

# Student Handout: Unit 2 Lesson 1



## They're Selling – Am I Buying?

Suggested time: 60 -75 Minutes

### What's important in this lesson:

Some advertising is so successful that it seems burned into our popular culture. And yet, some people and groups in our society react very differently to the same advertising. How might people's values change the message delivered by an ad? Thinking about words and images and the power they possess, really becomes thinking about people, and thinking about the world.

### Complete these steps:

1. Participate actively in an informal discussion with your teacher or a partner, about the ads which are your favourites, both now and in the past.
  - Share your opinions, and listen to those of others.
  - Think about the characteristics of the favourite ads, and why you (or others) might remember them so clearly.
2. Listen carefully as the teacher shows you an example of a piece of advertising which might be considered controversial by someone or some group.
  - Participate in an oral analysis of the features of the ad, focusing on the way in which the ad emphasizes the product, or hides the product.
  - Complete the worksheet called "*What Are They Selling?*"
3. Your teacher will get you started on a Sentence Starter activity. Check your answers against sample answers provided in an exemplar.
4. From your teacher, you will get an example of an ad. Either your teacher will provide you with sentence starters based on the ad, or you will create sentence starters based on the ad for yourself or a partner.
  - Work independently to complete the sentence starters. Read each *Sentence Starter* carefully, to be sure that you are paying attention to the hints about the different people and groups reacting to the ad.
  - Study the ad carefully for any reasons which people might like or dislike or be worried about the message it is sending.
  - Complete the sentences using good grammar, and effective, specific language. Revise the assignment if necessary to improve the clear expression of the different points-of-view.

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**Hand in the following to your teacher:**

1. Completed “*What Are They Selling?*” worksheet
2. Completed *Sentence Starters* worksheet

**Questions for the teacher:**

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## “What Are They Selling?”

Many ads send confusing signals, keeping the audience in suspense about the actual product being presented for sale. Other ads use very deliberate methods to sell a product by connecting it to something else – an attractive lifestyle, or an impression of success, popularity, or happiness.

Take a careful look at an ad, either provided to you by the teacher, or one that you are able to select for yourself. Answer the following questions about the gap between the actual product for sale, and the way the ad presents that product.

1. What is the actual product or service provided by the company which is behind this advertisement?

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2. How prominent (“in your face”) or obvious is the actual product? Where does it appear in the ad’s design?

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3. What else could someone see as the real focus of the ad? Does something else (an *idea*, a *lifestyle*, or *another product*) seem to be just as important, or even more important, than the one being advertised?

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4. Can you imagine a particular person or group who might be offended or confused by the way this ad presents its product? Be as specific as you can.

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5. Put the “message” of the ad into your own words. Think about what it’s saying to you, not just with its words, but also with its images and overall design.

For example, “If you buy our product, your life will change in this way:

\_\_\_\_\_.”

Or, “If you don’t buy our product / use our service, you will / won’t be

\_\_\_\_\_.”

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## Reacting to Advertising: Sentence Starters

For each of the following, consider the individuals or groups described.

- Think about the characteristics, opinions, behaviours, and beliefs, which you would use to describe that individual or group. Then consider how someone with those characteristics, opinions, behaviours, and beliefs might react to the advertisement you're working on right now.
- Be careful not to oversimplify or stereotype all members of a group, but try to imagine how someone in that position might see, feel, and think about the ad.

1. I work in a clothing store that specializes in fashion for teens. I think that this ad \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_.

2. I am the mother of a nine-year-old daughter. When I look at this ad, I think that \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_.

3. My mom is taking me out to shop for new clothes. This year I'll be starting at a new high school, and I think that this ad

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_.

4. As principal of this high school, I want to be sensitive to the issue of what our students wear when they're at school. I'm bringing this ad to our meeting on the dress code, because I think

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_.

5. This ad came from the *Guitar Player* magazine in the library; when I saw it, I thought \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_.

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### Reacting to Advertising: Sentence Starters

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Be careful not to oversimplify or stereotype all members of a group, but try to imagine how someone in that position might see, feel, and think about the ad.

1. I work in a clothing store that specializes in fashion for teens. I think that this ad *rocks, because now all the girls are going to want to look like her. And the more we sell, the more money I make!*
2. I am the mother of a nine-year-old daughter. When I look at this ad, I think *that girl looks terrible! I don't want my little girl going to school dressed like that!*
3. My mom is taking me out to shop for new clothes. This year I'll be starting at a new high school, and I think that this ad *shows me what to wear. I'm not sure if I really like that style, but hey, I want to fit in.*
4. As principal of this high school, I want to be sensitive to the issue of what our students wear when they're at school. I'm bringing this ad to our meeting on the dress code, because I think *this is the sort of fashion the parents and teachers have been complaining about; but do we really want to tell our students what they can or can't wear?*
5. This ad came from the *Guitar Player* magazine in the library; when I saw it, I thought *"Wow. I don't know what it's selling, and I don't care! Do you think she likes guitar players?"*