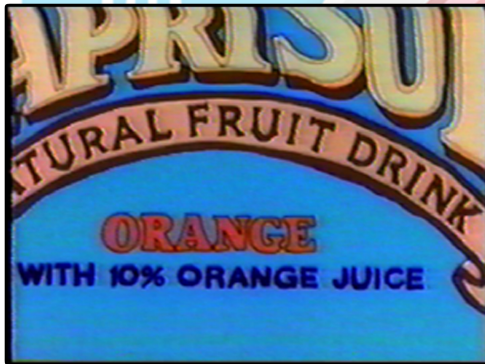


CRITICAL THINKING & HEALTH: TV COMMERCIALS AND NUTRITION

A Media Literacy Curriculum Kit for Early Elementary Grades



Vegetables

Protein



ChooseMyPlate.gov

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**LOOK
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COLLEGE

Critical Thinking and Health: TV Commercials and Nutrition

by
Cyndy Scheibe and Jane Koestler



www.projectlooksharp.org

Providing materials, training, and support to help teachers prepare students
for life in today's media-saturated world.



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Mission Statement

Project Look Sharp is a not-for-profit, mission driven initiative committed to providing teachers with the training and materials they need to integrate media literacy, critical thinking and 21st century learning into the curriculum.

Project Look Sharp provides staff development workshops and consulting.

Please Consider Donating

All our curriculum kits are available **free** of charge on our web site.
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About the Critical Thinking & Health Series

The series is in preparation and will include kits on the following topics for elementary grades:

HEALTHY LIVING AND THE MEDIA
SAFETY, RESPECT, RESPONSIBILITY AND THE MEDIA

All materials can be accessed for free on our website and are also available through mobile non-Internet based versions viewed on a digital media device. Digital devices include a master PDF as well as all specified media within lesson folders purchased from the Ithaca College Bookstore.

Access the bookstore through our website.

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Critical Thinking & Health

TV Commercials and Nutrition

By **Cyndy Scheibe and Jane Koestler**

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OVERVIEW OF THE KIT

TV Commercials and Nutrition

Overview, Objectives, Pedagogy, and Practice

Overview

This kit provides teachers and other educators with the materials and guidance to help children begin to understand the purpose of TV commercials (and advertising in general) in terms of selling intent, and to recognize the types of tricks that advertisers may use to make products look better than they really are. Children are also introduced to concepts like “target audience” to help them realize that sometimes advertisers are directly targeting them. Specific lessons focus on food groups and the new *ChooseMyPlate*, with follow-up media literacy lessons that deal with the two most common misleading nutritional messages in children’s commercials: the “complete breakfast” shot and highly sugared pseudo-fruit snacks and beverages. Many different commercials are provided so that children can practice what they have learned.

Objectives

- To teach students about the purpose of advertising and the implications of persuasive intent (e.g., that TV commercials may use tricks and techniques to make products look and seem better than they may actually be).
- To help students recognize that advertisements have particular target audiences, and that sometimes TV commercials are targeted to children like themselves.
- To teach students basic nutritional information about different food groups, including the importance of eating a lot of some foods (like whole grains, fruits and vegetables) and very little of foods that contain unhealthy fats and sugars.
- To help students recognize misleading nutritional information presented in TV commercials, especially about fruit and what constitutes a “complete” breakfast.

- To train students in visual literacy and media literacy skills, especially the ability to identify persuasion in marketing ideas and consumption.
- To engage all students, but particularly those who are at risk or disengaged from traditional school work, in critical thinking and the development of reading, listening and visual decoding skills.

Learning Standards

This kit addresses the following specific New York State Learning Standards for:

Elementary Health Education:

- *Personal Health and Fitness*: understanding the relationship between behaviors and healthy development, demonstrating and practicing positive health behaviors.
- *A Safe and Healthy Environment*: recognizing characteristics of the environment that contribute to health.
- *Resource Management*: understanding the influence of culture, media and technology in making decisions about personal and community health issues, recognizing how the media influence healthy choices.

Elementary ELA Learning Standards:

- Read, write, listen, and speak for critical analysis and evaluation, including...persuasive texts such as advertisements [and] commercials.
- Make decisions about the quality and dependability of texts and experiences based on some criteria, such as...the logic and believability of the claims made in an advertisement.

OVERVIEW OF THE KIT

How to Use these Materials

Grade Level Lessons

These lessons have been organized into units for kindergarten and first grade based on their implementation in the Ithaca City School District (in Ithaca, NY), and reflect the formative and summative evaluations of their effectiveness conducted over the past five years. However, all of these lessons are likely to be effective with children in late preschool and early elementary grades, and they can be combined or modified in any way that makes sense for the particular class.

Leading Media Analysis Questions

These lessons are designed to involve whole class discussions of recorded media content. The core of the lessons lies in the critical analysis of media messages, and the follow-up discussions about health and TV commercials (including misleading nutritional messages and persuasive techniques used to make products look better than they may really be). In leading these discussions, educators should try to do a minimum of “telling,” or presenting information, to the students. Instead, teachers should emphasize asking questions about what students saw and heard in the commercials, with follow-up probe questions to encourage a “deep reading” of the message.

This interactive decoding process is detailed in the **Teacher Guide** for each lesson. Content written in **bold** is meant to be said or asked by the teacher. Following a brief introduction, students are shown a TV commercial with instructions to look for particular information. Probe **Questions** ask students to think and analyze what they have seen and heard in the commercial, and are designed to evoke the relevant understanding of persuasive techniques and nutritional messages. **Possible Answers** are included as model evidence-based responses that will further the discussion.

However, there is rarely one right answer to any of these interpretative questions, and teachers should encourage multiple readings and a diversity of responses as long as students present “evidence” to back up their interpretations. It is important that students recognize that all people do not interpret media messages in the same way. It is also important to encourage students to begin to ask their own media literacy questions, especially at home when they are most likely to be exposed to these types of advertising messages.

Keeping the Discussion Focused

When first starting to use these lessons, teachers may find that the discussion quickly gets into children’s personal experiences with these toys or foods and how much they like them. It may be important to allow a little of that kind of discussion at first, but teachers will need to keep the focus on the analysis by coming back to the key questions when the discussion gets sidetracked.

The Importance of Practice

As laid out in the **Teacher Guide** for each lesson, each commercial should be shown multiple times so students can practice looking for misleading images and verbal messages, and identify tricks used to persuade. This opportunity for practice is crucial for the effectiveness of the lesson, and it also allows children to get beyond their initial excitement over the products advertised in the commercial to focus on the questions at hand. The more practice students have in applying their critical thinking and analysis to these commercials, the less likely they are to get caught up in the persuasive message itself.

There are additional commercials provided for practice at the end of the kindergarten and first grade units and we encourage teachers to revisit these lessons periodically over time.

Working with Families

If at all possible, we encourage teachers to work with parents and guardians to follow through on these lessons at home when children are watching television. At the end of this kit, there are suggested activities in a reproducible pamphlet for families to use when watching television, or for use at the toy or grocery store. These will deepen the lessons and provide additional opportunities for the children to practice their critical thinking and media analysis skills. We are often told by parents that their children come home and talk about what they learned in these lessons (“Did you know that commercials use tricks?”), and that they raise the issues of sugar and 100% fruit at the grocery store.

Using Examples and Manipulatives

Young children learn best through active manipulation and exploration. These lessons will be enriched if the teacher can provide actual foods and food containers for the children to analyze and discuss (e.g., different types of real fruit, cereal boxes, drink containers). Real or plastic foods could be used for children to sort into different food groups, and the lessons can be extended through discussions about nutrition during snack, lunch time, or on class trips.

Action Steps

At the end of each lesson, there are **Action Steps** that children can take to put what they have learned into practice in their daily lives, both at school and at home. We encourage teachers to have ongoing discussions with their students about “What can you do?” and to brainstorm with their students ways in which they can use what they have learned – at the store, when watching TV, in the choices they make around media and food, etc.

Avoiding Value Judgments

When doing this kind of media analysis, it is very tempting to present the TV commercials as “bad” or “harmful,” and to describe certain foods as “good” or “bad” for you. We strongly urge educators to avoid making these kinds of value judgments; the point is not to make students (or their families) feel bad or guilty about the foods they like and eat or the media they use, nor is it to replace the students’ existing opinions and values with our own. Instead, approach the discussion and analysis of the media messages from the perspective of what is “true” or “misleading,” and to identify foods as “healthy” or having ingredients that are “unhealthy,” especially if you eat a lot of them. The point is not to portray Froot Loops as bad for you, but for students to understand that it is a cereal that contains a lot of sugar and no fruit at all.

Modifying the Lessons to Meet Your Needs

The specific questions and TV commercials in this kit are designed to provide an easy-to-use guide for teachers to introduce the concepts and provide practice for children in order to reinforce the lessons. However, feel free to modify the lessons to meet your specific needs and values. For example, the first set of lessons in the Kindergarten Kit includes TV commercials for toys targeted to girls or boys (which is very common on children’s television). This can provide a context for discussing the narrow gender-typing of children’s toy commercials (see suggested questions in those lessons); however, you may feel that you would rather not show gender-typed messages in your classroom, in which case you can substitute other commercials from the additional practice set at the end of the kit.

For more information about the principles of media literacy and their relevance for education, we encourage you to read the section on **Media Literacy** in this overview of the kit.

OVERVIEW OF THE KIT

Media Literacy

We live in an age when the most influential messages about pressing social issues and events are delivered through mass media, such as television, newspapers and the Internet. Most students use the Internet as their primary source of information, yet few have any formal training in assessing the credibility of information in Web sites. It is essential to the success of our democracy that young people consciously and consistently analyze and evaluate media messages. They need to be taught to seek out current, accurate, and credible sources of information; they need to understand the influence of media messages on their understanding of the world; and they need training in identifying and using various techniques for communicating messages in different media forms. Without these critical skills, we risk losing the diversity and freedom of thought that underpins a culture of true democracy.

Collective Reading of Media Messages

This curriculum is based on the classroom practice of collective reading, in which the teacher leads the class through the process of decoding images, sounds and text as a way of developing a range of critical thinking skills while teaching core knowledge. This constructivist approach encourages the development of moral reasoning as students learn to clarify their own interpretations and listen to the analysis of their peers. Decoding of media examples in this curriculum will help train students to distinguish fact from opinion, analyze point of view and identify biases, and use evidence to back up their conclusions.

The classroom decoding process is particularly effective in involving students who rarely share their opinions or ideas, including students with reading disabilities, visual learners, and students for whom English is a second language. The teacher should consider calling on students or going around the room to ensure participation by all students in the collective reading process.

Encouraging Multiple Readings

Although the Teacher Guides for each lesson include possible answers to the probe questions, the teacher should encourage multiple readings and a diversity of responses for most of the questions posed in the Teacher Guide. It is important that students give evidence from the media message to explain their conclusions. Occasionally a question has only one right answer (e.g., “what product are they selling?”), and students should learn to distinguish between objective and subjective questions. The suggested answers given in the teachers guide are intended to reflect typical responses that address the relevant health and media literacy concepts and information. However, it is important that students recognize that all people do not interpret media messages the same way. Depending upon each reader’s background, including life experience, age, gender, ethnicity, and culture, he or she may have very different interpretations of a particular message. The collective reading experience provides the opportunity to explore these differences and discuss the important concept that readers interpret messages through their own lenses.

Reading Bias

All media messages come from a particular point of view and have biases that reflect the intent and perspective of the producer and sponsor. With these materials, teachers can train students to recognize bias and point of view. The teacher should encourage students to ask critical questions about any media messages encountered inside or outside the classroom using the *Key Questions To Ask When Analyzing Media Messages* found at www.projectlooksharp.org.

Bias in this Curriculum and in the Classroom

This series of lessons, like all media, also has a point of view and a bias. As teachers use these lessons, they may identify opinionated language, selective facts, missing information, and many other subjective decisions that went into constructing this view of health and media. The same questions the curriculum applies to other documents can be applied to this media construction: Who produced this curriculum for what purpose and what are its biases? Teachers can and should be asking critical questions about the editorial choices that went into constructing these lessons. For instance, why did we choose to focus on certain topics (e.g., target audience, tricks used in commercials, sugared cereals, pseudo-fruit snacks and drinks), but not others (e.g., exercise, vitamins, false advertising)? And, what is your evidence for these conclusions? When using these materials teachers will make their own decisions of what to include and to edit, what questions to use and what issues to avoid. All of these decisions, both by the creators and users of the curriculum, will influence the view of health and media that students receive. Teachers should encourage students to thoughtfully analyze and discuss the information, the perspectives, and the biases celebrated and criticized within our own classrooms. Those skills and practices are core to an educated democratic citizenship.

Additional Resources

For more information about media decoding, you can download the following documents from the Project Look Sharp website (www.projectlooksharp.org), some of which have been produced in cooperation with the National Association for Media Literacy Education (www.namle.net):

- *Key Questions to Ask When Analyzing Media Messages*
- *Tips for Media Decoding*
- *Core Principles for Media Literacy Education*

Fair Use of Media Documents

The classroom critique of mass media messages (e.g., TV commercials, excerpts from films or TV shows, comic strips) is essential to the development of core literacy skills in our media-saturated democracy. To enable educators to fulfill the mission of teaching these core civic objectives, Project Look Sharp has created media literacy integration kits using a variety of different media documents for critical analysis in the classroom. The documents in this curriculum are presented for the purpose of direct critique and solely to be used in an educational setting.

For more information about fair use in Media Literacy Education, go to the Media Education Lab at Temple University at www.mediaeducationlab.com.

Buy Me That! Videotape Series

This excellent 3-part series – subtitled *A Kids' Survival Guide to T.V. Advertising* - was produced by Consumers Union in cooperation with HBO, and broadcast on television in 1989-1992. It is now available on video (see complete list of segments at the end of this kit). Excerpts included in this kit are used by permission from Consumers Union of U.S., Inc.

Critical Thinking & Health: TV Commercials and Nutrition

Kindergarten Lessons

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LESSON PLAN

Lesson 1: Commercials, Part 1



Video Clips

Lesson Objectives:

- Students will learn about the purpose of TV commercials.
- Students will begin to recognize some of the tricks used by advertisers to make products seem better than they really are.
- Students will be introduced to the idea that commercials are often made for specific audiences (children, boys, girls) and begin to recognize how children are targeted by advertisers and how boys and girls are targeted differently.

