
- Computer with Internet access
- Copies of various teen-oriented magazines, catalogs, and ads
- Poster board or large construction paper
- Markers, colored pencils

## Procedures

1. Ask students to think about how the media influences their self-esteem or self-perception. Ask them to form small groups and share their thinking. Move around and listen to points being made, then open the discussion up to the whole class.
2. Discuss how movies, TV, magazines, ads, or other media (such as outdoor billboards or music videos) may consciously or subconsciously impact their attitudes and why.
3. Again, divide the class into groups and distribute the magazines, catalogs, and ads. Have the students review and analyze a specific teen-oriented print ad, magazine cover, or catalog page. Ads can be for any product geared towards teens or young adults, such as clothing, cars, makeup, cologne, etc.
4. List the various subtle messages the ad may be trying to portray (for example, if you wear these jeans, you will attract more guys); next to each statement write "true, false, or maybe."
5. Students will work in groups to create a more realistic ad or catalog page for the targeted product, using images or product shots that better reflect an "average" teen. They will create a headline, body copy, tag line or "call to action" e.g., buy these jeans because they fit well and are not too expensive. Describe where the ad or catalog copy might be placed and the impact they think it would have to help to sell the product.

The following Web sites have useful information about media influences. They are good starting point for exploring this topic:

<http://www.adage.com/century/campaigns.html>

<http://www.campaignforrealbeauty.com/index.asp>

[http://www.media-awareness.ca/english/parents/marketing/issues\\_teens\\_marketing.cfm](http://www.media-awareness.ca/english/parents/marketing/issues_teens_marketing.cfm)

[http://www.mediafamily.org/facts/facts\\_childadv.shtml](http://www.mediafamily.org/facts/facts_childadv.shtml)

<http://www.aap.org/family/mediainpact.htm>

6. Discuss as a class how other factors, such as family, peer pressure, and self-esteem influence teens' purchase decisions and lifestyle choices. What can be done to lessen the impact of advertising on teens' self-image?

## Assessment

Use the following three-point rubric to evaluate students' work during this lesson.

- 3 points: The student developed an informative, creative ad that demonstrated how media can influence buying practices and self image.
- 2 points: The student developed an ad that demonstrated one way in which media can influence buying practices and self image.
- 1 point: The student failed to develop an ad that demonstrated at least one way in which media can influence buying practices and self image.

## Vocabulary

### body image

*Definition:* A subjective picture of one's own body

*Context:* Many teens have an unrealistic body image, believing they're not living up to a marketing "ideal" of what they should look like.

### eating disorders

*Definition:* Any of several psychological disorders (such as anorexia nervosa or bulimia) characterized by serious disturbances of eating behavior

*Context:* Many teens develop eating disorders in an effort to look more like the models in advertisements.

### marketing

*Definition:* The action or business of promoting or selling products or services

*Context:* Marketing to teens often includes the use of beautiful, sexy, women or muscular, handsome men, even if they have nothing to do with the product.

### nutrition

*Definition:* The process of providing or obtaining the food necessary for health and growth.

*Context:* Many teens have a high-fat, high-calorie diet that doesn't provide them with adequate nutrition but can lead to obesity and other health problems.

### obesity

*Definition:* A condition characterized by excessive body fat; usually caused by the consumption of more calories than the body can use.

*Context:* Obesity can cause a number of health problems including diabetes and heart disease.

### sedentary

*Definition:* Spending most of one's time seated or physically inactive

*Context:* Teens are living a more sedentary lifestyle, so they're burning off fewer calories.

## Standards

### National Academy of Sciences

The National Academy of Sciences provides guidelines for teaching science in grades K-12 to promote scientific literacy. To view the standards, visit this Web site:

<http://books.nap.edu/html/nses/html/overview.html#content>.

This lesson plan addresses the following national standards:

- Science in Personal and Social Perspectives: Personal and community health

## Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL)

McREL's Content Knowledge: A Compendium of Standards and Benchmarks for K-12 Education addresses 14 content areas. To view the standards and benchmarks, visit <http://www.mcrel.org/compendium/browse.asp>

This lesson plan addresses the following national standards:

- Health: Understands essential concepts about nutrition and diet
- Health: Knows how to maintain and promote personal health
- Behavioral Studies: Understands that group and cultural influences contribute to human development, identity, and behavior
- Self Regulation: Maintains a healthy self-concept

## Support Materials

Develop custom worksheets, educational puzzles, online quizzes, and more with the free teaching tools offered on the Discoveryschool.com Web site. Create and print support materials, or save them to a Custom Classroom account for future use. To learn more, visit

- <http://school.discovery.com/teachingtools/teachingtools.html>

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## DVD Content

### *How To Use the DVD*

The DVD starting screen has the following options:

**Play Video** – This plays the video from start to finish. There are no programmed stops, except by using a remote control. With a computer, depending on the particular software player, a pause button is included with the other video controls.

