

# INQUIRY PROCESS: ADVERTISING

**Class:** Social Studies

**Grade:** 6 (cycle 3)

**Topic:** Thematic Project on Advertising

**Time Frame:** One Term

**Purpose:** The following thematic project could be implemented to help students develop their information literacy skills. These lessons should be used in conjunction with the IS-21 software and the additional classroom activity plans for each step (see the *Inquiry Process Lesson Plans* in the [Teacher Resource webpage](#)). This thematic project will indicate when it would be useful to follow the activities outlined in those lessons. This particular set of lessons is intended to spark interest in advertising, present the project, and support students in the IS-21 steps in relation to their topic.

*Note: These lessons were created with the Flexible Mode of the IS-21 tool in mind.*

## Lesson: Generating Interest

**Stage of Inquiry Process:** Prior to use of IS-21 and before project is assigned.

**Purpose of lesson:** This lesson is intended to generate interest in the upcoming advertising project and call upon the students' prior knowledge and experience with advertisements.

### OUTCOMES

LESSON GOALS	QEP COMPETENCIES
Students will be able to... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify spaces for media and form an opinion on successful product placement campaigns</li> <li>Interpret the graphic and language cues of an advertisement in order to determine the product and its targeted audience</li> <li>Analyze the connection between the images, graphics, text, and intent of an advertisement.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Arts Education: Visual Arts</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2 – To produce media works in the visual arts</li> <li>3 – To appreciate works of art, traditional artistic objects, media images, personal productions and those of classmates</li> </ul> <p><b>Languages: English Language Arts</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 – To read and listen to literary, popular and information-based texts</li> <li>4 – To use language to communicate and learn</li> </ul> <p><b>Cross Curricular</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3 – To exercise critical judgment</li> <li>6 – To use information and communication technologies</li> <li>8 – To cooperate with others</li> <li>9 – To communicate appropriately</li> </ul>

### Materials:

- 5 Print ads (approx.) – sticky notes or paper covering logos and slogans
- Projector or interactive white board such as a SmartBoard
- Magazines, newspapers, and/or posters
- Whiteboard and markers.

- *Optional: Computers with access to the Internet Lesson: Setting Up an Inquiry Need.*

### HOOK ACTIVITY

Ask students to list the places they usually encounter/see ads. They are likely to list:

- Magazines/Newspapers
- Radio
- Online
- Public transportation (buses, metros, trains)
- TV
- Billboards/Side of buildings
- On other products (ex: cereal boxes)

Ask if they usually stop to read or look at these ads? Lead a brief discussion about why they would or wouldn't pay attention to the ads they encounter on a daily basis. Take a poll of the class to determine where they feel the best location is to place an advertisement in order to appeal to their age group and demographic. The answer to this question would depend on the product being marketed to this demographic. For examples, grade 5 students are likely to ignore coffee advertisements but may pay attention to clothing advertisements. Where they live will also influence their exposure as inner city students are more likely to see billboard and public transportation advertisements over suburban community students.

### ACTIVITY: VISUAL CUES FROM ADVERTISEMENTS

- 1) *Select* a number of print-based advertisements selling a variety of products.

#### Teacher Tip

It is ideal to find advertisements aimed at the class' age group or slightly older teens. However, finding one ad for an older or younger audience would be useful as you can get the class thinking about target audiences. This can also be done with gender, socio-economic status, culture, language, or geographical location.

- 2) *Cover up* the company name, slogan and any other content that might indicate what the product is.
- 3) *Project* the advertisements, one at a time, for the whole class to see.
- 4) *Discuss* each advertisement with the class.  
Ask students what they think is being sold based on the picture or text and indicate why they feel that way.
- 5) *Write down* each of the suggestions.  
Create a list on the whiteboard of all of the ideas that students are naming.



- 6) *Uncover* the slogan and ask if that changes some of their initial ideas.  
Cross out any of the products that the class no longer feels is the intended product and add new ones if they generate any other ideas.
- 7) *Uncover* the company name, logo and any other identifying text.  
Ask the class if the company used a good strategy or if it is confusing based on the alternative guesses that the class made. What are some other ideas that the company could have used to sell this product? Is the slogan a good fit for the intended product?
- 8) *Repeat* the process with a handful of advertisements.  
Show students about 4-5 advertisements in this manner.

#### Teacher Tip

Try to find a bit of variety in products to keep it fresh. However, 2 of the advertisements should be of a similar product, such as shoes. This will allow students to compare strategies. What are the different strategies? Is there a reason why the 2 companies would use a different strategy? Does one seem more successful than the other?