Vocabulary:

advertising, commercial, advertiser, tricks, special effects, sound effects

Media:

Commercial 1:
Hot Wheels
(0:35)



Commercial 2:
Barbie Jam 'N Glam
(0:35)

Materials Needed:

- *Teacher Guide* for leading analysis and discussion
- Video clips (access online or via Kindergarten Lesson 1 digital media folder)
- LCD Projector and computer

Time: 25 minutes or longer, depending on discussion

Lesson Procedures:

1. Present the *Lesson Introduction* to the class, leading an initial discussion.
2. Play video clips of commercials, stopping after each one for questions and discussion (playing each commercial two or three times).
3. Lead follow-up discussion about the purpose of commercials, who the commercials are made for, and tricks used in commercials to make products seem better.
4. Pause the commercial as you show it the second or third time to point out specific tricks or other aspects of the commercial.
5. Discuss *Action Steps* that the children might take now that they have learned this information, especially at home or in stores and in discussions with their families.

TEACHER GUIDE

Lesson 1: Commercials, Part 1



1. Introduce the lesson. Content written in bold is to be said or asked by the teacher.

Lesson Introduction

Today we're going to talk about TV commercials. How many of you sometimes watch television? Then you've probably seen a commercial before.

Lead the students through a discussion about TV commercials, using questions provided in the teacher guide and probing for answers. Explain as much as necessary, and correct if necessary (e.g., if a child says something that is not really true about commercials). The most important things to emphasize are that commercials are different from programs because they are made by advertisers who want people to like and buy the things they are selling.

2. Lead a discussion about television commercials using the *Discussion Questions & Answers* in the *Teacher Guide*.
3. Read aloud the information provided about television commercials, and introduce Commercial 1.
4. Play Commercial 1 and lead class through the *Commercial Analysis Questions & Answers* in the *Teacher Guide*. Play Commercial 1 a second time and lead class through additional questions.
5. Introduce Commercial 2.
6. Play Commercial 2 and lead class through the *Commercial Analysis Questions & Answers* in the *Teacher Guide*. Play Commercial 2 a second time and lead class through additional questions.
7. Discuss *Action Steps* the children can take at home or in stores based on what they have learned.

SPECIAL NOTES

Children may get distracted into wanting to talk about the toys they have (especially if they have any of the toys shown in these commercials). Try to bring the conversation back to looking closely at what is said and shown in the commercials, but without implying that it is right or wrong to have – or want to have – these toys. Also, these two commercials were specifically selected because they are clearly targeted to boys or girls, allowing for a discussion of stereotyping and gender-typing on children's television. If you would rather avoid that discussion, you can substitute other commercials from the practice set at the end of the kit (although toy commercials for children are almost always gender-specific).

Discussion Questions & Answers

1) Who knows what a TV commercial is? What's a TV commercial?

Possible Answers: Advertisements, short messages, they interrupt the programs, show toys and food and other things you can buy

2) Who makes TV commercials?

Possible Answers: Advertisers and people who make things to sell; they hire writers and directors to make the commercials, and then they hire actors to be in the commercials. The people who are shown in the commercial are not the ones who made it, and they might not even like the product – they are getting paid.

3) Why do they show TV commercials?

Possible Answers: They want people to like and buy the things they are selling, they want you to ask an adult to buy you something.

4) Where do we see commercials and other advertising?

Possible Answers: On TV, radio, the Internet, in magazines and newspapers, on signs, before movies at the theater or on videos or DVDs.

5) What kinds of things do they sell in commercials on TV?

Possible Answers: Toys, video games, things to eat and drink, restaurants, cars, clothes, etc.

Lots of people are trying to get you interested in selling you things. They want you to ask your mom, your dad and your grandparents to buy you their particular product so they can make money. And since they really want you to like their product, advertisers sometimes use tricks in their commercials to get your attention and get you interested in their product. Those tricks can sometimes make a food or toy seem better than it really is. And the kids you see using those products in the commercials might really look excited, but remember those kids are actors who are getting paid to be in the commercial.



Commercial 1: *Hot Wheels*

Commercial 1 Introduction

Now we're going to watch some commercials and talk about them. Pay close attention, and see if you can see any tricks that they're using to get you to pay attention and to make the product look really good.

Target Audience: Boys

Tricks Used: The commercial shows many cars that don't come with the set, makes cars look bigger than they really are, extreme close-ups and special visual effects, exciting music and sound effects, car crashes, excited boys playing with the cars



Commercial Analysis Questions & Answers

1) What was that commercial selling?

Possible Answers: *Hot Wheels* cars and the *Hot Wheels* stunt pit.

2) What did the makers of the commercial want you to do?

Possible Answers: Buy the toy, ask an adult to buy you *Hot Wheels* cars and the stunt pit.

3) Think really hard, what did the advertiser do to try to get your attention and to make the product look really good?

Possible Answers: Showed cars that looked really big and fast, exciting music, special sound effects, exciting car crashes, boys who looked excited and like they were having lots of fun, made it look like "real stunt driving," showed lots of car crashes, showed lots of different cars and accessories that might not come with the car when you buy it.



Commercial 1: *Hot Wheels* Cont'd

Commercial 1: Second viewing

I'm going to show you the commercial again. Look for the tricks that we've already talked about, and see if you can find any more.

Play Commercial 1 again. Pause it as it goes along to point out some of the tricks.

Commercial Analysis Questions & Answers

- 1) So what did the advertisers do to get you to pay attention and to want to buy these cars?
- 2) Who do you think this commercial was made for, children or adults? What makes you think that?
- 3) Who do you think this commercial was made for, boys or girls or both? What makes you think that?
- 4) Why do you think the advertisers only showed boys playing with the cars? Don't girls sometimes like to play with cars too?
- 5) Does anyone want to say anything else about this commercial?

Possible Answers: Made the cars look fun, used cool sounds and special effects, showed boys looking excited

Possible Answers: Children; it was for a toy, it showed children playing with the toys, it had exciting toys and music.

Possible Answers: Boys; it was for toy cars, it showed only boys using the cars, it had loud music, bright colors, you hear a man's voice.

Possible Answers: (Teachers can guide this discussion to help children understand that advertisers often have stereotyped views of children's behaviors and interests – they might not realize or care that girls sometimes like to play with these kinds of toys too.)

Possible Answers: (Answers will vary.)



Commercial 2: *Jam 'n Glam Barbie*

Commercial 2 Introduction

Target Audience: Girls

Tricks Used: Music, shows “older” and excited girls happily playing with the dolls, shows many different Barbies, lots of accessories and clothes that don’t necessarily come with the dolls, lots of different colors of hair, extreme close-ups of the dolls, make the dolls look like they are moving



Commercial Analysis Questions & Answers

1) What was that commercial selling?

Possible Answers: *Jam 'n Glam Barbie*, Barbie dolls

2) What did the makers of the commercial want you to do?

Possible Answers: Buy the toy, ask an adult to buy you Barbies, especially *Jam 'n Glam Barbie* and the clothes and accessories that you can buy to go with her.

3) What kinds of tricks did the advertiser use to try to get your attention and to make the product look really good?

Possible Answers: Lots of different colors of hair, music, shows “older” and excited girls happily playing with the dolls, shows many different Barbies, lots of accessories and clothes that don’t necessarily come with the dolls, special visual effects, extreme close-ups of the dolls, make the dolls look like they are moving

4) What colors do you think you can make Barbie’s hair?

Possible Answer: Purple, pink, blue, others.

5) If you bought one of these special Barbies, how many different colors could her hair have? How do you know?

Possible Answer: Each Barbie can only have two different hair colors (disclaimer in commercial, or children may know because they have one).



Commercial 2: *Jam 'n Glam Barbie* Cont'd

Commercial 2: Second Viewing

Actually, each Barbie can only have two hair colors. I'm going to show you the commercial again, and this time pay close attention to what it says at the end. Also, look for the tricks that we've already talked about it, and see if you can find any more.

Play Commercial 2 again. Pause it as it goes along to point out some of the tricks.

Commercial Analysis Questions & Answers

1) Who noticed what they said at the end of the commercial?

Possible Answers: An announcer says very quickly that each Barbie has only two hair colors and that parts are sold separately.

2) Who do you think this commercial was made for, children or adults? What makes you think that?

Possible Answers: Children; it was for dolls, it showed children playing with the dolls, it had exciting toys and music.

3) Who do you think this commercial was made for, boys or girls or both? What makes you think that?

Possible Answers: Girls; it was for dolls, it showed only girls using the dolls, it had lots of pink and purple colors.

4) Why do you think they only showed girls playing with these toys? Do boys ever play with different kinds of toys like this? Why don't advertisers know that?

Possible Answers: (Teachers can guide this discussion to help children understand that advertisers often have stereotyped views of children's behaviors and interests – they might not realize or care that boys sometimes like to play with these kinds of toys too.)

5) Does anyone want to say anything else about the commercial?

Possible Answers: (Answers may vary.)

Action Steps

Brainstorm with the students. **So what can you do, now that you know all of this about TV commercials?** List suggestions on a chart, if possible. Ideas might include: being like a detective, looking for clues about what is really true about the product being advertised; talking about this with your families; noticing the difference between TV commercials and programs when watching TV; figuring out what TV commercials are selling and who their target audience is; looking for "tricks" used in TV commercials to make products look better than they might really be; checking out the products advertised when you see them in stores to see how the real product compares with the way it was advertised; think and talk about how advertising in TV commercials and on toy boxes uses different colors and other techniques to market toys to girls versus boys.

LESSON PLAN



Video Clips

Lesson 2: Commercials, Part 2

Lesson Objectives:

- Students will be able to identify the purpose of TV commercials.
- Students will practice recognizing some of the tricks used by advertisers to make products seem better than they really are.
- Students will be introduced to the term “target audience,” and will practice recognizing how children are targeted by advertisers and how boys and girls are targeted differently.

Vocabulary:

advertising, commercial, advertiser, tricks, target audience, special effects, sound effects

Media:

Commercial 1:
Mickey's Magix Cereal
(0:36)



Commercial 2:
Zyrofoam
(0:21)



Commercial 3:
Ritz S'Mores
(0:35)



Commercial 4:
Pop Tarts
(0:35)

Materials Needed:

- *Teacher Guide* for leading analysis and discussion
- Video clips of commercials (access online or via Kindergarten Lesson 2 digital media folder)
- LCD Projector and computer

Time: 25 minutes or longer, depending on discussion

Lesson Procedures:

1. Remind students what they learned in Lesson 1 about why commercials are made and the kinds of tricks used in commercials.
2. Play video clips of commercials, stopping after each one for questions and discussion (playing each commercial two or three times).
3. Lead follow-up discussion about the purpose of commercials, who the commercials are made for, and tricks used in commercials to make products seem better.
4. Pause the commercial as you show it the second or third time to point out specific tricks or other aspects of the commercial.
5. Discuss *Action Steps* that the children might take now that they have learned this information, especially at home or in stores and in discussions with their families.

TEACHER GUIDE

Lesson 2: Commercials, Part 2



Video Clips

1. Introduce the lesson. Content written in bold is to be said or asked by the teacher.

Lesson Introduction

Today we're going to talk more about TV commercials. Does anyone remember what we noticed when we watched the commercials last time?

Lead the students through a brief discussion, probing to see what they remember from Lesson 1 by using some of the questions from that lesson.

Let's look at some more commercials, and see if you can find some of the tricks they are using in each one.

2. Introduce Commercial 1.
3. Play Commercial 1 and lead class through the *Commercial Analysis Questions & Answers* in the *Teacher Guide*. Play Commercial 1 a second time and lead class through additional questions.
4. Read aloud statement provided about commercials.
5. Introduce Commercial 2 and ask questions provided in the *Commercial Analysis Questions & Answers* in the *Teacher Guide*.
6. Continue the same procedure for showing commercials and asking the students questions for Commercials 3 and 4, showing commercials twice each.
7. Discuss *Action Steps* the children can take at home or in stores based on what they have learned.

SPECIAL NOTES:

Try to keep the conversation focused on what is said and shown in the commercials, but without implying that it is right or wrong to have – or want to have – these toys or foods.



Commercial 1: *Mickey's Magix Cereal*

Commercial 1 Introduction

Target Audience: Children

Tricks Used: Cartoon characters like Mickey Mouse and Donald Duck (who children might really like already), music, sparkles coming out of the cereal, special effects



Commercial Analysis Questions & Answers

1) What was that commercial selling?

Possible Answers: Cereal, *Mickey's Magix Cereal*

2) What did the makers of the commercial want you to do?

Possible Answers: Buy the cereal, ask an adult to buy you *Mickey's Magix Cereal*

3) What did the advertiser do to try to get your attention and to make the product look really good?

Possible Answers: Use cartoon characters like Mickey Mouse and Donald Duck (who children might really like already), music, sparkles coming out of the cereal, special effects



Commercial 1: *Mickey's Magix Cereal* Cont'd

Commercial 1: Second Viewing

I'm going to show you the commercial again. Look for the tricks that we've already talked about it, and see if you can find any more.

Play Commercial 3 again. Pause it as it goes along to point out some of the tricks.

Commercial Analysis Questions & Answers

1) Did the advertiser do a good job of getting you interested in the cereal? Why?

Possible Answers: (Answers will vary.)

2) Who do you think this commercial was made for, children or adults? What makes you think that?

Possible Answers: Children; it used cartoon characters and special effects, only showed children eating the cereal, did not make any grown-up claims about the cereal (like how good it is for you)

3) Who do you think this commercial was made for, boys or girls or both? What makes you think that?

Possible Answers: Probably both boys and girls; these Disney characters are liked by both and cereal is usually for both boys and girls.

When advertisers make a commercial for a specific type of person, like adults or children or boys or girls, that is called the "target audience" for the commercial. The commercials we've been seeing all had children as the target audience, but some were made specifically for boys and some were made for girls and some were made to appeal to both boys and girls. If you watch commercials at home, you can see if you can figure out who the target audience is for the commercial. And you can also try to find the tricks they are using to get your attention and to get you to like and want to buy the product.



Commercial 2: Zyrofoam

Commercial 2 Introduction

Now let's watch another commercial. Watch it carefully and see what you notice about it.

Target Audience: Children

Tricks Used: Many different colors of foam, looks easy to use, shapes are made quickly, high speed photography, exciting music, enthusiastic kids, lots of accessories that are actually sold separately, sparkles and special visual effects



Continue analyzing the commercials by asking some or all of the same questions used for the previous commercial.

- 1) What was the commercial selling?
- 2) What did the advertiser want you to do?
- 3) What kinds of tricks did the commercial use to get your attention and to want to buy this product?
- 4) Who was the "target audience" for this commercial (who was this commercial made for)?

