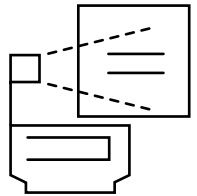


# **lesson ten**

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## the influence of advertising



overheads



# commonly used advertising techniques

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## information

- Presentation of simple, direct information.

## status

- Associates product use with those who have status, who are successful, and who enjoy and understand the “finer things in life.”

## peer approval

- Associates product use with friendship/acceptance.

## celebrity endorsement

- Associates use of product with a well-known person.

## sexual attraction

- Associates use of product with increased sexual appeal.

## entertainment

- Associates product with entertainment and feelings of enjoyment.

## intelligence

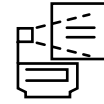
- Associates product with smart people who can't be fooled by gimmicks.

## independence

- Associates product with people who can think and act for themselves.

## unfinished comparison

- Use of phrases such as, “Works better in poor driving conditions!” Works better than what?



Some commonly used approaches:

## guarantees

- Abundant use of statements such as “lifetime guarantee” and “satisfaction guaranteed, or your money back.” All promises should be given in writing.

## scarcity

- Merchant creates a false sense of urgency by claiming that supply or time is limited.

## perceptual contrast

- Merchant presents undesirable/inferior option first to make the second option look far superior.

## scientific or numerical claims

- “Nine-out-of-ten” may sound good, but many such claims can prove impossible to substantiate.

## negative option

- Merchandise arrives automatically unless the consumer takes steps to stop shipment and billing.
- Often used by book and record clubs.



Techniques considered deceptive and/or misleading:

## bait and switch

- Advertisement entices consumers into the store with bargains that are too good to be true. Once consumers are in the store, they are told the item is unavailable and are shown a similar, but more expensive, item.
- Often high-pressure sales tactics are used.
- Illegal in Canada.

## exploitation of fears and misgivings

- Ad feeds or plays on consumers' fears.

## specials

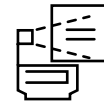
- Advertisement of products that are not in stock or that are not readily available to consumers at the advertised price.

## out-of-context quotations

- Comments by a noted person or passages from a story taken out of context to imply an endorsement of a product or service.

# examples of misleading advertising

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Frequently seen misleading advertisements:

“get rich quick” schemes

- Ads that offer an opportunity to earn a lot of money in a short amount of time with very little effort.
- Preys on desire to achieve financial success.

health fraud

- Promises of overnight medical cures and treatments.
- Products developed after “years of research” and “proven to provide immediate positive results.”
- Testimonials from medical experts and satisfied customers.
- Preys on consumers’ vanity and fears.

credit repair

- Offers, for a fee, to fix a bad credit record. (Credit repair is impossible!)

product misrepresentation

- Uses names similar to nationally recognized brand.
- Merchandise offered at below-market value for a limited time only.
- Vague descriptions of product.

travel fraud

- Offers accompanied by certificates for free or very low-cost travel.
- Vague description of services and accommodations.



## program-length commercials (infomercials)

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how to spot program-length commercials

- “Commercials” similar to the program content.
- Sponsor identified at beginning or end.
- One product is proclaimed superior.

protect yourself if you want to order the item

- Use a credit card.
- The Collection Agencies Act will offer you some protection if you have problems with the bill or the quality of the product.

actions to avoid

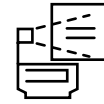
- Giving your bank account number over the phone.

remember

- Product claims are made by the advertiser.
- Such claims represent neither an objective nor an independent evaluation of the product.

# rules for evaluating advertisements

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ask yourself basic questions

- Does the ad appeal to your emotions?
- Look beyond the appeal to find out what the ad really says (or doesn't say) about the product or service.
- What are the special features of the product?
- Are these features necessary?

as you read, listen to, or watch advertisements...

- Search for fraud and deception in the ad.
- Be alert to ads that are misleading (those that make unreasonable claims about the product or service).
- Read the fine print, or listen carefully.

# **lesson ten**

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## the influence of advertising



student activities

name: \_\_\_\_\_

date: \_\_\_\_\_



## what appeals to you? what doesn't?

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### directions

Collect examples of ads you like and dislike. Also pay attention to TV commercials. If your classroom has a VCR and you have a VCR, videotape commercials and bring the tapes to class. Pay particular attention to facts versus unsupported claims in ads.

When you're done collecting ads, answer the questions below.

1. What do you like about the ads you've collected?

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2. What do you dislike about the ads you've collected?

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3. What do you like about the TV commercials you've seen?

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4. What do you dislike about the TV commercials you've seen?

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name: \_\_\_\_\_

date: \_\_\_\_\_

# examples of fraudulent or misleading advertisements

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## directions

Bring to class print ads you think are fraudulent or misleading. Tape up the ads around the classroom.

1. Describe your example of a fraudulent or misleading ad.

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2. List the fraudulent or misleading techniques and appeals used in your favorite ad.

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3. List the fraudulent or misleading techniques and appeals used in your least favorite ad.

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4. What actions could consumers take to avoid these deceptions?