#### Optional Modification to the Lesson

The final product for this thematic project is intended to be print or web-based advertisements. With this in mind, the introduction activity focused on examining print-based advertisements. However, you might want to introduce television and/or radio advertisements for various reasons. For example, compare 2 advertisements for the same product done in 2 different media (e.g., magazine ad and a television ad). This can help students when they are researching to be better prepared to tailor it to the needs of the medium they are using for their advertisement. Or you might assign creating a commercial as the final product rather than a print-based advertisement.

#### ACTIVITY: JIGSAW GROUP WORK

- 1) *Lead* students to understand what a persuasive argument is.
- 2) *Put* the students into working groups.  
Assign roles for each group member: leader, recorder, speaker, and summarizer.
- 3) *Give* each group one advertisement.  
The groups should all have advertisements from different locations. For example, one group could have an advertisement for a magazine, another group could have one for a newspaper, a third group could have one for the side of a bus or billboard (you will present them with a photo or printout of one), and so forth.



**Teacher Tip**

If the Internet is used for this activity, be sure to ask those groups how they found their images (such as, which search engine and search terms they used) so that you have an idea of what strategies they are currently using.

- 4) *Explain* that each group should determine the persuasive argument that the advertisement is using.  
You can help them determine the good and bad elements by asking:
  - Is the slogan catchy and memorable?
  - Does the slogan have an obvious tie to the product or company?
  - Who is the intended audience of the product and how did they determine that?
  - How could this advertisement be improved (be sure to keep in mind the product, audience, and method of delivery)?
  - What is unique about the advertising medium (magazine, newspaper, etc.) that they selected?
  - Is it an appropriate location for the ad given the product and audience? Why or why not?
- 5) *Have* the summarizer of each group summarize the discussion.  
Each student should take notes on this summary, as they need to be prepared to share with their new jigsaw group.
- 6) *Assign* the students in each group into new groups.  
Only one member of the original group should be in the new groups.
- 7) *Have* each new group take turns describing their advertisement.  
If students disagree about whether something is successful in an advertisement have the group debate it and justify their points.

**Take Away**

Suggest that the students take some time to observe the advertisements that they encounter over the next few days. Which ones catch their attention and why? Suggest that students take pictures of the advertisements so that they can bring them in to show their classmates.

Students should leave class with a log template to record the following information:

- What the advertisement was selling
- Where they saw the advertisement
- How many times they saw the same advertisement or an advertisement for the same product / brand
- What time of day they saw the advertisement
- What persuasive techniques the advertisement is using

This will also allow them to realize how many advertisements they might see in a week and to begin to realize whether or not the volume of advertisements impacts their lives,



i.e. what they perceive to be a need or a want or a prestige validation. The completed log templates should be shared and discussed after a few days.

## Lesson: Setting Up an Inquiry Need

**Stage of Inquiry Process:** IS-21's START step.

**Purpose of lesson:** To introduce the advertising project to the students and set up groups. It will also introduce them to the IS-21 software.

Start this lesson with the proposed hook activity, outlined below. Then refer to the activities outlined in the *Inquiry Process Lesson Plans* in the teacher resource page, however you can use the worksheets associated with this thematic project.

### Materials

- Computers and Internet access (for IS-21).
- Worksheets of the assignment entitled *Task Description* (see the teacher resource page).

### HOOK ACTIVITY

Pose the following prompts out loud, one at a time, to the class. Go around the room and allow a few students to answer the question before moving on to the next one.

- The silliest slogan I have heard is...
- I hate it when advertisements...
- I ignore advertisements that are placed...
- I don't like when advertisements are placed...
- I notice advertisements the most when...
- Advertisements targeted towards me are selling...
- Advertisements targeted towards parents are selling...
- Advertisements targeted towards boys are selling...
- Advertisements targeted towards girls are selling...
- Why I will always remember the commercial about...
- If companies want to sell their product, they should...

### ASSIGNING THE TASK

- 1) Refer to the activity 'Assign the Task' in the START lesson plan. It can be found in the *Inquiry Process Lesson Plans*, which are on the Teacher Resource webpage.
- 2) Pass out the 'Phase One' worksheet. This document is on the Teacher Resource webpage.

### Optional Modification to the Lesson

The assignment given in this thematic project is for students to create an advertisement about a music player (mp3). This assignment can be altered to suit a different classroom environment. You can select a different product such as a new



and healthy snack food. Or groups can start with an existing advertisement and redo it using different persuasive techniques or target it towards a different audience.