Play each commercial at least twice if possible, pausing it the second time through to identify specific tricks used to sell the product.



Commercial 3: Ritz S'Mores

Commercial 3

Target Audience: Children (and maybe adults)

Tricks Used: Crackers, marshmallows and chocolate jump out of the box, crackers made to look like sumo wrestlers, exciting action and fighting, sound effects and music, slogan "more mmm in the middle"





Commercial 4: *Pop Tarts*

Commercial 4

Target Audience: Children and Teens

Tricks Used: Goes from black and white to color, excited teens, dancing and lots of movement, bright colors, special sound and visual effects, cool looking chairs, sci-fi looking TV screen, excited voiceover, slogan “Pop Tarts Rule”



End the lesson by re-emphasizing the main points:

1) What do the makers of commercials always want you to do?

Possible Answers: Pay attention, like their product and want to buy it, ask an adult to buy their product for you

2) How do the commercials get you interested in the products?

Possible Answers: They use tricks, they make products look really fun, they use music and bright colors, etc.

Action Steps

Brainstorm with the children. **So what can you do, now that you know all of this about TV commercials?** List suggestions on a chart, if possible. Ideas might include:

- Being like a detective, looking for clues about what is really true about the product being advertised
- Talking about this with your families
- Noticing the difference between TV commercials and programs when watching TV
- Figuring out what TV commercials are selling and who their target audience is
- Looking for “tricks” used in TV commercials to make products look better than they might really be
- Checking out the products advertised when you see them in stores to see how the real product compares with the way it was advertised
- Thinking and talking about how advertising in TV commercials and on toy boxes uses different colors and other techniques to market toys to girls versus boys
-

Emphasize that children can identify “tricks” used in advertising and can think about these issues when they decide what products they like and when asking an adult to buy something for them.

LESSON PLAN

Lesson 3: The Food Groups

Lesson Objectives:

- Students will identify different food groups, including fruit, vegetables, grains, dairy, fat, and sugar.
- Students will place examples of foods into different food groups and will recognize that some foods contain things that fit into more than one food group.
- Students will summarize the importance of eating more foods from some food groups (grains, vegetables, fruits) and only a little from other food groups (especially fat and sugar).
- Students will practice healthy eating habits.

Vocabulary:

food group, grains, vegetables, fruit, dairy, oil, fat, sugar, protein

Materials Needed:

- *Teacher Guide* for leading analysis and discussion
- A *ChooseMyPlate* poster (available at <http://teamnutrition.usda.gov/myplate.html> or copy the *ChooseMyPlate* sheet available in the *Resources* at the end of this curriculum kit)
- Examples of foods and beverages from different food groups, which could be actual foods, plastic manipulatives, pictures from magazines, or empty food and beverage containers. Make sure to include:
 - Cereals (including low sugar and high sugar brands)
 - Bread, pasta, rice (including some whole grains)
 - Fruit, juice, fruit snacks, and fruit drinks
 - Vegetables
 - Milk, cheese, yogurt
 - Processed foods that contain high amounts of fat and/or sugar
- Large squares of construction paper representing the different food groups (in different sizes that reflect how much food we should eat from each group). If possible, use different colors that match the *ChooseMyPlate* food groups:
 - Large Squares (2' x 3'):
 - Grains (Orange)
 - Vegetables (Green)
 - Fruits (Red)
 - Medium Squares (1' x 2'):
 - Dairy (Blue)
 - Protein (Purple) **[see NOTE below]
 - Very Small Squares (6" x 6"):
 - Healthy Oils (Yellow)
 - Sugar & Unhealthy Fats (Beige) ** [see NOTE below]
- Snacks from the different food groups (such as celery or carrots, raisins, cheese sticks, and pretzels)

NOTES:

- While the Protein category is one food group that is on *ChooseMyPlate*, and may be used for the food sorting activity, it is a category that is very confusing for young children because it contains so many different types of foods (chicken, fish, eggs, nuts, beans, tofu) and it does not have a single word name like the other categories. It is also not used in any of the lessons in this kit besides this one. You may want to treat it as information that children are exposed to, but are not expected to fully understand at this age.
- Sugar and fats do not appear as a category on *ChooseMyPlate*, but instead are referenced in a note at the bottom. You could decide not to have a sheet of paper representing Sugar and Unhealthy Fat when doing the food sorting task, but that may be confusing to children. Since many of the subsequent lessons are about foods that have high amounts of sugar, we recommend having a category for it, but with a very small square to represent foods that should be seldom eaten.

Time:

25 minutes or longer, depending on discussion

Lesson Procedures:

1. Present the *Lesson Introduction* to the class, leading an initial discussion.
2. Place the squares of paper representing different food groups on the floor. Discuss different types of foods and food groups, while placing examples on the correct squares.
3. Using the examples of real or plastic foods and food containers, have children place those foods into the right food groups. When they are unsure, talk with them about how they could decide. If children put an item into the wrong group, explain where it should really go and talk about why it was confusing.
4. Have the children look at the *ChooseMyPlate* poster to find where each of these food groups are located. Explain why sugar and unhealthy fats do not appear on the diagram at all, and reinforce the idea that those foods should be eaten rarely or in very small amounts.
5. Lead a follow-up discussion about the foods that fit into more than one group (which includes many foods advertised on television, like Kraft Macaroni & Cheese and sugared cereals).
7. Discuss *Action Steps* the children might take now that they have learned this information, especially at home or in stores and in discussions with their families.
6. (Optional) End with a book or video about food groups or *ChooseMyPlate*. See *Resources* at the end of this kit for suggestions.

TEACHER GUIDE

Lesson 3: The Food Groups

1. Introduce the lesson. Content written in bold is to be said or asked by the teacher.

Lesson Introduction

Before starting the lesson, make sure you have the food examples, food group squares, and other materials you need (see Materials List in the *Lesson Plan*). Have a picture or poster of *ChooseMyPlate* on the wall where children can see it.

Today we're going to talk about different food groups. Who can tell the name of a kind of food or the name of a food group? What other kinds of foods are there?

Lead the students through a discussion about different kinds of food and beverages, clarifying what the different groups of foods are and asking children to speculate about what kinds of foods might fall into each group. Point out the picture or poster of *ChooseMyPlate*, and talk about the different food groups that are included.

2. Lay out the food group squares on the floor, and put out the box of sample plastic or real foods and food containers. Select one food representing each of the food group squares, and then ask children to identify it and decide in which food group it belongs.
3. Point out the different sizes of the food group squares and discuss “healthy” and “unhealthy” foods and drinks using the *Discussion Questions & Answers Teacher Guide*.
4. Have the students work with the other examples of foods and food containers to place each one in the food group where it fits best. Discuss examples of foods that may fit into more than one food group as they come up, helping students think through their decisions.
5. Using the *Discussion Questions & Answers Teacher Guide*, discuss foods that might be confusing because of their names or the way they are shown in advertising.
6. Provide a snack representing food and beverages representing at least four of the main food groups. As the students eat their snack, recap the lesson using the *Discussion Questions & Answers Teacher Guide*.
7. Discuss *Action Steps* the children can take at home or in stores based on what they have learned.
8. (Optional) Read a story or children’s book about healthy food choices (see *Resources* at the end of the kit for suggestions).

SPECIAL NOTE:

In talking about different foods, it’s important not to make value judgments about different kinds of foods (describe them as “good” or “bad”) since the children’s parents may buy and eat those foods at home. Instead, focus on accuracy (e.g., What is really fruit?), facts (e.g., How much sugar is in that?), and consequences of eating – or not eating – certain kinds of foods.

Discussion Questions & Answers

1) Who has seen a food groups diagram, like *ChooseMyPlate*? What kinds of food groups does it show?

Possible Answers: Grains, vegetables, fruits, dairy, meats and beans, oils, water (they may give specific foods like milk, and, if so, probe to help them decide what food group it should be in).

2) These different squares of paper on the floor are the same colors as you see in this diagram. Can you match each colored paper with where it is on the food pyramid?

Possible Answers: Red is fruit, orange is bread and cereal, blue is milk and cheese, etc.

3) This green piece of paper is really big because we should eat a lot of this kind of food. What kind of food is it? Can you find the category on *ChooseMyPlate*? What other foods should we eat a lot of? Why?

Possible Answers: The green is for vegetables, like carrots, tomatoes, celery, green beans, red peppers, etc. You should also eat a lot of grains and fruit.

4) This yellow piece of paper is really small because we should only eat a little of this kind of food. It is not on *ChooseMyPlate*, but it's something that we need to eat a little of each day, but not very much. It's usually yellow or golden in color. Can anyone guess what it is?

Possible Answers: It is oil. (Explain about different kinds of healthy oils, like olive oil, or canola oil; distinguish that from fats found in butter, margarine and fried foods.)

5) [Hold up the beige paper.] This color represents foods and drinks that aren't even on the food groups diagram because they're not very healthy and we shouldn't eat them very often. You see them advertised on TV a lot. What do you think they might be?

Possible Answers: Sugar, candy, ice cream, gum, soda, fats, butter, fried things.

Activity 1

Let's see if we can figure out what food group each of these foods should go in. What about this apple? How about this spaghetti? What about this glass of milk? How about this green pepper? What about this piece of ham? What about this candy bar?

Now let's see if you can figure out where the rest of these foods go in the food groups.

You may have the students work in groups, with each group finding foods to go in one of the food groups, or have a few students come up to get foods at the same time.

Discussion Questions & Answers

1) Which foods were the hardest to figure out? Why?

Possible Answers: Things that have a lot of sugar in them but are not candy or all sugar, things that have more than one kind of food in it (discuss how to decide and where the food should go – which might be more than one place; especially clarify that “fruit” snacks and drinks have hardly any fruit, so they shouldn't go in the fruit group).

2) Why do we want to eat healthy foods?

Possible Answers: We need them for energy, we need vitamins and minerals to keep our skin and eyes and teeth healthy, they help us think better, we need them to grow and to be strong.

3) Why should we try not to eat very many unhealthy foods?

Possible Answers: It could make us sick, we would not have any energy, we might get cavities in our teeth, we might gain too much weight, it might make us feel funny.

4) There's one important drink that's not on *ChooseMyPlate*, but we should drink a lot of it every day. Can anybody guess what it is?

Answer: Water.

Activity 2

Now we're going to have some special snacks that come from the different food groups. See if you can figure out which group each of the things you are eating and drinking would go it. You can do this at home too, whenever you eat breakfast or snacks or dinner.

(Optional) Read a book aloud during their snack time. Choose a book about healthy eating or food groups. (See *Resources* at the end of this kit for suggestions.)

Summary Questions & Answers

1) What are the five food groups?

Possible Answers: Grains, Vegetables, Fruit, Dairy, Protein (Meats & Beans)

2) How does *ChooseMyPlate* help us to be more healthy?

Possible Answers: By helping us remember what kinds of foods to eat

3) From which food groups should we eat the most?

Possible Answers: Grains, fruits, vegetables

4) From which food groups should we eat the least?

Possible Answers: Unhealthy fats and sugars

Action Steps

Brainstorm with the children. **So what can you do, now that you know all of this about food groups?** List suggestions on a chart, if possible. Ideas might include:

- Being like a detective, looking for clues about what is really true about the product being advertised
- Talking about all of this with our families
- Thinking about the things we eat and drink and what food groups they belong to
- Thinking about how much we should eat of different foods each day
- Choosing foods that are healthy for us to eat and portion sizes that are healthy
- Noticing when fats and sugars are added to foods in ways that make them less healthy to eat and drink
- Noticing when restaurants or TV commercials show or give out portions that are way more than we should really eat or drink.

LESSON PLAN

Lesson 4: Cereal Commercials

**Lesson Objectives:**

- Students will identify the components of a “complete breakfast.”
- Students will recognize some of the tricks used by advertisers in cereal commercials.
- Students will identify clues so they will know when a cereal probably contains a lot of sugar.

Vocabulary:

food groups, grains, complete breakfast shot, fruit, sugar, teaspoon, gram, serving

Media:

Commercial 1:
Honeycomb
(0:35)



Clip from *Buy Me That!*:
Candy for Breakfast
(1:42)



Commercial 2:
Lucky Charms
(0:35)

Materials Needed:

- *Teacher Guide* for leading analysis and discussion
- Video clips of commercials (access online or via Kindergarten Lesson 4 digital media folder)
- LCD Projector and computer
- Placemat and bowl
- Real or plastic foods representing a complete breakfast
- Poster of food groups or *ChooseMyPlate* (see Materials Needed for Lesson 3)
- Empty, flattened boxes of different types of cereals (some that are low in sugar, like Cheerios or Kix, and some that have a lot of sugar – especially ones that are brightly colored, chocolate flavored, contain marshmallows, have cartoon characters on the box, or sparkles on the food); these can be brand name cereals or store brands and less familiar cereals – it is great to have a variety
- Copies of the *How Much Sugar?* Chart (included in the *Resources* at the end of this kit)

Time: 30-40 minutes

Lesson Procedures:

1. Get real or plastic foods to use in the lesson and empty, flattened boxes of as many different cereals as possible; many of these can be small size cereal boxes that come in multi-cereal packs or found in the school cafeteria. As long as they have side panels with nutritional information on them, you can include them.
2. Present the *Lesson Introduction* to the class, leading an initial discussion.
3. Play the first commercial, following the instructions for analysis and discussion (showing the commercial twice).
4. Play the excerpt from the video *Buy Me That! Candy for Breakfast* about sugared cereals, and discuss what the children learned from the video.
5. Show several large, flattened cereal boxes and lead a discussion about clues students can use to figure out how much sugar is in different cereals.
6. On one of the large boxes, show the side panel where information about grams of sugar is given. Present the *How Much Sugar?* chart and show students how they can look up the number of grams of sugar (with help from adults) to see if the cereal contains a little or a lot of it.
7. Divide the class into pairs or small groups, giving each group several cereal boxes and a copy of the *How Much Sugar?* chart. Provide instructions for what students should look for and decide.
8. Bring the class back together to discuss what the groups found out, reinforcing the clues students can use and how they can ask an adult to help them figure out how much sugar is in cereals.
9. Play the second commercial, following instructions for analysis and discussion (showing the commercial at least twice).
10. Lead a discussion about different types of breakfasts, and what types of foods are important to include in a complete or balanced (healthy) breakfast.
11. Discuss *Action Steps* that the children might take now that they have learned this information, especially at home or in stores and in discussions with their families.