**Video Index** – Here the video is divided into sections, indicated by video thumbnail icons. Watching all parts in sequence is similar to watching the video from start to finish. Brief descriptions and total running times are noted for each part. To play a particular segment, press Enter on the remote for TV playback; on a computer, click once to highlight a thumbnail and read the accompanying text description and click again to start the video.

**Curriculum Units** – These are specially edited video segments pulled from different sections of the video (see below). These nonlinear segments align with key ideas in the unit of instruction. They include onscreen pre- and post-viewing questions, reproduced below in this Teacher's Guide. To play a particular segment, press Enter on the TV remote or click once on the Curriculum Unit title on a computer.

**Standards Link**—Selecting this option displays a single screen that lists the national academic standards the video addresses.

**Teacher Resources**—This screen gives the technical support number and Web site address.

## Video Index

### I. Body Image (15 min.)

Teenagers are bombarded with media messages about how they should look. Learn about the effect these messages can have, and how teens need to see through the marketing to gain a more realistic perception of themselves.

### II. Eating it Up (12 min.)

The food industry spends billions on advertising, much of aimed at young people. See how teens respond to these ads and what effect it has on their health and nutrition.

## Curriculum Units

### 1. My Body, Myself

*Pre-viewing question*

Q: Do you think you have a realistic view of your body image?

A: Answers will vary.

*Post-viewing question*

Q: Why are people hard on themselves about their body type?

A: Answers will vary but should mention peer pressure, media influences such as movies, TV, magazines, and societal pressures.

### 2. The Medium Sends a Message

*Pre-viewing question*

Q: How do the media influence our body image?

A: Answers will vary.

*Post-viewing question*

Q: Why do you think advertisers try so hard to get teens thinking they need to be thinner, prettier, more muscular?

A: Answers will vary but should include that companies need to create demand for their product. Ads that show happy, attractive, successful people using their products are designed to make the consumer feel dissatisfied with themselves and willing to try the products in hopes of becoming like the people in the ads.



### 3. Making Permanent Changes

*Pre-viewing question*

Q: Why do people to undergo surgery to change their looks?

A: Answers will vary.

*Post-viewing question*

Q: Do you think Ashleigh really changed as a person because of the surgery?

A: Answers will vary.

### 4. Being Content with Yourself

*Pre-viewing question*

Q: Does being taller, skinnier, prettier, or stronger make you a better person?

A: Answers will vary.

*Post-viewing question*

Q: Do you think most teens feel they need to change their appearance?

A: Answers will vary.

### 5. Poor Snacking Habits

*Pre-viewing question*

Q: What types of snacks to you eat after school?

A: Answers will vary.

*Post-viewing question*

Q: What are the long-term health effects of poor snacking habits?

A: Answers will vary but should mention obesity, risk of high cholesterol, heart disease, diabetes, and other medical problems.

### 6. Advertising and Food Choices

*Pre-viewing question*

Q: Does advertising influence your food choices?

A: Answers will vary.

*Post-viewing question*

Q: Why do advertisers use thin, beautiful people to sell food?

A: Answers will vary but should mention associating good looking people with the product is intended to make consumers believe they'll be like those people if they buy the product.

### 7. Truth in Advertising?

*Pre-viewing question*

Q: Do you associate eating certain foods with being a happier, smarter person?

A: Answers will vary.



*Post-viewing question*

Q: How can you reduce the influence the media has on your food choices?

A: Answers will vary but should mention reading labels, being skeptical of claims, and knowing how advertising manipulates people.

## **8. Making Healthy Choices**

*Pre-viewing question*

Q: Do you make food choices based on their nutritional content?

A: Answers will vary.

*Post-viewing question*

Q: What can you do to make healthier choices about food?

A: Answers will vary but should mention eating a better balance of foods, eating more fruits and vegetables, choosing foods lower in fat, calories, cholesterol, and sugar, and drinking water instead of soda.