## Lesson: Defining an Inquiry Need

**Stage of Inquiry Process:** IS-21's DEFINE and BRAINSTORM steps.

**Purpose of lesson:** This lesson is intended to help students formulate an appropriate research topic (i.e. a Big Question) and researchable questions (i.e. Little Questions) that will guide their inquiry. They will learn about the 'arm' analogy to help explain the differences between Big and Little Questions. They will then formulate these questions for their task. Depending on the time you devote to each activity, this lesson may span more than one class.

Start this lesson by following the activities described in the DEFINE & BRAINSTORM lesson plan. It is part of the *Inquiry Process Lesson Plans* found on the teacher resource page. When you get to the 'Hot Potato Questions' activity, use the modified version as described below as it provides specific advertisement roles.

### Materials

- Sheets of paper with roles or categories written at the top (see the *Hot Potato Questions* activity).
- Computers and Internet access (for IS-21).

### ADVERTISEMENT HOT POTATO QUESTIONS

Have the class divided into groups of 3-4 members. They do not have to be with their partners for the project. Give each group a paper with a particular topic on it that relates to the inquiry project. For example, you can create roles for people that might be involved in creating an advertisement, such as:

- *Advertising copywriter:* person who writes the advertisements.
- *Creative director:* person in charge of the look or style of the advertisement.
- *Market researcher:* person who researches who should see the advertisement and why they should see it.
- *Media planner:* person who plans where the audience should see the advertisement and how often they should see it and how much all of that will cost.

You will give each group the signal and they will have a short time to think of 1-2 questions that relates to their topic. Tell them not to overthink the questions as this is just a brainstorming activity. When the time is up, have the pass the paper to the next group and collect a new one from another group. Give them the signal again. They will read what has been written and then have a short time to think of another 1-2 questions on the topic. Continue rotating the sheets until each group has had a chance to write questions for each topic. You can then either post the brainstormed questions somewhere in the classroom, or compile them into a document that you can share.



## Lesson: Identifying Keywords

**Stage of Inquiry Process:** IS-21's KEYWORDS step.

**Purpose of lesson:** This lesson allows students to pull out the key concepts that form the basis of their inquiry. Thinking of synonyms for the keywords they highlight will aid them in considering alternative ways that the information is stored and classified. This will help them prepare for the search phase as well as develop their own understanding of how to specify their needs.

Follow the activities outlined in the KEYWORDS lesson plan. It is part of the *Inquiry Process Lesson Plans* found on the teacher resource page.

## Lesson: Creating Search Strings

**Stage of Inquiry Process:** IS-21's SEARCH STRINGS step.

**Purpose of lesson:** This lesson is designed to teach students how to use the Boolean operators "AND" and "OR" in online searching to either narrow or expand their results. These Boolean operators establish a relationship between the keywords/concepts in a search, and thus have a significant impact on the relevancy of their search results.

Follow the activities outlined in the SEARCH STRINGS lesson plan. It is part of the *Inquiry Process Lesson Plans* found on the teacher resource page.

## Lesson: Determining Best Resources

**Stage of Inquiry Process:** IS-21's RESOURCES step.

**Purpose of lesson:** The purpose of this lesson is to have students consider the variety of resources available to them to answer each of their Little Questions and to learn that different kinds of information may be found in different sources, which are subsequently found in different locations.

Start the lesson with the activity 'Gaging Student Knowledge of Appropriate Resources', described below. Then follow the RESOURCES lesson plan. It is part of the *Inquiry Process Lesson Plans* found on the teacher resource page.

If you want to invite an expert to speak to your classroom, now would be a good time to plan for it.

### GAGING STUDENT KNOWLEDGE OF APPROPRIATE RESOURCES

Tell students that you would like to take a poll. If they agree with the following statements, they should raise their hand. If they disagree then they should not raise their hands. If they are not sure then they should raise one finger. Give the following statements and count how many students agree, disagree or are unsure.

- If I have a question, the Internet is always the **best** place to look.



- If I am looking for background information on a topic, I should start by looking in an encyclopedia.
- I need to think about the information that I find on the Internet by checking the sources of the information.
- I can use organizations in my community as resources for a project.
- I can name 3 different search engines.
- Sometimes newspaper articles only tell one side of a story.

At the end of the **EXPLORE** lesson, go over these statements to see if the students have changed their responses. If there is still some confusion, stop and address these issues.

## Lesson: Exploring Resources

**Stage of Inquiry Process:** IS-21's EXPLORE step.

**Purpose of lesson:** Once students have decided which appropriate resource(s) they need, they will begin to explore the retrieval tools that are available for each resource. This particular lesson will focus on helping students explore the types of search tools available for searching websites (i.e.: search engines and directories) and evaluating the search results retrieved in such tools.