TEACHER GUIDE

Lesson 4: Cereal Commercials



Video Clips

1. Introduce the lesson. Content written in bold is to be said or asked by the teacher.

Lesson Introduction

Lead the students through a discussion about different food groups, especially fruits, grains, dairy, and sugar. You can use a *ChooseMyPlate* poster or just pictures of different food groups. It is a good idea to bring in real or plastic examples of different types of foods, especially the kinds of things that are typically eaten or shown in commercials depicting breakfast (bowls of cereal, toast, bagel or muffin, a glass of juice, fruit, a glass of milk, eggs, rice, tortillas). Help the children understand what the “grains” food group consists of (breads, pasta, rice, cereals, etc.) and, if possible, describe the difference between whole grains and white or processed (low nutrition) grains.

Put a placemat on the floor or table, and with the children’s help build several different examples of complete, healthy, balanced breakfasts. Talk about the facts that our bodies need energy from different types of foods and drinks, including fruits and grains. Explain that some cereals and some foods and drinks that are called as “fruit” actually have a lot of added sugar.

Now we’re going to talk about a common breakfast food, cereal, and the TV commercials for children’s cereals. How many of you had cereal for breakfast today? How many of you like cereal? There are a lot of different brands of cereal, and the companies really want you to buy their cereals, so they sometimes try to influence you by showing you commercials to make their cereals look really good and fun. Let’s watch one of those commercials.

2. Introduce Commercial 1.
3. Play Commercial 1 and lead the class through the *Commercial Analysis Questions & Answers* in the *Teacher Guide*. Play Commercial 1 a second time and lead class through additional questions.
4. Play the *Buy Me That: Candy for Breakfast* video clip and lead class through the *Video Clip Questions & Answers* in the *Teacher Guide*.
5. Introduce the *How Much Sugar?* chart. Show and discuss examples of cereal boxes, using the description in Activity 1.
6. Play Commercial 2 and lead the class through *Commercial Analysis Questions & Answers* in the *Teacher Guide*. Play Commercial 2 a second time using the additional questions.
7. Discuss *Action Steps* the children can take at home or in stores based on what they have learned.

SPECIAL NOTES:

It is important that the teacher not stress too strongly that eating heavily sugared cereals is *bad* or *wrong* (since the children may have parents who buy and eat that type of cereal), but instead to emphasize the importance of knowing what you are eating, the pitfalls in eating a lot of heavily sugared foods for breakfast, and the ability to make healthy choices.

**Commercial 1: *Honeycomb*****Commercial 1
Introduction**

Target Audience: Children

Tricks Used: Story with an exciting chase, boy who changes into a Honeycomb creature, humor, gigantic cereal pieces, sound effects, special visual effects

**Commercial Analysis Questions & Answers**

1) What did the makers of the commercial want you to do?

Possible Answers: Buy the cereal, ask an adult to buy you *Honeycomb* cereal.

2) What kind of tricks did the advertiser use to try to get your attention and to make the product look really good?

Possible Answers: Story with an exciting chase scene, boy who changes into a Honeycomb creature, funny parts that might make you laugh, shows gigantic pieces of cereal, sound effects.

3) What food group do cereals belong to? Should some cereals fall into more than one food group?

Possible Answers: Mostly grains, but some should belong partly in the sugar group because they have a lot of added sugar.

4) Honeycomb has a special kind of sugar called honey. There are lots of different kinds of sugar that are put into some of the foods we eat. Do we need to eat a lot of sugar in order to eat a healthy breakfast?

Possible Answers: No, sugar is not something that we NEED to eat, so it is not part of a complete healthy breakfast.



Commercial 1: *Honeycomb* Cont'd

Commercial 1: Second Viewing

I'm going to show you the commercial again. Look for the kinds of tricks that we just talked about and pay special attention to the end. There's something that cereal makers usually say in the commercials that also has a trick. They want you to think that you need to eat a lot of their cereal to have a complete healthy breakfast.

Play Commercial 1 again. Pause it as it goes along to point out some of the tricks. Pause at the end when they say "part of a complete breakfast" and show the other foods with the cereal.

Commercial Analysis Questions & Answers

1) What did the announcer say when they showed the food?

Possible Answers: "Part of a complete breakfast."

2) What other foods did they show besides the cereal?

Possible Answers: Fruit, juice, milk, toast.
(Point out which food group each belongs to.)

3) Could you have a complete healthy breakfast if you just ate those other things and didn't have the cereal?

Possible Answers: Yes/no.

4) Could you have a different cereal instead, along with those other things?

Possible Answers: Yes, any other cereal included with those other breakfast items would be "part of a complete breakfast."

5) Could you have just the cereal with some milk on it – would that be a complete, healthy breakfast? Why not?

Possible Answers: No, because it is not balanced, there is no fruit or protein; therefore, it is not complete.



Buy Me That: Candy for Breakfast?

Video Clip Introduction

Buy Me That: Candy for Breakfast?

Summary: Discussion and demonstrations to show how much sugar is in most children's cereals, and what foods are really necessary for a complete, healthy breakfast.



Video Clip Questions & Answers

1) What did he say about cereals?

Possible Answers: Many of them have lots of sugar, you do not need to have all that sugar, eating those cereals for breakfast is like eating candy

2) Why don't we want to be eating a lot of sugar?

Possible Answers: Sugar fills you up so you might not have room for the foods that you really need to be healthy, sugar can make cavities in your teeth

3) What do you need to have for a healthy, balanced breakfast?

Possible Answers: Lots of different foods, usually some kind of grain – like cereal, oatmeal, toast, a bagel, muffin, rice, or tortilla - and some kind of fruit or juice, and maybe milk in a glass or on your cereal, and sometimes people have eggs or tomatoes or potatoes

4) What does "part of a complete breakfast" mean?

Possible Answer: It is not enough just to have the cereal, you need to have other foods too in order to have a complete healthy breakfast.

5) Some cereals are very healthy, and don't have much sugar in them. Does anybody know a cereal that doesn't have a lot of sugar in it?

Possible Answer: Cheerios, Kix, Rice Krispies, oatmeal, etc.

6) Some cereals have a lot of sugar in them, like the ones that they showed in the video. How can we tell which cereals have a lot of sugar?

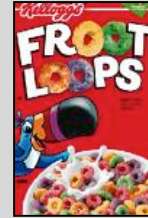
Possible Answer: You can ask someone to look on the side of the box to see where it tells how much sugar there is, if it is chocolate flavored, has marshmallows in it, is brightly colored, has "frosted" in the name, they show sparkles of sugar on the box, has funny cartoon characters

Activity 1

Have at least three or four large, flattened cereal boxes to show during the discussion, including one that is low in sugar and ones that have different types of clues that they contain a lot of sugar.

SPECIAL NOTE: This activity may be modified depending on the level of the class and the amount of time available. For example, you may want to leave out the part about grams of sugar if you feel that would be too difficult for the students to understand.

Hold up the first box. **What kind of cereal is this? What do you think, does it have a lot of sugar or only a little bit of sugar? What makes you think that?** Probe for additional answers, and point out the clues on the box that might help children make that judgment, including: words in the product name (like “frosted,” “honey”), ingredients in the cereal (like chocolate or candy flavors, marshmallows), images of sugar (like frosting on the cereal, sparkles that look like sugar, dripping honey), cartoon characters, brightly colored cereal pieces. When showing the low sugar cereal (e.g., Cheerios), point out the absence of these clues and emphasis on the plain cereal that is grain colored (maybe with some real fruit on top of it).



There's another way that you can tell how much sugar there is in a cereal. Show the side panel of one of the boxes. **On the side of each box, they give information about what ingredients are in the cereal and about other things related to nutrition. One thing they have to give is how many grams of sugar there are in one serving of the cereal. Grams are kind of like teaspoons, like the man showed in the video we just saw. Remember he said that there were 67 teaspoons of sugar in the whole box? Here on the package, they show how much sugar is in one bowl of cereal, and they use grams. I've got a chart that will help us figure out whether the grams of sugar in one bowl of cereal is a lot or only a little.** Show the *How Much Sugar?* chart, pointing out the numbers of grams that represent a little, some, a lot, and a whole lot. **Let's see what the chart would tell us for the cereals we were just looking at.** Read off the number of grams of sugar for each of the cereals, asking the children to say which category each one would fall into.

Now, I'm going to give you a chance to see if you can figure out whether a cereal has a lot of sugar in it or not. I have some more cereal boxes here, and I'm going to give some to each of you to look at, so you can see what you think. Divide the class into pairs or small groups, giving each group several cereal boxes and a copy of the *How Much Sugar?* chart. Make sure to include some cereals with a lot of sugar and some with only a little. Move around the room, helping each group find the grams of sugar on the side and confirming or discussing the conclusions they reached for each cereal.

Bring the children back together in one group, asking each group to report on one cereal they studied and what they concluded, including what their evidence was for their answer. **So some cereals have a whole lot of sugar and some only have a little sugar, and there are lots of ways we can tell by looking at the box.**

Now let's watch another cereal commercial and see if we can tell whether the cereal might have a lot of sugar in it by the box they show and other things that we see and hear in the commercial. Also, watch for the part when the announcer says something about a “complete breakfast” and see if you notice what else they show besides the cereal.



Commercial 2: *Lucky Charms*

Target Audience: Children

Tricks Used: Funny leprechaun, bright colors, catchy music, a huge bowl of cereal

Commercial 2: Introduction



Commercial Analysis Questions & Answers

1) What are they trying to get you to do?

Possible Answers: Buy the cereal, ask an adult to buy you *Lucky Charms*

2) Do you think this cereal has a lot of sugar in it? What makes you think that?

Possible Answers: It has marshmallows in it, which are made of sugar.

3) What food group would this belong in?

Possible Answers: Mostly grains, but some should belong partly in the sugar group because it has a lot of added sugar.

4) What other kinds of tricks did they use to get your attention and to make the product look really good?

Possible Answers: The funny leprechaun, the children chasing him, the catchy music and bright colors, the huge bowl of cereal



Commercial 2: *Lucky Charms*

Commercial 2: Second Viewing

Who saw the part where they said “part of a complete breakfast?”

Play Commercial 2 again. Pause it as it goes along to point out some of the tricks, and pause it on the “complete breakfast shot” to point out the foods shown.

Commercial Analysis Questions & Answers

1) What foods did they show besides the cereal?

Possible Answer: Muffin, orange, glass of milk

2) Do you need to have this sugary cereal to have a complete breakfast, or could you just have the other foods without the cereal?

Possible Answer: You can have the other food without the cereal and still have a complete breakfast

3) Look at how big the bowl of cereal is compared to the other foods. Is that how much cereal you should eat for breakfast? Why do you think they show such a big bowl of cereal?

Possible Answer: Because they want you to buy the cereal, they want to sell a lot of it, so they want you to think the cereal is more important than the other foods.

Discuss anything else about the issues of breakfast and sugar. If you have time, talk about other things they say when they show the “complete breakfast shot” – sometimes they say things like “a marshmallowy sweet part of this good breakfast” or “a good part of this TV breakfast.”

Action Steps

Brainstorm with the children. **So what can you do, now that you know all of this about cereals, sugar and cereal commercials?** List suggestions on a chart, if possible. Ideas might include: being like a detective, looking for clues about what is really true about the product being advertised; talking about all of this with our families; figuring out how much sugar is in different cereals we see at the store, in TV commercials, or that we have at home by looking at the images and words on the box, or asking an adult to look on the side panel; put up a copy of the *How Much Sugar?* chart at home to check out different foods that we eat; paying attention to the “complete breakfast” messages in TV commercials for cereals, and noticing the other foods that are shown besides the cereal; finding tricks used in cereal commercials to make the cereals seem really fun and exciting.

LESSON PLAN



Video Clips

Lesson 5: Fruit and Juice vs. “Fruit” Snacks and “Fruit” Drinks

Lesson Objectives:

- Students will begin to discriminate between real fruit and fruit snacks and between real juice and fruit drinks.
- Students will identify 100% juice or 100% fruit on product packaging.
- Students will understand that just because the packaging or a commercial shows fruit does not mean the product is all fruit or all juice.
- Students will recognize some of the tricks used in TV commercials that imply foods and drinks have fruit in them when they really have little or no fruit in them.

Vocabulary:

fruit, juice, drink, beverage, snack, 100%, product

Media:



Clip from *Buy Me That: Real Fruit or Candy?*
(2:59)



Commercial 1:
Gushers
(0:35)



Clip from *Buy Me That: Real Juice? What's Really in Them?*
(1:18)



Commercial 2:
Tang
(0:20)

Materials Needed:

- *Teacher Guide* for leading analysis and discussion
- Video clips of commercials (access online or via Kindergarten Lesson 5 digital media folder)
- LCD Projector and computer
- Examples of real or plastic fruit (apple, banana, grapes, etc.), including some less familiar fruits (e.g., kiwi, mango, kumquat), plus some cans of fruit and some dried fruits
- Empty packages or containers of snacks and beverages that imply or actually do contain fruit or fruit juice, and have information about the percentage of fruit or juice on the package (e.g., 100% juice, 5% fruit, “contains no juice”); these can be brand name products and less familiar products – it is great to have some of both. It is especially useful to have pictures of fruit on the package or a product name that includes fruit (e.g., Cherry 7-Up, Froot Loops, Fruit by the Foot), but that actually contain little or no fruit, and beverage containers that say things like “100% Vitamin C” or “100% Natural Flavors” but actually have little or no fruit juice
- Copies of the *How Much Fruit?* chart (included in the *Resources* at the end of this kit)

Time: 30-40 minutes

Lesson Procedures:

1. Get real or plastic foods to use in the lesson, and empty packages or containers of as many different “fruit” products and beverages as possible; many of these can be small size containers like juice boxes or pouches, and may be able to be collected from childrens’ lunches or the school cafeteria. Make sure that some of the larger packages or containers have nutritional information panels with ingredients lists on them for the large group discussion.
2. Present the *Lesson Introduction* to the class, leading an initial discussion using examples of real or plastic fruit, canned fruit and dried fruit to show.
3. Play the excerpt from the video *Buy Me That!* about fruit snacks versus real fruit, and discuss what the children learned from the video.
4. Play the first commercial, following instructions for analysis and discussion (showing the commercial twice).
5. Play the excerpt from the video *Buy Me That!* about fruit juices versus fruit drinks or beverages that only contain a little fruit.
6. Play the second commercial, following instructions for analysis and discussion.
7. Discuss the term “100% juice” and how that relates to how much fruit is in the product. Introduce the *How Much Fruit?* chart, showing how little 5%-15% is in comparison to 100% of a glass.
8. Show several examples of beverage containers and lead a discussion about how to figure out how much juice is in them, pointing out where it says the statement about the percentage of fruit or juice on the container. Discuss the variations that might appear on a container using the 100% term, and why that is not the same thing as 100% juice.
9. Divide the class into pairs or small groups, giving each group several beverage containers and a copy of the *How Much Fruit?* chart, giving instructions on what students should look for and decide.
10. Bring the class back together to discuss what the groups found out, reinforcing how to interpret the message about juice on the containers and how that relates to fruit (including the point that whole fruits that you buy or pick do not say “100% juice” or “100% fruit,” but are still all fruit).
11. Discuss *Action Steps* that the children might take now that they have learned this information, especially at home or in stores and in discussions with their families.

