

# Middle School Lesson 3

## Media Blitz

Students will critically analyze junk mail, SPAM, and web-based advertisements while developing their own advertising materials for their campaign.



### Essential Questions for Students

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- What are the different purposes behind print and electronic advertising?
- How carefully are advertisements constructed to convey their message?
- What elements and tactics do advertisers use to get your attention?

### Outcomes

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- Students will analyze the different purposes behind print and electronic advertising: to inform, to persuade, to draw attention to an issue.
- Students will begin to critically analyze advertisements they are exposed to.
- Students will produce their own focused and informative campaign advertisements.

### Targeted Content Standards

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- Language Arts – Standard 10  
*Understands the characteristics and components of the media.*
- Life Skills – Thinking and Reasoning – Standard 1  
*Understands and applies the basic principles of presenting an argument.*

### Timeline

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- One to two class periods, including time to work on Activity Posters.

### Advanced Preparation/Materials Needed

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- Prior to the lesson, have students bring in junk mail, SPAM, and web-based advertisements. Include fliers left on doors or cars, printed copies of SPAM they receive and printed copies of other web-based advertisements. Make sure students have a clear understanding of junk mail and SPAM.
- Sticky pad for each group.
- Materials for students to use to create posters for their campaign (optional). See resource 3 – Poster Template.

## Middle School Lesson 3: Media Blitz

### Continued

#### Key Vocabulary

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(Definitions taken from [www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary](http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary) and [www.wikipedia.org](http://www.wikipedia.org).)

- Advertising  
*the action of calling something to the attention of the public especially by paid announcements* (Webster)
- Credibility  
*the quality or power of inspiring belief* (Webster)
- Junk Mail  
*third class mail* (Webster)  
*advertising mail received through the post; SPAM (electronic)* (Wikipedia)
- SPAM  
*unsolicited usually commercial e-mail sent to a large number of addresses* (Webster)
- Target Audience  
*In marketing and advertising, the target audience, or target group, is the primary group of people that something, usually an advertising campaign, is aimed at appealing to. A Target Audience can be people of a certain age group, gender, marital status, etc.* (Wikipedia)

#### Lesson

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##### Part I

- Complete a KWPL (Know, Want to Know, Predict, Learned) Chart (resource 9) regarding how advertisers design junk mail/SPAM. Prompting questions could include: Do companies produce different ads for different age groups? Is all junk mail/SPAM the same? Is it all factual?
- Write *Print, Images, Purpose, Audience, and Credibility* on the board. Briefly discuss each term and ask that students consider these points while looking at the junk mail/SPAM they brought to class. Encourage students to express their opinions on anything else that catches their attention, as well.
- Break students into groups of 4 to 5. Give each group a pad of sticky notes on which to write their observations. Have students write their observations and general feelings about the ads on the sticky note and attach it to the advertisement.
- As a class, review what the students learned. Which ads did they like the most and why? Do they have things in common? What did they feel was honest? Dishonest? Does all the material serve the same purpose? What differences did they see in advertisements that were meant to be informative versus those meant to persuade?
- What other avenues and tactics do advertisers use to get students attention? Why would they choose these formats over others? What have students bought based on ads? How have ads changed the way they think?
- Review and complete the KWPL Chart.

##### Part II

- Discuss the Read for the Record event and how it should be advertised. What is the purpose of the advertising they are creating?
- Have students compile the essential information that should be on the event posters and create the posters.

#### Extension Activities

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- Expand the examination to other forms of media advertisements.
- Research how much is spent on advertising each year in the United States. How much money is spent on advertising to their age group? How does this compare to the amount spent on other age groups? How much is spent to advertise the student's favorite product? Why is that campaign successful?

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### Continued

#### Accommodations/Modifications

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- Critically review junk mail/SPAM with students in a guided discussion. Focus on how to determine whether or not an ad is credible.
- Specifically analyze mailings that imply the reviewer has won something. Have students determine if these are really true and what they should do with the advertisements.
- Discuss the issue of mailings being addressed specifically to them. If mail has their name on it does the sender always know them? Can these be advertisements as well? Are they credit worthy?

#### Family Connection

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- Encourage students to share what they have learned with their parents. Have students ask parents to look at some junk mail with them over dinner and see if they get the same message.
- Marketing that bypasses parents can be of great concern. Encourage discussions at home on how to evaluate information and what sources are considered trustworthy.