

Sizing Up E-Cigarette Marketing

Encourage students to uncover the misleading ways e-cigarettes are marketed to teens.

Objective

Students will analyze the messages delivered by e-cigarette marketing and design their own effective anti-vaping advertisement for teens.

Standards

CCSS ELA

- W.1 Write arguments to support claims
- RH.11-12.8 Evaluate an author's claims

C3

- D4.2 Construct explanations using sound reasoning, pertinent information, and data
- D3.2 Evaluate the credibility of a source

Time

45 minutes

Materials

- Decode the Marketing Message activity sheet
- Optional: A selection of ads for students to choose from in Step 1

1 Direct students to find two different advertisements for any product (other than e-cigarettes). These may include magazine ads, photos of billboards, or printouts or links to television ads or internet ads. They should choose one ad that they think is aimed at adults and one designed for teens.

2 As a class, analyze the messages delivered by the ads. Guide the discussion with questions such as: *What features do advertisers use to attract attention? How is an advertisement for adults different from one aimed at teens? What platforms might advertisers use to reach adults versus teens (e.g., TV, internet/social media, blogs, magazines)?* Identify features of an advertisement that might mislead a buyer, for example to persuade them to think something is beneficial for their health when it may not be.

3 Separate the class into pairs and hand out the Decode the Marketing Message activity sheet. Instruct students to work collaboratively to complete the activity.

4 Write the following on the board:

- Use what you've learned about the dangers of e-cigarettes and the resources at scholastic.com/teenvapingrisks to create your own ad that tells teens the harms of vaping. Think about what platform would be most effective for reaching youth, such as posters, TV ads, blog posts, social media, or magazine ads. Make sure your ad grabs your audience's attention.



5 Have each pair present to the class the advertisements they created. Guide students to critically analyze one another's work: *Does it grab a viewer's attention? Who is the audience?* Prompt students to use constructive language while discussing the strengths and weaknesses of each advertisement. Example sentence starter: *That part grabbed my attention, but this part confused me.*

Extension: Final Project

Challenge students to work in small groups to design an anti-vaping campaign for teens. Encourage them to incorporate creative formats to include in their campaign, such as a blog post or series, an art installation, a comic strip, music, or a video series. Discuss what features will lead to a successful campaign, and make a list of critical elements (e.g., captures teens' attention, includes facts that support message, etc.).



Additional Teaching Resources

Check out additional teaching resources available at scholastic.com/youthvapingrisks. You'll find:

- Digital interactive on e-cigarette facts
- Teen and family resource sheet
- Vaping Facts and Misperceptions infographic
- Links to anti-vaping resources
- Five teaching videos
- Lessons for middle school

Name _____

Decode the Marketing Message

One factor that people think contributes to the increase in teen vaping is the way that e-cigarette companies promote their products. Answer the following questions to analyze how e-cigarettes are marketed and why the images and methods companies use may put teens at risk.



1 E-cigarette ads and packaging often include features like images of candy, bright colors, and images of “cool” people. What audience do you think these features are designed to draw in? Explain why.

2 Some e-cigarette companies such as Juul have recruited social media influencers who have large numbers of followers on apps like Instagram to help promote their products. Some influencers were paid to promote e-cigarettes by talking positively about them in their posts. How do you think this might impact the number of teens who try e-cigarettes?

3 How might the images and methods used by e-cigarette companies to market their products mislead people into thinking they are safe? Use specific examples to support your answer.

4 In 1970, the U.S. government passed the Public Health Cigarette Smoking Act, which banned tobacco companies from advertising cigarettes on radio and television. Do you think advertising laws affect the choices people make with respect to trying e-cigarettes or traditional tobacco products? Explain your reasoning.