TEACHER GUIDE



Video Clips

Lesson 5: Fruit Snacks vs. Real Fruit

1. Introduce the lesson. Content written in bold is to be said or asked by the teacher.

Lesson Introduction

Remind the students about different food groups, especially fruits. You can use a food groups poster, a *ChooseMyPlate* diagram, or just pictures of fruits. You should use examples of different kinds of fruits and fruit juices (as plastic foods, or by bringing in real fruits and bottles of juices).

Explain what “fruit” is.

Can anybody give me an example of something that is a fruit? (Brainstorm as many examples as possible, gently correcting students if they name something that isn’t really fruit.)

A fruit is something that is grown outside, on a tree (like apples or peaches or oranges) or on a bush (like blueberries) or on plants (like strawberries). Sometimes fruit is squeezed to make juice. Can anybody name a fruit that you can squeeze to make juice? (Brainstorm as many answers as possible.) **Sometimes fruit is dried. Can anybody give me an example of dried fruit?** (Brainstorm as many examples as possible, including raisins and dried apples.)

Now we’re going to talk about TV commercials that talk about or show fruit. Have you ever seen a commercial for any of the kinds of fruit or juices that we just talked about? But sometimes they show foods or drinks that they pretend are made out of fruit, when really there is only a little fruit in them, or maybe not any fruit at all.

2. Introduce Video Clip 1.
3. Play Video Clip 1 and lead class through the *Discussion Questions & Answers* in the *Teacher Guide*.
4. Introduce Commercial 1. Play Commercial 1 and lead class through the *Commercial Analysis Questions & Answers* in the *Teacher Guide*.
5. Introduce Video Clip 2. Play Video Clip 2 and lead class through the *Discussion Questions & Answers* in the *Teacher Guide*.
6. Introduce Commercial 2. Play Commercial 2 and lead class through the *Commercial Analysis Questions & Answers* in the *Teacher Guide*.
7. (Optional, but recommended) Introduce the *How Much Fruit?* chart and show and discuss examples of beverage containers, using the description in Activity 1.
8. Discuss *Action Steps* the children can take at home or in stores based on what they have learned.

SPECIAL NOTES:

It is important that the teacher not stress too strongly that eating fruit snacks or fruit drinks is *bad* or *wrong* (since the children may have parents who buy and eat those things), but instead to emphasize the importance of knowing what you are eating, the pitfalls in eating a lot of sugar, and the ability to make healthy choices.



Buy Me That: Fruit Snacks - Real Fruit or Candy?

Video Clip 1

First we're going to watch a short video that is about foods and snacks that might seem like they are fruit, but they're really not.

Summary: Explores the difference between real fruit and snack products that pretend they have real fruit but actually contain very little or no fruit, and how to tell the difference



Video Clip Questions & Answers

1) What did they say about fruit snacks? Are they the same thing as eating real fruit?

Possible Answers: Fruit snacks sometimes pretend they are fruit, but they are not.

2) If those fruit snacks are not made of only fruit, what else do you think is in them?

Possible Answers: Sugar, flavoring, fake colors

3) How could you tell if a product is only made of fruit or if it only has a little bit of fruit, or not fruit?

Possible Answers: Real fruit usually does not come in a package, or does not have a special name, look for sugar in the list of ingredients, look for words like "snack"



Commercial 1: *Gushers*

Commercial 1

Let's watch a commercial and see if you think this product made totally of fruit or whether it might not have very much fruit in it.

Target Audience: Everyone

Tricks Used: Kids' heads turning into fruit, sound effects, contrast with punk teenagers, upbeat music, escalators



Commercial Analysis Questions & Answers

1) What are they trying to get you to do?

Possible Answer: Buy the snack, ask an adult to buy you *Gushers*

2) Do you think this product has a lot of sugar in it? What makes you think that?

Possible Answer: (Answers will vary.)

3) Do Gushers really contain fruit? Did the commercial mention fruit?

Possible Answer: (Answers will vary.) Yes, the commercial used the words "fruit" and "fruity."

4) What did it say or show to make people think there might be a lot of fruit in the product?

Possible Answer: Showed kids' heads turning into fruit, using the words "fruit" and "fruity"

Watch the commercial a second time, if possible, and look at the ways they made the product seem like it had a lot of fruit in it.



Buy Me That: Real Juice? What's Really in Them?

Video Clip 2

Now we're going to talk about fruit juices and TV commercials for products that are really juice and those for products that pretend to be juice, but they really aren't. Let's watch this video about them.

Summary: Fruit drinks and beverages that look and seem like they are fruit juice, but they are really not; a beverage has to say 100% juice in order to be real fruit



Video Clip Questions & Answers

- 1) What did they say about fruit drinks? What does a package or bottle have to say so you know that it's only made of real fruit?
- 2) If those fruit drinks are not made of only fruit, what else do you think is in them?
- 3) If there are pictures of fruit on the package does that mean that it's all fruit juice?
- 4) What if it says "100% Vitamin C" on it – is that the same thing as 100% Juice?

Possible Answers: 100% juice

Possible Answers: Sugar and water, fake colors, artificial flavors

Possible Answers: No, it has to say 100% juice.

Possible Answers: No, it's not the same thing. They can add vitamins, but the drink still might be mostly made of sugar and water.



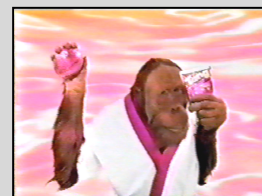
Commercial 2: Tang

Commercial 2

Let's watch another commercial and see if you think this product is all juice or whether it might only have a little bit of fruit juice, or none at all.

Target Audience: Children

Tricks Used: Ape swinging around, oversized fruits, sound effects, ape punching cherry to remove pit, close-up of Tang, ape head, slogan "it's a kick in a glass"





Commercial 2 Cont'd: *Tang*

Commercial Analysis Questions & Answers

1) What are they trying to get you to do?

Possible Answer: Buy the drink, ask an adult to buy you *Tang*.

2) Do you think that *Tang* is all juice, or that it has a lot of sugar in it? What makes you think that?

Possible Answer: No, it didn't say 100% juice.

3) What did it say or show to make people think there might be a lot of fruit in *Tang*?

Possible Answer: Showed fruit in the commercial, like cherries and oranges and pineapple

Activity 1

Have at least three or four large beverage containers to show during the discussion, including one that says "100% juice," one that says 5% or a small percentage of juice, and one that contains no juice.

SPECIAL NOTE: This activity may be modified depending on the level of the class and amount of time available. For example, you may want to leave out the part about misleading phrases associated with 100% (Vitamin C, natural flavors) and/or the discussion of the ingredients in the product if you feel that will be too difficult for the students to understand.



In the video we saw, they talked about a lot of different numbers and percentages of juice. What percentage does something have to have in order to be all juice? Reinforce the importance of the term "100% juice." **When it says 100% juice, then it means that the drink is made up of all fruit that has been squeezed and then they might add some water to it. So if it says 100%**

juice, does it have a lot of fruit in it or only a little bit? Clarify and discuss that this would mean there is a lot of fruit in the drink. **And if it says "contains no juice," then how much fruit is in it?** Confirm that this would mean there is no fruit in it. **But what if it says 5%, 10%, or 15% juice? That's a little confusing, but I have a chart that can help us see how much fruit that really is.** Show the *How Much Fruit?* chart and point out how much of the glass is filled with fruit in each case. Discuss what the rest might be made up of – including added sugar, artificial flavors and colors.



Hold up the first beverage container, maybe having one or two students come up to take a look at it more closely. **What's the name of this product? What do you think, does it have a lot of juice or only a little bit of juice? What makes you think that?**

Point out the statement about the percentage of juice, which may appear in several places on the container. Find where that percentage would show up on the *How Much Fruit?* chart. Repeat with the other containers, discussing the different wording and clarifying that “100% Vitamin C” or “100% natural flavors” is not the same thing as “100% juice.”

Show the ingredients list on one of the containers that has very little or no juice. **On the side of each container, they give information about what ingredients are in the drink and about other things related to nutrition. When they list the ingredients, the things that they put first are the things that the product is mostly made of. So, let’s read the ingredients on this one.** As you read the ingredients, you might comment or clarify some of them (e.g., high fructose corn syrup as another word for “sugar”). Pause when you get to any reference to actual fruit and clarify that because it comes very late in the list, that is another way to tell that there is not very much fruit in this product.

Now I’m going to give you a chance to see if you can figure out whether a product has a lot of fruit in it or not. I have some drink containers here, and I’m going to give some to each of you to look at and see what you think. Divide the class into pairs or small groups, giving each group several containers and a copy of the *How Much Fruit?* chart. Make sure to include some beverages with a lot of juice and some with only a little or no juice. Move around the room, encouraging children to place the containers on the chart and confirming or discussing the conclusions they reached for each beverage.

Bring the children back together into one group, asking each group to report on one beverage they studied and what they concluded, including what their evidence was for their answer. Be sure to make the connection between how much juice is in a product and what that means about how much fruit is in the product.

So do all foods and drinks that have a lot of fruit in them say 100% juice? What about this apple? (Hold up the example at the beginning of the lesson.) **Does this say 100% juice? But it has a lot of fruit in it because it *is* a fruit. And you can squeeze your own juice from oranges or lemons, or even make apple cider by squeezing apples – and that would be 100% juice even if it didn’t say that on your glass.**

Action Steps

Brainstorm with the children. **So what can you do, now that you know all of this about fruit juices shown in TV commercials?** List suggestions on a chart, if possible. Ideas might include:

- Being like a detective, looking for clues about what is really true about the product being advertised
- Talking about all of this with our families
- Figuring out how much sugar is in different cereals we see at the store, in TV commercials, or that we have at home by looking at the images and words on the box, or by asking an adult to look on the side panel
- Put up a copy of the *How Much Sugar?* chart at home to check out different foods that we eat
- Pay attention to the “complete breakfast” messages in TV commercials for cereals, and notice the other foods that are shown besides the cereal
- Finding tricks used in cereal commercials to make the cereals seem really fun and exciting

TEACHER GUIDE

More Commercials for Practice



Video Clips

Note to Teachers

The best way for students to learn how to think critically about advertising messages, including misleading messages about fruit and nutrition, is practice! These additional commercials can be used for students to practice identifying the tricks used to make products look fun, times toys are shown doing things they really can't do, foods and beverages that seem like they contain a lot of fruit when they really don't, and the "complete breakfast shot" with cereals that contain a lot of sugar. Students can also identify the target audience (boys, girls, or both), what actually comes with the toy when you buy it ("parts sold separately"), toys that are made to look bigger than they really are, and huge portions of cereal. We recommend showing each commercial at least twice to give students the chance to thoroughly analyze the messages, including verbal statements and disclaimers.

****Access to all media clips listed here can be found online or via the Kindergarten More Commercials digital media folder****

Commercial 1: *My Little Pony*

(:35 seconds)

Useful for Practicing: target audience, tricks, toys doing things they can't really do, disclaimers.

Target Audience: Girls

Tricks Used: catchy song, dancing pony that looks like the toy, lots of ponies and accessories, laughing girls, slow motion, animation and special effects.

Commercial 1

Commercial 2: *Fly Wheels*

(:35 seconds)

Useful for Practicing: target audience, tricks, size of the toy, toy doing things it can't really do, disclaimers.

Target Audience: Boys

Tricks Used: exciting music and action, fly wheels going high up in the air in skateboard park, through mud, over airplane, stop motion, slow motion, special effects, excited voiceover, boy's voice saying "wow!"

Commercial 2



**Commercial 3: Trollz**

(:35 seconds)

Useful for Practicing: target audience, tricks, disclaimers.**Target Audience:** Girls**Tricks Used:** sparkles in the air around the trollz, special effects and animation, catchy song, words like “totally trollicious hair” and “magical makeover,” lots of different trolls with different hair colors, excited girl’s voiceover.**Commercial 3****Commercial 4: Snard Bard**

(:20 seconds)

Useful for Practicing: tricks, toys doing things they can’t really do.**Target Audience:** Children**Tricks Used:** animated funny looking “snard” acting like the toy, special effects, huge belch, exciting music.**Commercial 4****Commercial 5: Honey Nut Cheerios**

(:35 seconds)

Useful for Practicing: complete breakfast shot, sugared cereal, portion size, tricks.**Target Audience:** Children**Tricks Used:** animated bees, action sequence of bees falling down into canyon, waterfall of honey, exciting music, special effects.**Commercial 5**

**Commercial 6: *Frosted Flakes***

(:35 seconds)

Useful for Practicing: target audience, complete breakfast shot, sugared cereal, tricks.

Target Audience: Boys

Tricks Used: animated tiger, catchy song, boys playing baseball, slow motion, clapping, phrase "they're great!"

Commercial 6**Commercial 7: *Cocoa Krispies***

(:35 seconds)

Useful for Practicing: complete breakfast shot, sugared cereal, portion size, tricks.

Target Audience: Children and Teens

Tricks Used: exotic mountain/cave setting & music, "magic" disk that opens door, huge mounds of chocolate cereal, special effects, phrase "unlock the magic."

Commercial 7**Commercial 8: *Cookie Crisp***

(:20 seconds)

Useful for Practicing: complete breakfast shot, sugared cereal, tricks.

Target Audience: Children

Tricks Used: funny sounding and looking wolf, cereal that looks like cookies, sound effects, wind blowing the wolf into outer space, explosion.

Commercial 8



Commercial 9: *Cocoa Puffs*

(:35 seconds)

Useful for Practicing: complete breakfast shot, sugared cereal, portion size, tricks

Target Audience: Children

Tricks Used: cuckoo bird with funny voice, phrase “cuckoo for cocoa puffs,” huge words “chocolatey,” “crunchy,” and “munchy.”

