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A few ideas to reinforce and promote advertising/media awareness

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1. Concepts to stress with your students at all levels whenever you are talking about any kind of media production:
  - Media are carefully constructed
  - Media creators use identifiable techniques
  - Media are businesses
  - Media present values (they tell us what is “important”)
  - Different people get different meanings from the same media
2. Before starting your advertising unit have the kids brainstorm a web in groups about what they know about advertising. On a large piece of paper have one of the kids in the group write the word *advertising* in the middle. Web words or phrases around it which tell what they know about advertising. When your unit is finished, repeat this activity and compare it with the first web.
3. Talk about wide shots, medium shots, and close-ups.

**Wide shot:** gives lots of information about where the scene is taking place

**Medium shot:** gives some information about where the scene is but focuses more attention a particular person or object in the scene

**Close-up:** gives little information about where the scene is and focuses fully on a particular person or object in the scene

**Activity:** Divide a large piece of butcher paper into thirds and label one section *wide shot*, one *medium shot*, one *close-up*. Have the kids go through magazines and/or newspapers and cut pictures out and place them under the correct heading.

**Activity:** Have students draw a scene of a wide shot, then draw a medium shot of the same scene, and then draw a close-up of the same scene. For ex. A student might draw a wide shot of a barnyard scene showing the barn, several animals, hills in the distance, etc. The medium shot would get closer to show only part of the barn, and maybe two animals. The close-up would show only one animal and it would fill the frame of the picture. Tip: If you have access to one of those die-cut cameras, you can fit three of those on a regular sheet of paper and the kids can draw their shots in the circles.
4. **Product Placement** is discussed in the video *Buy Me That, Too!* This is the technique of placing products in a scene and it looks like the product just casually belongs there. Like coke, for example, or cigarettes, or a bag of Lay’s potato chips. It’s important to stress this advertising technique because kids don’t recognize it as advertising. Again, *all* media is carefully constructed and products are not placed in movies and TV shows by accident.

**Activity:** Have students draw a picture and put products in it that have been cut out of newspaper advertisements which show the products in full color. The Sunday paper is loaded with these.
5. **Advertising Analysis** Give a pair or a group of four students an advertisement from a magazine. Have them analyze the ad and make a list of *What the Ad is telling us* and *What the Ad is NOT telling us*. For example, an ad for some Tommy Clothes may be telling us that we will look cool, we will be happy when we wear these clothes, we will have friends and do fun things; the ad is not telling us that these clothes are expensive, they will not guarantee an instant circle of friends, etc. Tip: do a few of these together as a class before having them analyze on their own or in small groups. Tip: Start collecting ads *now*. Go

through those old magazines before you toss them, slip the ads into plastic sleeves and start a file.

6. **Ad Contradiction Project** This is a great one to do with older kids with tobacco or alcohol ads but it can also be done with other kinds of ads as well. Have the student glue a collage of images from a particular type of ad like alcohol onto the left side of a folder. On the right have them find images or just write words to contradict the image created by the ads on the left. For example, on the left they may have a collage of kids having fun (drinking) at the beach, partying at a bar with friends, participating in sports, etc. while on the right they might have pictures or words like *alcoholic, family abuse, drunk driving, police, liver disease, expensive, addiction, out-of-control, hang-over*.
7. **Watching Commercials** You can watch the same commercial multiple times while looking for different things. Watch the commercial “as-is” all the way through. Watch it again with the sound off and focus on the colors in the ad. “Watch” it again with the screen covered to focus on auditory. Watch it and count the cuts aloud while watching it.
8. **Media are created for three reasons: to persuade, to inform, to entertain.** (This is discussed in the first part of the video *TV Smarts*. I can’t stand to watch this first segment because the characters drive me insane, but the information is very worth passing on to your students.) Copy 8 to 10 second segments of shows onto a video and have your students identify which of the three reasons each segment was created for. This is very easy to do: just pop in a video, turn to a station that you want to record, press *record* and let it record for 8 to 10 seconds, press stop, then repeat the process.
9. **Video Production Just for Fun**  
Create a video production to illustrate editing where they take out what they don’t want you to see. See the attached scripts and instructions. This is fun and quick. I did both of these skits in about thirty minutes.

## Video Production #2: The Tale of An Amateur Wizard in one short act

### Materials:

Video camera  
Magic wand  
Big dictionary or other book  
Wizard hat  
Wizard robe  
Paper airplane for brother to play with

### Characters:

Wizard  
Pesky little brother  
Narrator  
Helper to place frog

Narrator: *Once upon a time there was a young wizard who was trying to study his book of spells and chants and potions. His little brother was being annoying and distracting him, even though he was asked politely to please be quiet*

Wizard says: **Little brother please be quiet!**

Narrator: *Still he kept disturbing him with his play and his chatter. Finally, the young wizard decided to try out a spell he had to practice for homework. He said some magic words while he pointed the wand at his brother...*

**(Wizard says magic words and points the wand)**

**(Wizard freezes)**

### **Shut camera off**

Brother leaves  
Stuffed frog is put on the floor in his place

### **Turn camera ON**

The wizard looks startled

Narrator: *...who, POOF! Turned into a frog!  
The startled young wizard says, horrified:*

**Oh Dear! What have I done?**

**I guess there's only one thing to do...**

(He picks up the frog)

**I'll throw him in the pond!**

He rushes off with the frog in his arms.

## **Video Production #1: Marvin or Mimi the Magnificent**

### **Materials:**

Video camera  
Wig for the magician  
Mustache for the magician  
Stuffed rabbit  
Basket big enough to hold the rabbit  
Piece of cloth big enough to cover basket  
Magic wand  
Background music (optional)

### **Characters:**

Marvin or Mimi  
Helper to place rabbit in basket

(Done totally in mime)

M bows to the crowd  
M shows the basket to the crowd, inside and out  
M taps the bottom and inside of basket with the wand

M holds up the purple cloth and shows both sides of it  
Then lays the cloth over the top of the basket

M circles the basket with the wand  
Then taps the top of the basket with the wand and **freezes**

### **Shut camera OFF**

Helpers lift the cloth, stick the rabbit inside and replace the cloth

### **Turn camera ON**

M circles the basket with the wand one more time  
Then pulls the cloth off the basket and (with flair)  
Removes the rabbit

*Applause*