

Cracked Commercials

Year 5 – The Arts

Year 6 – English; The Arts



(English; Yr 6, ACELY1708)

Compare texts including media texts that represent ideas and events in different ways, explaining the effects of the different approaches

(English; Yr 6, ACELY1709)

Participate in and contribute to discussions, clarifying and interrogating ideas, developing and supporting arguments, sharing and evaluating information, experiences and opinions

(English; Yr 6, ACELY1801)

Analyse strategies authors use to influence readers

(English; Yr 6, ACELY1714)

Plan, draft and publish imaginative, informative and persuasive texts, choosing and experimenting with text structures, language features, images and digital resources appropriate to purpose and audience

(The Arts – Media Arts; Yr 5&6, ACAMAM064)

Develop skills with media technologies to shape space, time, movement and lighting within images, sounds and text

(The Arts – Media Arts; Yr 5&6, ACAMAM064)

Plan, produce and present media artworks for specific audiences and purposes using responsible media practice

Cracked Commercials

Making – and breaking – the conventions of food advertising

Students create an advertising campaign that's just a little cracked! First, they learn some food advertising conventions. Then they subvert those conventions by planning some ridiculous adverts that just... wouldn't work. The aim is to learn to decode the persuasive messages and images that are designed to shape consumer behaviour.

Equipment:

Materials for planning (such as the storyboard template provided)

Video cameras (smartphones or tablets will suffice)

Art materials such as coloured paper, coloured pencils, marker pens, glue, scissors

Duration:

Several sessions of 45 minutes

Location:

The classroom and around the school if appropriate

Notes:

Super, Super, Super

- 👁 Watch **The One with the Pestering**
- 🎧 Bonus Track **Nomcast Episode 6**



- ❓ Discuss:
 - ◇ What did students learn about where products are placed?
 - ◇ Did anything in this episode surprise students? What was it, and why was it surprising?
- ❓ Ask students what forms of media exist to influence decision-making. Collect a class list, which will mostly be forms of 'above-the-line' advertising, but may include the growing area of 'soft' advertising. Examples include but are not limited to:
 - ◇ billboards, posters, adverts on trains and trucks, street posters
 - ◇ sponsored names of stadiums, sporting and music events and educational programs
 - ◇ games, giveaways, free toys, coupons and competitions
 - ◇ radio, TV and print advertising, flyers and stickers
 - ◇ endorsements by celebrities, 'influencers' and people with a large online following.

Eat Like Your Grandma

The popular science and food writer, Michael Pollan, famously said: "Eat food. Not too much. Mostly plants."

- He developed some simple rules for supermarket shopping. Put simply, they are:
 - ◇ Shop the outer aisles – these tend to be where the fruit and veg, bread, milk and other unprocessed food is found.
 - ◇ Don't buy your food where you fuel your car.
 - ◇ Only buy food your great-grandmother would recognise (she'd recognise cheese, but not cheese-in-a-tube).

- ❓ Ask the class why these foods (milk, bread, fresh vegetables and fruit) rarely have big-budget advertising and fancy packaging. Should they? What questions does this bring up?
- Processed foods are sold for a much higher price than their raw ingredients and the labour that goes to produce them. This means the profit margin – the amount of money to be made per pack – of cereal is higher than a zucchini (for example). This allows for marketing, packaging, and the cost of building an enticing brand name.
- ❓ Discuss what students think about these ideas. Do they fit with what they learned in **The One with the Pestering**?

Analysing TV Ads

- ❓ View several examples of food advertising with the class. Discuss the conventions of advertising, such as:
 - ◇ Everyone looks happy and healthy.
 - ◇ Food is lit beautifully and presented close up.
 - ◇ Warm food steams or indicates its heat.
 - ◇ Close-up shots show people enjoying the food, focusing on their emotions such as contentment, delight and pleasure.
- It can be fun to compare food advertising with pet food advertising to see how the same devices are used to make the food look appealing to the human (who has the wallet but who won't be the one eating 'Feline frolic salmon chunks with mornay sauce!') Discuss why pet food adverts need to appeal to humans.
- Advertisements tell a story, even if it is very simple. For example, a typical story for a pet food advert would be: 'Lady comes home and feeds her cat. Cat purrs. Lady is happy.' Watch some of the ads a second time and map out their stories.

Resources

- ◇ Adventures in Imagination – M&S Food 2014: <https://youtu.be/PZ4pctQMdg4>
- ◇ Commercials aimed at kids and teens: https://youtu.be/xk_hkdGf1tc
- ◇ Lights, Action, Burger – food advertising tricks: https://youtu.be/fUjz_eilX8k
- ◇ My Cat Whiskas commercial: <https://youtu.be/fB4lyqucG-4>

✍ Promotional Products

- In groups, students choose a fresh food product category they would like to satirise in their own advertisement. You may like to first explore the meaning of satire, which is to emphasise the characteristics of a text/video/ad in order to comment on it. Their product may be a fictional version of a real item (Uncle Bob's Beetroot Bites!) or a jazzed-up plain food item with a 'proper' or hyped-up brand name (Awesome Artichokes, Juicy Sweet Snowpeas.)



- Students devise a very simple story that incorporates their product.
- They draft a list of characters – again, this is usually short and quite simple.
- Using storyboarding tools, students map out the arc of their ad story, including sketch drawings of the key shot. They decide when to use establishing long shots, when to move in and when to have extreme close-ups on the food and the people (or cats) enjoying it.