Commercial 9



Commercial 10: *Fruit Twistables*

(:35 seconds)

Useful for Practicing: tricks, real fruit vs. “fruit” snacks

Target Audience: Children

Tricks Used: talking cartoon fruits dressed like people, funny talking twistable dressed like a drill sergeant, super-fast motion

Commercial 10



Commercial 11: *Fruit Smoothie Blitz*

(:35 seconds)

Useful for Practicing: tricks, messages about real fruit vs. “fruit” snacks, target audience

Target Audience: Boys (only boys shown, male voiceover, “violence” of blender kicking bowl of fruit off counter)

Tricks Used: blender that moves and has facial expressions, animation of fruit and yogurt being blended, whirling food on package.

Commercial 11



Critical Thinking & Health: TV Commercials and Nutrition

First Grade Lessons

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LESSON PLAN

Lesson 1: The Food Groups

Lesson Objectives:

- Students will identify the five food groups (fruit, vegetables, grains, dairy, protein [meats and beans]) as well as recognizing oils and foods high in fat and sugar.
- Students will sort examples of foods into different food groups and will recognize that some foods contain things that fit into more than one food group.
- Students will summarize the importance of eating more foods from some food groups (grains, vegetables, fruits) and only a little from other food groups (especially fat and sugar).
- Students will describe a health benefit from each food group.

Vocabulary:

food group, grains, vegetables, fruit, dairy, protein, meats & beans, oil, fat, sugar, calcium, vitamins, energy

Materials Needed:

- *Teacher Guide* for leading analysis and discussion
- A *ChooseMyPlate* poster (available at <http://teamnutrition.usda.gov/myplate.html> or copy the *ChooseMyPlate* sheet available in the *Resources* at the end of this curriculum kit)
- Examples of foods and beverages from different food groups, which could be actual foods, plastic manipulatives, pictures from magazines, or empty food and beverage containers. Make sure to include:
 - Cereals (including low sugar and high sugar brands)
 - Bread, pasta, rice (including some whole grains)
 - Fruit, juice, fruit snacks, and fruit drinks
 - Vegetables
 - Milk, cheese, yogurt
 - Protein (meat, chicken, fish, beans, nuts, eggs)
 - Healthy oils (olive oil, canola oil)
 - Processed foods that contain high amounts of fat and/or sugar
- Large squares of construction paper representing the different food groups (in different sizes that reflect how much food we should eat from each group). If possible use different colors that match the *ChooseMyPlate* food groups:
 - Large Squares (2' x 3'):
 - Grains (Orange)
 - Vegetables (Green)
 - Fruits (Red)
 - Medium Squares (1' x 2'):
 - Dairy (Blue)
 - Protein (Purple) **[see NOTE below]
 - Very Small Squares (6" x 6"):
 - Healthy Oils (Yellow)
 - Sugar & Unhealthy Fats (Beige) ** [see NOTE below]

NOTES:

- While the Meats & Beans (i.e., Protein) category is one food group that is on the *ChooseMyPlate* and may be used for the food sorting activity, it is a category that can be confusing for children because it contains so many different types of foods (chicken, fish, eggs, nuts, beans, tofu) and it does not have a single word name like the other categories. It is also not used in any of the other lessons in this kit. You may want to treat it as information that children are exposed to, but are not expected to fully understand at this age.
- Sugar and fats do not appear as a category on *ChooseMyPlate*, but instead are referenced in a note at the bottom. You could decide not to have a sheet of paper representing Sugar and Unhealthy Fat when doing the food sorting task, but that may be confusing to children. Since many of the subsequent lessons are about foods that have high amounts of sugar, we recommend having a category for it, but with a very small square to represent foods that should be seldom eaten.

Time: 35 minutes or longer, depending on discussion

Lesson Procedures:

1. Present the *Lesson Introduction* to the class, leading an initial discussion.
2. Place the squares of paper representing different food groups on the floor. Discuss different types of foods and food groups, while placing examples on the correct papers.
3. Using the examples of real or plastic foods and food containers, have students place those foods into the right food groups. When they are unsure, talk with them about how they could decide. If children put a food into the wrong group, explain where it should really go and talk about why it was confusing.
4. Discuss the foods that fit into more than one group (which includes many foods advertised on television, like hamburgers, Kraft Macaroni & Cheese or sugared cereals).
5. Show and discuss the *ChooseMyPlate* poster to find where each of these food groups are located. Explain why sugar and unhealthy fats do not appear on the diagram, reinforcing the idea that those foods should be eaten rarely or in very small amounts.
6. Discuss the healthy benefits of each of the five food groups. Have students find pictures (from those provided) that match each of those benefits, and have them paste those pictures on the appropriate colored paper representing each food group.
7. Explain that foods high in fat and sugar might have added vitamins, but they are still less healthy than foods that contain vitamins naturally.
8. Discuss *Action Steps* that the children might take now that they have learned this information, especially at home or in stores and in discussion with their families.

TEACHER GUIDE

Lesson 1: The Food Groups

1. Introduce the lesson. Content written in bold is to be said or asked by the teacher.

Lesson Introduction

Before starting the lesson, make sure you have the food examples, food group papers and other materials you need (see Materials List in the *Lesson Plan*). Have a picture or poster of *ChooseMyPlate* on the wall where children can see it.

Today we're going to talk about different food groups. Can anyone tell me the name of a food group? (If they name individual foods, explain what food group that food would belong in.) **What other food groups are there?**

Lead the students through a discussion about different kinds of food and beverages, clarifying what the different groups of foods are and asking children to speculate about what kinds of foods might fall into each group. Point out the picture or poster of *ChooseMyPlate*, and talk about the different food groups that are included.

2. Lay out the food group squares on the floor, and put out the box of sample plastic or real foods and food containers. Select one food representing each of the food group squares, asking children to identify it and decide which food group it belongs in.
3. Point out the different sizes of the food group squares, and discuss "healthy" and "unhealthy" foods and drinks using the *Discussion Questions & Answers* in the *Teacher Guide* and the *ChooseMyPlate* poster.
4. Have the students work with the other examples of foods and food containers to place each one in the food group where it fits best. Discuss examples of foods that may fit into more than one food group, helping students think through their decisions.
5. Using the *Discussion Questions & Answers* in the *Teacher Guide*, discuss foods that might be confusing because of their names or the way they are shown in advertising.
6. Discuss the healthy benefits of each of the five food groups using the *Discussion Questions & Answers* in the *Teacher Guide*. Have students find pictures representing Those benefits and put them on the matching colored food group papers.
7. Explain that foods high in fat and sugar sometimes have added vitamins and minerals, but because of the high amounts of fat and added sugar, they still are not very healthy.
8. Discuss *Action Steps* the children can take at home or in stores based on what they have learned.

SPECIAL NOTE

In talking about different foods, it is important not to make value judgments about different kinds of foods (describe them as "good" or "bad") since the children's parents may buy and eat those foods at home. Instead, focus on accuracy (e.g., What is really fruit?), facts (e.g., How much sugar is in that?), and consequences of eating – or not eating – certain kinds of foods.

Discussion Questions & Answers

1) Who has seen a food groups diagram, like *ChooseMyPlate*, before? What kinds of food groups does it show?

Possible Answers: Grains, vegetables, fruits, dairy, protein (meats and beans). (If students give specific foods like milk or bread, probe to help them decide in which food group it should be.)

2) These different colored pieces of paper are the same colors you see in *ChooseMyPlate*. Can you match each colored paper with the food group on the pyramid?

Possible Answers: Red is fruit, orange is bread and cereal, blue is milk and cheese, etc.

3) Some of the papers are really large because we should eat a lot of foods from those groups. Which food groups are those?

Possible Answers: The green one for vegetables, like carrots, tomatoes, celery, green beans, red peppers; the orange one for grains, like bread, pasta, rice, and oatmeal; the red one for fruits, like apples, bananas and strawberries

4) Some of the papers are really small because we should only eat a little of them. It is not on *ChooseMyPlate*, but it's something that we need to eat a little of each day, but not very much. It's usually yellow or golden in color. Can anyone guess what it is?

Possible Answers: It's oil. (Explain about different kinds of healthy oils, like olive oil, or canola oil; distinguish that from fats found in butter, margarine and fried foods.)

5) [Hold up the beige paper.] This color represents foods and drinks that aren't even on the food groups diagram because they're not very healthy and we shouldn't eat them very often even if they taste really good. You might see them advertised on TV a lot. What do you think might be in that group?

Possible Answers: Sugar, candy, ice cream, cake, cookies, gum, soda, fats, butter, fried things

6) Some foods might go in more than one food group? Can anyone think of something that might need to go in more than one food group?

Possible Answers: Macaroni and cheese, hamburgers, yogurt with fruit in it, French fries, a cereal that has a lot of sugar

Activity 1

Let's see if we can figure out what food group each of these foods should go in. What about this pear? How about this spaghetti? What about this cottage cheese? How about this red pepper? What about these kidney beans? What about this donut?

Now let's see if you can figure out where the rest of these foods go in the food groups.

You may have the students work in groups, with each group finding foods to go in one of the food groups, or have few students come up to get foods at the same time.

Discussion Questions & Answers

- 1) Which foods were the hardest to figure out? Why?

Possible Answers: Things that have a lot of sugar in them but are not candy or all sugar, things that have more than one kind of food in it (discuss how to decide and where the food should go – which might be more than one place, especially clarify that “fruit” snacks and drinks have hardly any fruit, so they should not go in the fruit group)

- 2) Why do we want to eat healthy foods?

Each food group is important for different reasons. Fruits give us energy and vitamins to help us fight infections. Vegetables give us vitamins & minerals that help us see better. Grains give us lots of energy. Dairy gives us calcium for strong bones and teeth. Meats and Beans give us protein to build muscles and help us grow.

Possible Answers: We need them for energy, we need vitamins and minerals to keep our skin and eyes and teeth healthy, they help us think better, we need them to grow and to be strong

- 3) Why should we try not to eat very many unhealthy foods?

Possible Answers: They could make us sick, we would not have any energy, we might get cavities in our teeth, we might gain too much weight, it might make us feel funny.

- 4) There's one important drink that's not on *ChooseMyPlate*, but we should drink it every day because it helps our blood and skin, and helps us get rid of wastes by going to the bathroom. Can you guess what it is?

Answer: Water.

Summary Questions & Answers

1) What are the five food groups?

Answers: Grains, Vegetables, Fruit, Dairy, Protein (Meats and Beans)

2) How does *ChooseMyPlate* help us to be more healthy?

Possible Answers: By helping us remember what kinds of foods to eat

3) How do foods help us be healthy?

Possible Answers: They give us vitamins, energy, protein, and calcium.

4) From which food groups should we eat the most?

Possible Answers: Grains, fruits, vegetables

5) From which food groups should we eat the least?

Possible Answers: Unhealthy fats and sugars

6) Sometimes foods and drinks that have a lot of sugar also add vitamins. They might say something like “contains 100% Vitamin C.” Does that mean that they are just as healthy for us to have as real fruits and vegetables?

Possible Answers: No. They still have a lot of added sugar that is unhealthy, so it is not the same as eating fruit or vegetables.

Action Steps

Brainstorm with the children. **So what can you do, now that you know all of this about food groups?** List suggestions on a chart, if possible. Ideas might include:

- Being like a detective, looking for clues about what is really true about the product being advertised
- Talking about all of this with our families
- Thinking about the things we eat and drink and what food groups they belong to
- Thinking about how much we should eat of different foods each day
- Choosing foods that are healthy for us to eat and portion sizes that are healthy
- Noticing when fats and sugars are added to foods in ways that make them less healthy to eat and drink
- Noticing when restaurants or TV commercials show or give out portions that are way more than we should really eat or drink

Emphasize that children can categorize the foods they are eating every day and gain a better understanding of how certain foods help them stay healthy.

LESSON PLAN



Video Clips

Lesson 2: Understanding TV Commercials

Lesson Objectives:

- Students will recognize the purpose of a commercial.
- Students will recognize some of the tricks used by advertisers to make products seem better than they really are.
- Students will understand the importance of “100% juice” on food packaging.
- Students will understand that just because the packaging or a commercial shows fruit, it does not mean that there is really a lot of fruit in the product.
- Students will begin to think about distortions in portion size shown in commercials.
- Students will identify the target audience for the commercial (children or adults).

Vocabulary:

**advertising, commercial, advertiser, tricks, fruit, 100% juice, target audience
special effects, sound effects**



Commercial 1:
Trix
(0:35)



Commercial 2:
Capri Sun
(0:20)



Commercial 3:
Pringles
(0:35)



Commercial 4 :
McDonalds (Children)
(0:36)



Commercial 5:
McDonalds (Adults)
(0:35)

Materials Needed:

- *Teacher Guide* for leading analysis and discussion
- Video clips of commercials (access online or via First Grade Lesson 2 digital media folder)
- LCD Projector and computer
- Several examples of juice drink boxes, pouches, or bottled (if possible, including Capri Sun), with one that says “100% juice” and one that has only a small percentage of juice
- *How Much Sugar?* and *How Much Fruit?* charts (available in the *Resources* at the end of the kit)

Materials Needed Cont'd:

- (Optional Activities) Empty cereal packages and beverage containers for children to practice finding clues about how much sugar and juice is in the products; see Kindergarten Lessons 4 and 5 for those Activity descriptions

Time: 30-40 minutes or longer, depending on discussion

Lesson Procedures:

1. Present the *Lesson Introduction* to the class, leading an initial discussion.
2. Play video clips of Commercials 1, 2 and 3, following the *Commercial Analysis Questions & Answers* in the *Teacher Guide*, showing each commercial several times.
3. Pause each commercial as you show it the second or third time to point out specific tricks or other aspects of the commercial, including issues related to fruit, 100% juice, and portion size.
4. Introduce the concept of “target audience,” including if a commercial is aimed at boys or girls or both boys and girls. Discuss how you would know if a commercial was targeted to children or to adults.
5. Play video clips of Commercials 4 and 5, following the *Commercial Analysis Questions & Answers* in the *Teacher Guide*, stopping after each commercial to discuss the target audience.
6. Lead follow-up discussion about the purpose of commercials, the target audience (who the commercials are made for), tricks used in commercials to make products seem better, and nutritional issues (e.g., real fruit or juice versus “fruit” snacks or drinks).
7. Discuss *Action Steps* that the children might take now that they have learned this information, especially at home or in stores and in discussions with their families.

Optional Activities:

As part of this lesson, you may want to incorporate the small group activities using actual cereal packages and beverage containers introduced in the Kindergarten Lessons 4 and 5 earlier in this kit, so that children can practice finding the clues and information about sugar, fruit, juice and other nutritional messages. Because some of the information and skills introduced in those lessons is quite complex, the more that children can practice them using multiple examples and discussion geared to their age and grade level, the better.