Start by following the activities outlined in the EXPLORE lesson plan. It is part of the *Inquiry Process Lesson Plans* found on the teacher resource page. When students are ready for the 'Exploring Resources for their Task' activity, pass out the 'Phase Two' worksheet. It provides a review of their task and lists what they can expect during the second phase.

At the end of this lesson, pose the questions listed in this document under the RESOURCES' activity 'Gaging Student Knowledge of Appropriate Resources'. This will help determine if there is some lingering confusion in students' understanding of selecting appropriate resources.

*Note: If you plan to bring your class to the school library then it would be a good idea to do a preliminary search in the OPAC to ensure that the school library has sufficient texts to offer on advertising.*

## Lesson: Selecting Sources

**Stage of Inquiry Process:** IS-21's SELECT step.

**Purpose of lesson:** Students will learn how to identify the best hits/results from an Internet search by reading the title, description, and web address on a Results page. The criteria they should focus on at this point in the process are the source's *relevancy* to their Little Question and a quick judgment about the source's *quality*. These sources will be evaluated for additional criteria in the next lesson.

Follow the activities outlined in the SELECT lesson plan. It is part of the *Inquiry Process Lesson Plans* found on the teacher resource page.





## Lesson: Reviewing Sources

**Stage of Inquiry Process:** IS-21's REVIEW step.

**Purpose of lesson:** Students will determine if the sources they selected previously are credible, reliable, accurate, current, and relevant. Based on this evaluation, they will then determine if they would like to use the source.

Follow the activities outlined in the REVIEW lesson plan. It is part of the *Inquiry Process Lesson Plans* found on the teacher resource page.

## Lesson 9: Note Taking

**Stage of Inquiry Process:** IS-21's NOTE TAKING step.

**Purpose of lesson:** Students will take notes on the sources that they indicated they would use. This involves comprehending the main points in the source, highlighting relevant information to answer a Little Question, and determining if they will paraphrase or quote the content of each source.

Follow the activities outlined in the NOTE TAKING lesson plan. It is part of the *Inquiry Process Lesson Plans* found on the teacher resource page. When you reach the activity 'Highlighting and Note Taking' provide students with the 'Phase Three' worksheet. It reminds students of their task and provides an outline of what they will do in phase 3 of the inquiry process.

## Lesson: Synthesize

**Stage of Inquiry Process:** IS-21's SYNTHESIZE step.

**Purpose of lesson:** Students will reorganize and distill the information they found in order to make sense of it all. They will also determine if they have found enough information to answer their Big Question.

Follow the activities outlined in the SYNTHESIZE lesson plan. It is part of the *Inquiry Process Lesson Plans* found on the teacher resource page. When you reach the activity 'Reorganizing information' provide students with the 'Task Description' worksheet. It reminds students of their task and provides details of what they are expected to do for their end product.

There is also a suggested rubric specific to the advertising thematic project. Combine this rubric with the inquiry process rubric found on the teacher resources page.

## Lesson: Citing Sources

**Stage of Inquiry Process:** IS-21's ACKNOWLEDGE step.

**Purpose of lesson:** This lesson is designed to teach students that they must cite the sources that will be used to answer their Big Question. Students will recognize their moral and ethical responsibility to properly acknowledge where they found their



information and ideas and learn the value of placing complete citations in an alphabetical list. They will learn a specific citation style (MLA).

Follow the activities outlined in the ACKNOWLEDGE lesson plan. It is part of the *Inquiry Process Lesson Plans* found on the teacher resource page.

## Lesson: Creating Something New

**Stage of Inquiry Process:** IS-21's PRODUCE step.

**Purpose of lesson:** Students will learn how to communicate what they have learned in an effective format with a specific audience in mind. They will use different media and develop their presentation skills.

Follow the activities outlined in the PRODUCE lesson plan. It is part of the *Inquiry Process Lesson Plans* found on the teacher resource page. When you get to the 'Producing Something New' activity, provide students with the 'Final Preparations' worksheet.

Before students present their final products, it would be a good idea to again provide students with the 'Task Description' worksheet and Rubric handout.

You can also provide them with the checklist worksheet.

This is a good opportunity for peer feedback. Prior to the presentations, provide students with a peer-evaluation rubric. They will evaluate each group as they present, and they should leave some comments for each group. Compile these comments and share them with the groups.

### Optional Modifications to the Lesson

If you are not the language arts teacher, you could ask to work with that teacher for this assignment as they can give students a lesson on how to make concise and punchy slogans. You can also ask a French or Spanish teacher to do this with their students if you would like to write slogans for multiple audiences.