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name: \_\_\_\_\_

date: \_\_\_\_\_



## what makes you like an ad or commercial?

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**TO DO:** After you've talked about various advertising appeals and techniques, answer the following questions for your favourite ad and your favourite TV commercial.

1. Describe your favourite ad.

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2. What advertising techniques and appeals are used in your favourite ad?

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3. Describe your favourite TV commercial.

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4. What advertising techniques and appeals are used in your favourite TV commercial?

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name: \_\_\_\_\_

date: \_\_\_\_\_



# what makes you dislike an ad or commercial?

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**TO DO:** After you've talked about various advertising appeals and techniques, answer the following questions for your least favourite ad and your least favourite TV commercial.

1. Describe your least favourite ad.

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2. What advertising techniques and appeals are used in your least favourite ad?

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3. Describe your least favourite TV commercial.

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4. What advertising techniques and appeals are used in your least favourite TV commercial?

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name: \_\_\_\_\_

date: \_\_\_\_\_



## try it — make a commercial

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### directions

Divide into groups. Each group is responsible for researching a product or a service.

Prepare a commercial for the product or service your group has been assigned or has chosen. When preparing your commercial, be sure to use some of the techniques and appeals discussed in class.

Each group will present its commercial to the class. At the end of your presentation, be prepared to answer the following questions.

1. To whom are you trying to sell your product or service?

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2. What specific techniques and/or appeals did you use to try to sell your product?

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3. Were any of the techniques or appeals you used fraudulent or misleading?

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name: \_\_\_\_\_

date: \_\_\_\_\_



## test your advertising knowledge

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In the space provided, write the letter of the advertising technique or appeal the statement represents.

- |                                    |                              |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| a) Join the gang                   | h) Negative option           |
| b) Celebrity endorsement           | i) Credit repair             |
| c) Dangling comparatives           | j) Numerical claims          |
| d) Independence                    | k) Guarantees                |
| e) Get rich quick                  | l) Bargain appeals           |
| f) Exploiting fears and misgivings | m) Scientific claims         |
| g) Sexual appeal                   | n) Catch phrases and slogans |

- \_\_\_\_\_ Return this card today and begin receiving three CDs every month. If, at any time, you decide you don't want a CD, just return it within ten days.
- \_\_\_\_\_ If you're the type of person who can think and act for herself, drive one of our cars and you'll be convinced you can't buy a smoother ride.
- \_\_\_\_\_ We promise your new battery will last a lifetime, or your money back.
- \_\_\_\_\_ This detergent works better on grease and stains.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Three out of four dentists recommend this toothpaste.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Everyone else is using this product. Why aren't you?
- \_\_\_\_\_ At this price for a limited time only! So buy now, because you won't see a value like this again.
- \_\_\_\_\_ After years of research by leading physicians, we've formulated a pill that, taken one hour before each meal, allows you to eat anything you want without gaining weight.
- \_\_\_\_\_ You find yourself unconsciously singing the tune to the commercial.
- \_\_\_\_\_ If Mr./Ms. Famous Athlete wears this type of underwear, shouldn't you?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Just one spray of our cologne, and you'll never have to spend another Saturday alone!
- \_\_\_\_\_ Work in your home, part-time, and earn up to \$10,000 per week.
- \_\_\_\_\_ No matter how bad your credit is, for one small fee, we can help you get that car or van you've always wanted.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Our complete-at-home course, which comes with a supplemental videotape and a workbook, is designed to increase your chances of getting better grades regardless of the subject.

## test your advertising knowledge (continued)

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Answer each of the following questions in the space provided.

15. Explain and give an example of the “bait and switch” advertising technique.

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16. Explain and give an example of the “supermarket special” advertising technique.

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17. Explain and give an example of an advertisement that uses “scientific claims.”

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18. Explain and give an example of an advertisement that uses “bargain appeals.”

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19. List three ways to spot program-length commercials.

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20. List two things you can do to protect yourself if you buy something from a program-length commercial.

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# test your advertising knowledge answer key



In the space provided, write the letter of the advertising technique or appeal the statement represents.

- |                                    |                              |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| a) Join the gang                   | h) Negative option           |
| b) Celebrity endorsement           | i) Credit repair             |
| c) Dangling comparatives           | j) Numerical claims          |
| d) Independence                    | k) Guarantees                |
| e) Get rich quick                  | l) Bargain appeals           |
| f) Exploiting fears and misgivings | m) Scientific claims         |
| g) Sexual appeal                   | n) Catch phrases and slogans |

1. h Return this card today and begin receiving three CDs every month. If, at any time, you decide you don't want a CD, just return it within ten days.
2. d If you're the type of person who can think and act for herself, drive one of our cars and you'll be convinced you can't buy a smoother ride.
3. k We promise your new battery will last a lifetime, or your money back.
4. c This detergent works better on grease and stains.
5. j Three out of four dentists recommend this toothpaste.
6. a Everyone else is using this product. Why aren't you?
7. l At this price for a limited time only! So buy now, because you won't see a value like this again.
8. m After years of research by leading physicians, we've formulated a pill that, taken one hour before each meal, allows you to eat anything you want without gaining weight.
9. n (You find yourself unconsciously singing the tune to the commercial.)
10. b If Mr./Ms. Famous Athlete wears this type of underwear, shouldn't you?
11. g Just one spray of our cologne, and you'll never have to spend another Saturday alone!
12. e Work in your home, part-time, and earn up to \$10,000 per week.
13. i No matter how bad your credit is, for one small fee, we can help you get that car or van you've always wanted.
14. f Our complete-at-home course, which comes with a supplemental videotape and a workbook, is designed to increase your chances of getting better grades regardless of the subject.