TEACHER GUIDE



Lesson 2: Understanding TV Commercials

1. Introduce the lesson. Content written in bold is to be said or asked by the teacher.

Lesson Introduction

Today we're going to talk about TV commercials. How many of you sometimes watch television? Then you have likely seen a commercial before. A commercial is an advertisement on television or radio, usually a short segment that interrupts the program and tries to sell you something.

Lots of people are trying to get you interested in their products - such as toys, food, and restaurants. They want you to ask an adult to buy you a particular product so they can make money. Since they really want you to like their product, commercials sometimes use tricks to capture your attention and get you interested in their product. Those tricks can make a toy or food look better than it really is. They also hire people (including kids) to be in their commercials who pretend to really like that product a lot. And sometimes they might really like the product, but mostly they're acting and saying things because they get paid to do that.

Pay close attention to the commercials that I'll show you, and then be ready to tell me about some of the tricks that you see and hear.

2. Play Commercial 1 and lead class through the *Commercial Analysis Questions & Answers* in the *Teacher Guide*.
3. Play Commercial 1 two more times, leading the class through additional *Commercial Analysis Questions & Answers* from the *Teacher Guide*.
4. Explain briefly about fruit and fruit juice, referring back to Commercial 1 and explaining the importance of the phrase "100% juice."
5. Play Commercial 2 and lead class through the *Commercial Analysis Questions & Answers* in the *Teacher Guide*. Play the commercial again, looking for more tricks and discussing whether the product is a fruit juice or just a fruit drink with little or no fruit in it.
6. Play Commercial 3 and lead class through the *Commercial Analysis Questions & Answers* in the *Teacher Guide*. Play Commercial 3 again and lead class through the additional questions.
7. Explain the concept of "target audience" and ask who the target audience was for the three commercials they just saw. Discuss how to tell if the target audience is children or adults using the *Discussion Questions & Answers* in the *Teacher Guide*.
8. Show Commercials 4 and 5, discussing the target audience for each one using the *Commercial Analysis Questions & Answers* in the *Teacher Guide*.
9. Summarize the issues important for understanding about TV commercials.
10. Discuss *Action Steps* the children can take at home or in stores based on what they have learned.



Commercial 1: *Trix*

Commercial 1 Introduction

Target Audience: Children

Tricks Used: Lots of swirling fruit coming out of the water, water turning different colors, special effects, music, funny looking and sounding rabbit, cool surfing tricks, words like “gnarly” and “dude,” huge bowl of cereal, sound effects



Commercial Analysis Questions & Answers

1) What do the makers of this commercial want you to do?

Possible Answers: Ask an adult to buy you *Trix* cereal, eat *Trix* cereal

2) Now think really hard: What kinds of tricks did the advertiser use to get your attention and to make the cereal look really fun and great?

Possible Answers: Used cartoon characters, music and sound effects, cool surfing, slogan “*Trix* are for kids,” swirling pictures of fruit

3) They showed a lot of images of fruit in this commercial. Does *Trix* cereal contain fruit?

Possible Answers: Yes some, no not any, not sure.

4) Actually *Trix* has no fruit at all in it. What else did the advertiser do to make you think that *Trix* contains fruit?

Possible Answers: The rabbit talks about raspberry red, lemon yellow, wildberry blue; the kids say it is a “totally fruity part of this good breakfast”



Commercial 1: *Trix* Cont'd

Commercial 1: Second Viewing

I'm going to show you the commercial again. Look for those tricks that we've discussed.

Pause during the commercial to point out some of the tricks.

Commercial Analysis Questions & Answers

1) What food group do cereals belong in on *ChooseMyPlate*?

Possible Answers: Many cereals belong in the grains food group, but some cereals also have lots of extra sugar.

2) Has anyone here ever eaten *Trix* cereal? What's it like? Do you think that *Trix* contains a lot of sugar? How can you tell?

Possible Answers: (Answers will vary.) Yes it has a lot of sugar in it. You could ask an adult to read what it says on the side of the box, because it is made with bright colors, because it tastes really sweet

3) Where does sugar fall on *ChooseMyPlate*?

Possible Answers: Sugar is not on *ChooseMyPlate* because it is not healthy for you, and you should not have too much of it.

4) Do we need a lot of sugar in order to eat a healthy breakfast?

Possible Answers: No, eating too much sugar is not healthy, and eating other foods that belong on *ChooseMyPlate* are better for us to eat and provide us with more energy.

Recommended Activity 1

Provide examples of empty, flattened cereal packages for the children to examine in pairs or small groups to identify how much sugar is in the cereal. See Kindergarten Lesson 4 *Teacher Guide*, Activity 1 for more information.



Commercial 1: *Trix* Cont'd

Commercial 1: Third Viewing

Play Commercial 1 for a third time. Pause on the “complete breakfast” picture.

Commercial Analysis Questions & Answers

- 1) Check out the complete breakfast pictured here. Where does each thing fall in the food pyramid?
- 2) Do we have a complete breakfast without this sugary cereal?
- 3) *Trix* is an extra, sort of like a breakfast dessert. Is it okay to eat it sometimes?
- 4) Who do you think would like this commercial more, children or adults? Why?

Possible Answers: Juice = fruit; milk = dairy; muffin = grains (and maybe a little sugar or fruit).

Possible Answers: Yes.

Possible Answers: Yes, as long as you eat all the healthy food groups first.

Possible Answers: Children: the advertisers know that kids like cartoons, it's funny, kids like *Trix*

One of the tricks we talked about in this commercial was the ways the advertiser implied that there was a lot of fruit in *Trix* cereal, when there really isn't any fruit at all. That same issue comes up in commercials for things to drink – and sometimes it's hard to tell how much fruit juice there really is in a product based on the commercial. Let's watch another commercial, and this time look for the tricks they are using to make the product look really fun and exciting, and also see if you think the product has a lot of fruit juice in it.



Commercial 2: *Capri Sun*

Commercial 2 Introduction

Target Audience: Children

Tricks Used: Exciting music, snowboarding, special effects, snowboarders turn into silver rockets, huge pictures of the *Capri Sun* pouch and fruit, snow scene turning into a beach scene, teens in swimming suits, words “all natural” and “liquid cool”



Commercial Analysis Questions & Answers

1) What do they want you to do?

Possible Answers: Drink *Capri Sun*, ask an adult to buy you *Capri Sun*

2) What kinds of tricks do they use to get your attention?

Possible Answers: Exciting music, good looking athletic teens having a great time, snow scene and beach scene, teens turn into liquid metal as they race, big pictures of fruit, slogan “liquid cool”

3) Do you think *Capri Sun* is a fruit juice?

Possible Answers: Maybe there is some juice in it.

4) Actually, this *Capri Sun* has only 10% fruit juice in it; the rest is sugar, water, and artificial colors and flavors. What did they do to try to get you to think that *Capri Sun* is a fruit juice?

Possible Answers: Showed big pictures of fruit on the billboard, the words “all natural”

5) Does anyone know how you can tell if a drink is made up of all fruit juice and nothing else added except water?

Possible Answers: 100% juice

If you see “100% juice” or “100% fruit” on a product, then you know that it is made only of fruit and maybe some water added. Often “fruit snacks” and “fruit drinks” have only 5%, 10%, or 15% fruit, and cereals like *Trix* don’t have any fruit at all. Introduce the *How Much Fruit?* chart and show several examples of beverage containers, asking children to find the statement(s) on the container that identifies how much fruit juice the product contains. Discuss the ways that the packaging implies that there is a lot of fruit in the beverage when there really is not (including the name itself and showing images of fruit). **Another trick that advertisers sometimes use on packages is to say something like “100% Vitamin C” or “100% natural flavors.” Is that the same thing as 100% juice?** Discuss why advertisers might put that on the package.

Recommended Activity 2

Provide examples of empty beverage containers for the children to examine in pairs or small groups to identify how much juice is in the product. See Kindergarten Lesson 5 *Teacher Guide*, Activity 1 for more information.

**Commercial 3: *Pringles*****Commercial 3
Introduction**

Target Audience: Children and teens

Tricks Used: Exciting music, swirling *Pringles* can, lots of different unusual scenes, special effects, girl with potato chip lips, people eating chips, sound effects, singing “I want *Pringles*,” phrase “Once you pop the fun don’t stop”

**Commercial Analysis Questions & Answers**

1) What do the makers of this commercial want you to do?

Possible Answers: Eat *Pringles*, think *Pringles* are fun, ask an adult to buy you *Pringles*

2) What kinds of tricks do they use to get your attention?

Possible Answers: Music, song “I love *Pringles*,” dancing kids, kids having a really great time, different time periods shown, everyone eating *Pringles*, sound effects of chips crunching, bright colors

3) What food group would *Pringles* be located on a food group diagram or *ChooseMyPlate*?

Possible Answers: It would not really be on *ChooseMyPlate*, because even though it contains some potatoes, which are vegetables, it has so much fat that it would not be healthy for you.



Commercial 3: *Pringles* Cont'd

Commercial 3: Second Viewing

Here's the commercial again. See how many tricks you can notice.

Commercial Analysis Questions & Answers

1) Why do you think those kids in the commercial look like they're having such a great time?

Possible Answers: They are being paid, they are hired as actors and actresses to make it look like they love *Pringles*.

2) Do the actors and actresses do a good job getting you interested in the potato chips?

Possible Answers: Yes.

3) Do you think children or adults would like this commercial more. Why?

Possible Answers: Children and teens, because kids are in the commercial, they show a lot of fun things to do, kids and teens like potato chips

Advertisers sometimes make commercials where children are the target audience, and sometimes they even make commercials specifically targeted only to girls or only to boys. We're going to talk about that next time we do a media literacy lesson. But advertisers also sometimes make commercials where the target audience is adults. Sometimes they even have the same exact product, and some of the commercials are targeted to children and other commercials are targeted to adults. The last two commercials I'm going to show you are both for McDonald's. See if you can figure out who the target audience is for each one, and the different types of tricks they use for children and for adults.



Commercial 4: *McDonald's* (Kids)

Commercial 4

Target Audience: Children

Tricks Used: Ronald McDonald (a clown), funny music, sound effects, funny dancing, special visual effects, phrase "Made you smile!," boys playing with Happy Meal toys, spooky arrival of girl with green cream on her face, the word "Attack!"



Commercial Analysis Questions & Answers

1) **Who is the target audience? What makes you think that?**

Possible Answers: Children, because they show Ronald McDonald and Happy Meal toys, boys (because they only show a "boy" toy and the boys are "attacking" a girl)

2) **What kinds of tricks do they use to get your attention?**

Possible Answers: Funny music, sound effects, funny dancing, Ronald McDonald (clown), girl with green cream on her face, free toys, special effects



Commercial 5: *McDonald's* (Adults)

Commercial 5

Target Audience: Adults

Tricks Used: Close-ups of burgers, tomatoes, Lettuce, cute boy riding bicycle, pleasant older woman, woman kissing boy on the cheek, boy eating huge burger, music, voiceover talking about healthy ingredients



Commercial Analysis Questions & Answers

1) **Who is the target audience?**
What makes you think that?

Possible Answers: Adults, real-looking scene, boy is getting McDonald's for his grandmother or adult who is his friend, they talk about 100% beef and healthy ingredients, they show the grandmother and boy eating in her house

2) **What kinds of tricks did they use to get an adult's attention and to make them want the product?**

Possible Answers: Music, close-up images of healthy-looking burgers and tomatoes, voice saying they use healthy ingredients, happy boy eating an enormous burger

Action Steps

Brainstorm with the students. **So what can you do, now that you know all of this about TV commercials?** List suggestions on a chart, if possible. Give each student a copy of the *How Much Fruit?* chart and introduce the *How Much Sugar?* chart, explaining they can be used to figure out whether the amount of sugar in a product is only a little bit or a lot. Ideas might include:

- Being like a detective, looking for clues about what is really true about the product being advertised
- Talking about this with your families
- Figuring out what TV commercials are selling and who their target audience is
- Thinking and talking about how advertising in TV commercials and on packages uses specific techniques to target children versus adults
- Looking for “tricks” used in TV commercials to make products look better than they might really be
- Checking out the products advertised when you see them in stores to see how the real product compares with the way it was advertised
- Figuring out how much sugar is in different cereals and other products we see at the store, in TV commercials, or that we have at home by looking at the images and words on the box, or asking an adult to look on the side panel
- Put up a copy of the *How Much Fruit?* and *How Much Sugar?* charts at home to check out different foods and beverages
- Pay attention to the “complete breakfast” messages in TV commercial for cereals, and noticing other breakfast foods that are shown besides the cereal
- Finding “tricks” used in food and drink TV commercials to make them seem like products have a lot of fruit in them when they really do not
- Looking for “100% juice” or “100% fruit” on package labels

LESSON PLAN



Lesson 3: Toy Commercials & Their Tricks

Lesson Objectives:

- Students will recognize the purpose of a commercial.
- Students will recognize some of the tricks used by advertisers to make products seem better than they really are.
- Students learn about specific tricks used by advertisers: editing.

Vocabulary:

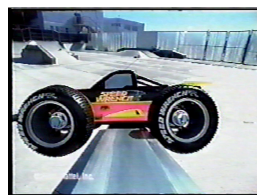
advertising, commercial, advertiser, tricks, editing, slow motion, extreme close-up, product

Media:

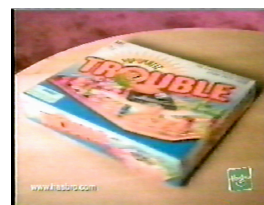
Commercial 1:
Top It!
(0:21)



Clip from *Buy Me That! How Do They Make Games Look So Easy?* (3:10)



Commercial 2:
Speed Wrench
(0:35)



Commercial 3:
Trouble
(0:20)

Materials Needed:

- *Teacher Guide* for leading analysis and discussion
- Video clips of commercials (access online or via First Grade Lesson 3 digital media folder)
- LCD Projector and computer

Time: 30-40 minutes or longer, depending on discussion

Lesson Procedures:

1. Present the *Lesson Introduction* to the class, leading an initial discussion.
2. Play Commercial 1, following the *Commercial Analysis Questions & Answers* in the *Teacher Guide*, pausing the commercial as you show it several times to point out tricks.
3. Introduce the video clip from *Buy Me That! How Do They Make Games Look So Easy?*
4. Lead follow-up discussion about editing in commercials, following the *Video Clip Questions & Answers* in the *Teacher Guide*.
5. Play Commercials 2 and 3, following the *Commercial Analysis Questions & Answers* in the *Teacher Guide*, showing each commercial several times, and pausing the commercials to discuss the editing techniques and other tricks used.
6. Lead a follow-up discussion about the purpose of commercials, tricks used to make products look better than they really are, and editing.
7. Discuss *Action Steps* the children might take now that they have learned this information, especially at home or in stores and in discussions with their families.