## test your advertising knowledge answer key

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Answer each of the following questions in the space provided.

- 15. Explain and give an example of the “bait and switch” advertising technique.**

*Designed to get you into the store by advertising a bargain. Once you're in the store, you're told the item is unavailable. Then you're shown a similar item of higher quality that costs more.*

- 16. Explain and give an example of the “supermarket special” advertising technique.**

*Advertisement of products that aren't in stock, or aren't readily available to consumers at the advertised price.*

- 17. Explain and give an example of an advertisement that uses “scientific claims.”**

*Claims of “scientific proof” that are made without the substantiation required by law.*

- 18. Explain and give an example of an advertisement that uses “bargain appeals.”**

*Plays on human tendency to want a bargain. Lots of so-called “bargains” aren't really bargains at all.*

- 19. List three ways to spot program-length commercials.**

*Look for commercials that are similar to the program content.*

*Check for sponsor identification.*

*Be wary of programs where one product is represented as “better” than others.*

- 20. List two things you can do to protect yourself if you buy something from a program-length commercial.**

*Use a credit card to pay for the item.*

*Order or pay by mail.*

## lesson ten quiz: the influence of advertising



### true-false

1. \_\_\_\_\_ An “unfinished comparison” in an advertisement provides consumers with incomplete information.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ Out-of-stock advertised specials are considered to be an unethical technique.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ Credit repair service advertisements may be misleading due to the promises made to consumers in credit trouble.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ An infomercial is a type of bait and switch.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ Comments from buyers of a product in a commercial usually provide useful information.

### multiple choice

6. \_\_\_\_\_ Advertisements using a well-known person are examples of the \_\_\_\_\_ advertising technique.  
A. peer approval  
B. unfinished comparison  
C. status  
D. endorsement
7. \_\_\_\_\_ Books, tapes, and music CDs are commonly sold using:  
A. a perceptual contrast.  
B. numerical claims.  
C. unfinished comparisons.  
D. a negative option.
8. \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ would be an example of an unethical action.  
A. An infomercial  
B. An out-of-context quote  
C. An offer to work at home  
D. Comparison pricing in an advertisement
9. \_\_\_\_\_ A program-length commercial is commonly called:  
A. bait and switch.  
B. a perceptual contrast.  
C. an infomercial.  
D. an action guarantee.
10. \_\_\_\_\_ The most useful information in an advertisement would be:  
A. the price.  
B. comments from product users.  
C. a list of product accessories.  
D. an endorsement from a well-known person.

### case application

Recent television programs and commercials have provided information on a new method of cooking to save money, reduce fat, and improve the flavour. This cooking equipment seems to be quite good. What actions should a person take before spending money on this type of product?



## lesson ten quiz: the influence of advertising answer key

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### true-false

1. t An “unfinished comparison” in an advertisement provides consumers with incomplete information.
2. t Out-of-stock advertised specials are considered to be an unethical technique.
3. t Credit repair service advertisements may be misleading due to the promises made to consumers in credit trouble.
4. f An infomercial is a type of bait and switch.
5. f Comments from buyers of a product in a commercial usually provide useful information.

### multiple choice

6. D Advertisements using a well-known person are examples of the \_\_\_\_\_ advertising technique.  
A. peer approval  
B. unfinished comparison  
C. status  
D. endorsement
7. D Books, tapes, and music CDs are commonly sold using:  
A. a perceptual contrast.  
B. numerical claims.  
C. unfinished comparisons.  
D. a negative option.
8. B \_\_\_\_\_ would be an example of an unethical action.  
A. An infomercial  
B. An out-of-context quote  
C. An offer to work at home  
D. Comparison pricing in an advertisement
9. C A program-length commercial is commonly called:  
A. bait and switch.  
B. a perceptual contrast.  
C. an infomercial.  
D. an action guarantee.
10. A The most useful information in an advertisement would be:  
A. the price.  
B. comments from product users.  
C. a list of product accessories.  
D. an endorsement from a well-known person.

### case application

Recent television programs and commercials have provided information on a new method of cooking to save money, reduce fat, and improve the flavour. This cooking equipment seems to be quite good. What actions should a person take before spending money on this type of product?

*Before making such a purchase, several types of research should be conducted. Contact local or provincial consumer agencies to determine if there are complaints against the company. Talk to others who have purchased this item or similar products. Conduct library research or an Internet search to gather additional information.*