TEACHER GUIDE



Video Clips

Lesson 3: Toy Commercials & Their Tricks

1. Introduce the lesson. Content written in bold is to be said or asked by the teacher.

Lesson Introduction

Today we're going to watch some toy commercials and learn about a few specific tricks that advertisers like to use. But first, does anyone want to share something you noticed about commercials you have seen since we started doing these media literacy lessons? Let three or four students share. Keep the class involved by asking the group if they have made similar observations.

Have you ever really wanted a toy, but when you finally got it, it wasn't what you expected? Commercials often use tricks to make toys look better than they really are. I have a commercial I want to show you. It's pretty short, so watch closely and see if you can pick out some of the tricks that the advertisers are using.

2. Play Commercial 1 and lead class through the *Commercial Analysis Questions & Answers* in the *Teacher Guide*.
3. Play Commercial 1 a second time, pausing to point out tricks.
4. Play Video Clip 1 of *Buy Me That! How Do They Make Games Look So Easy?* and lead class through the *Video Clip Questions & Answers* in the *Teacher Guide*.
5. Play Commercial 2 and lead class through the *Commercial Analysis Questions & Answers* in the *Teacher Guide*. Play Commercial 2 a second time to identify editing tricks.
6. Play Commercial 3 and lead class through the *Commercial Analysis Questions & Answers* in the *Teacher Guide*. Play Commercial 3 again and lead class through additional questions.
7. Summarize the lesson's conclusions about TV commercials.
8. Discuss *Action Steps* the children can take at home or in stores based on what they have learned.

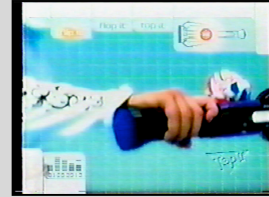


Commercial 1: *Top It!*

Commercial 1 Introduction

Target Audience: Children

Tricks Used: Rapid-fire voiceover, lots of visual cuts (editing), pretty girl twirling the product, saying the product's name over and over, musical beat, making the product look easy to use, joke about Alaska, special effects, sound effects, saying "Everybody does it"



Commercial Analysis Questions & Answers

1) What do the makers of that commercial want you to do?

Possible Answers: Want *Top It!*, ask an adult to buy you *Top It!*

2) What did the advertiser do to try to get your attention and make the product seem fun and really great?

Possible Answers: Uses a musical beat, sound effects, narrator says "Everybody does it," toy looks easy to play, girl does not miss a throw, Alaska scene contrast

3) Who thinks that *Top It!* looks pretty easy? Anybody here own it? Is it easy to play?

Possible Answers: (Answers will vary.)

4) How does the commercial make it seem like it would be an easy game to learn?

Possible Answers: The girl catches the ball every time, she even throws it under her leg, she is concentrating but she is relaxed



Commercial 1: *Top It!* Cont'd

Commercial 1 Second Viewing

Let's watch this commercial again.

Point out how the commercial uses only very short clips.

Most commercials use a trick called editing. They only show you the parts they want to see. In the *Top It!* commercial, if the girl missed the ball, they just wouldn't put that part in. Let's find out more about editing.



Buy Me That! How Do They Make Games Look So Easy?

Video Clip 1

Summary: How they use editing and other techniques to make toys and games look much easier to use than they really are; interviews with kids predicting how easy the toys will be and then showing the kids actually using the toys and finding out how hard they are to use



Video Clip Questions & Answers

1) What is editing?

Possible Answers: It is when advertisers only put in the parts they want you to see, then cut out the rest; you do not notice because of all the short clips.

2) How does editing help make the toys look better than they are?

Possible Answers: You only see the best stunts or best looking pictures of the product; editing creates a positive image of the product - which may not be true.

3) How does music help create a fun impression?

Possible Answers: Music and songs make it seem like everyone's having a good time.



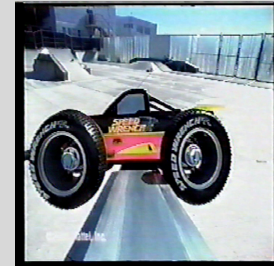
Commercial 2: *Speed Wrench*

Now we're going to watch another commercial where the editing is a very important trick.

Target Audience: Boys

Tricks Used: Exciting music, rapid-fire voiceover, lots of visual cuts (editing), slow motion, shots that make the truck look like it is going all the movement by itself (with no kids in view), saying the product's name over and over, extreme close-ups, words "No rules," "No boundaries," cool looking cartoon character, white writing in the sky.

Commercial 2 Introduction



Commercial Analysis Questions & Answers

1) What do they want you to do?

Possible Answers: Want and ask an adult to buy you Tyco's Speed Wrench.

2) What does the advertiser do to try and get your attention and to make the product look fun and exciting?

Possible Answers: Uses fast music, fantastic stunts, narrator tells about it, editing, white writing, extreme close-ups, special effects

3) Does anyone here have a toy like this?

Possible Answers: (Answers will vary.)



Commercial 2: *Speed Wrench* Cont'd

Commercial 2: Second Viewing

Play Commercial 2 again. Pause to show the different camera angles and evidence of editing such as where the car looks like it is making a super high jump. Point out the use of slow motion - another editing trick.

All commercials use editing, and it can make toys look better than they really are – just like they showed in *Buy Me That*.

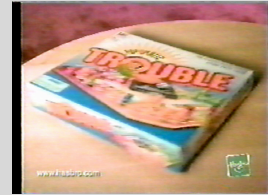


Commercial 3: *Trouble*

Target Audience: Children

Tricks Used: Box jiggles by itself, little people turn into dice when the bubble is pushed, camera makes the table look like it is moving, fun song, kids saying they are getting “In trouble,” sound effects, special visual effects of dice and game pieces floating through the air, extreme close-ups

Commercial 3 Introduction



Commercial Analysis Questions & Answers

1) What do they want you to do?

Possible Answers: Like the game *Trouble*, think it looks like fun, ask an adult to buy it for you

2) What does the advertiser do to try to get your attention and make the game look like fun?

Possible Answers: Fun song, sound effects, pun on words “Getting into Trouble,” shaking box, kids look really excited, dice and game pieces floating in background

3) Does anyone here own the game *Trouble*? Is it really that exciting?

Possible Answers: (Answers will vary.)

4) Why do those kids look like they’re having so much fun?

Possible Answers: Fun song, the kids look like they are having so much fun because they are acting and are getting paid to be in the commercial.

5) How big is the game? Look carefully when we watch it again to see how big the pieces are compared to the kids’ fingers.

Possible Answers: Really little, only about as big as a child’s hand, the bubble thing is only about as big as your thumb; the playing pieces are tiny

Action Steps

Brainstorm with the students. **So what can you do, now that you know all of this about TV commercials?** List suggestions on a chart, if possible. Ideas might include:

- Being like a detective, looking for clues about what is really true about the product being advertised
- Talking about this with your families
- Looking for “tricks” used in TV commercials to make products look better than they might really be, especially editing and music
- Checking out the products advertised when you see them in stores to see how the real product compares with the way it was advertised, especially how big the product is
- Remembering that the kids and other people in the commercial are just actors who are paid to look excited and happy when playing with these toys

LESSON PLAN



Lesson 4: More Commercials & Their Tricks

Lesson Objectives:

- Students will recognize the purpose of a commercial.
- Students will recognize some of the tricks used by advertisers to make products seem better than they really are.
- Students learn about specific tricks used by advertisers: disclaimers like “parts sold separately.”
- Students will identify products that pretend to contain a lot of fruit, but really do not.

Vocabulary:

advertising, commercial, advertiser, tricks, “sold separately,” editing, slow motion, extreme close-up, voiceover, fine print

Media:

Commercial 1:
Battle Bots
(0:36)



Clip from *Buy Me That!*
Parts Sold Separately
(3:36)



Commercial 2:
Buzz Lightyear Fruit Snacks
(0:35)

Materials Needed:

- *Teacher Guide* for leading analysis and discussion
- Video clips of commercials (access online or via First Grade Lesson 4 digital media folder)
- LCD Projector and computer

Time: 30-40 minutes or longer, depending on discussion

Lesson Procedures:

1. Present the *Lesson Introduction* to the class, leading an initial discussion.
2. Play Commercial 1, following the *Commercial Analysis Questions & Answers* in the *Teacher Guide*, pausing the commercial as you show it several times to point out tricks.
3. Introduce the Video Clip from *Buy Me That! Parts Sold Separately*.
4. Lead follow-up discussion about disclaimers, following the *Video Clip Questions & Answers* in the *Teacher Guide*.
5. Play Commercial 2, following the *Commercial Analysis Questions & Answers* in the *Teacher Guide*, pausing the commercial to discuss the disclaimers at the end.
6. Lead a follow-up discussion about the purpose of commercials, tricks used to make products look better than they really are, products that pretend to contain fruit, and disclaimers.
7. Discuss *Action Steps* the children might take now that they have learned this information, especially at home or in stores and in discussions with their families.

TEACHER GUIDE



Video Clips

Lesson 4: More Commercials & Their Tricks

1. Introduce the lesson. Content written in bold is to be said or asked by the teacher.

Lesson Introduction

Today we're going to look at some more commercials and learn a few more tricks that the advertisers use.

Who remembers the two specific tricks we talked about last time? What's one of them?
(Two tricks are editing and that the people in commercials are acting.)

What's "editing"? (It is when advertisers only put in the parts they want you to see and leave out the rest.)

Does anyone remember any of the other tricks we saw in the commercials last time? Let's watch another commercial and look for the tricks.

2. Play Commercial 1 and lead class through the *Commercial Analysis Questions & Answers* in the *Teacher Guide*.
3. Play Commercial 1 again, pausing to point out tricks.
4. Play Video Clip 1 of *Buy Me That! Parts Sold Separately* and lead class through the *Video Clip Questions & Answers* in the *Teacher Guide*.
5. Play Commercial 2 and lead class through the *Commercial Analysis Questions & Answers* in the *Teacher Guide*. Play Commercial 2 again to identify editing tricks.
6. Summarize the lesson's conclusions about TV commercials.
7. Discuss *Action Steps* the children can take at home or in stores based on what they have learned.



Commercial 1: *Battle Bots*

Commercial 1 Introduction:

Target Audience: Boys

Tricks Used: Rapid-fire voiceover, exciting music, lots of visual cuts, sounds and images of kids cheering, making the product look easy to use, sound effects, slow motion, special visual effects, speeded-up motion when the toy is being put together, showing lots of vehicles, saying "That's total control," "Smash 'em!"



Commercial Analysis Questions & Answers

1) What do the makers of that commercial want you to do?

Possible Answers: Want *Battle Bots*, ask an adult to buy you *Battle Bots*

2) What did the advertiser do to try to get your attention and make the product seem fun and really great?

Possible Answers: Fast music and voiceover, special effects, slow motion, speed-up shot of putting the toy together, showing lots of vehicles, kids cheering, sound effects, cars crashing looks cool.

3) Why do the kids look like they're having so much fun?

Possible Answers: They are having fun, they are actors who are getting paid to be in the commercial

4) How does the commercial make it seem like they work so well?

Possible Answers: Special camera effects, editing, music

5) How many *Battle Bots* do you get in one package? How do you know?

Possible Answers: Only one; it said that at the end of the commercial that "each sold separately."

Commercials often include short messages at the end, and sometimes they say it very fast. This might be a statement about what comes with it, or doesn't come with it (like batteries), or it might be about something that was shown that isn't really true.



Commercial 1: *Battle Bots* Cont'd

Commercial 1: Second Viewing

Let's watch this commercial again. This time look for the tricks, and also listen to what they say at the very end of the commercial.

Play again, stopping to point out specific tricks and editing, and then pausing on the disclaimers at the end.

Does every see the small print? Let's find out more about this "sold separately" business.



Buy Me That! Parts Sold Separately

Video Clip 1

Summary: Looking at the disclaimers at the end of commercials, especially those about "parts sold separately" and what that really means; discussion of what really comes with a toy, and what does not



Video Clip Questions & Answers

1) What does "parts sold separately" mean?

Possible Answers: Only some of the things you see in the commercial come with the toy when you buy it, and usually you have to buy each doll or car separately

2) How can you know what you'll get?

Possible Answers: You have to listen really carefully, and also sometimes be able to read what it says in the fine print at the bottom, and you can look at the package when you are at the store

Be aware that what you see might not be what you will actually get. Sometimes commercials will use a well-known star or celebrity from a movie to help sell their products. Take a look at this next commercial and tell me what you think.



Commercial 2: *Buzz Lightyear Fruit Snacks*

Commercial 2 Introduction

Target Audience: Boys

Tricks Used: Adventure/spy story, extreme close-ups, sound effects, music, image and voiceover of Buzz Lightyear from the movie *Toy Story*, special visual effects, slow-motion, editing



Commercial Analysis Questions & Answers

1) What do they want you to do?

Possible Answers: Like and ask an adult to buy you *Buzz Lightyear Fruit Snacks*

2) What did the advertiser do to try to get your attention and to make the product look fun and exciting?

Possible Answers: Uses fast music, Buzz Lightyear's voice and image on the TV screen, extreme close-ups, sound effects, special visual effects like slow motion

3) If you buy the fruit snacks, do you get the Buzz Lightyear movie? Do you get anything else you saw in the commercial?

Answer: No.

4) Are fruit snacks really fruit? What would it have to say to know they were all fruit? What food group should they go in?

Possible Answers: No, they are mostly made of sugar; it would have to say 100% fruit to be a fruit, so they should go in sugared foods.



Commercial 2: *Buzz Lightyear Fruit Snacks* Cont'd

Commercial 2: Second Viewing

Play Commercial 2 again. Pause to show the different camera angles and evidence of editing. Identify all the things that might seem like they come with the fruit snacks.

Action Steps

Brainstorm with the children. **So what can you do, now that you know all of this about TV commercials and food groups?** List suggestions on a chart, if possible. Ideas might include:

- Being like a detective, looking for clues about what is true about the product being advertised
- Talking about all of this with our families
- Looking for “tricks” used in TV commercials to make products look better than they might really be, especially editing, special effects and music
- Looking and listening for disclaimers in commercials about what is included, whether you have to put the product together first, or if you need to buy anything else (like batteries to make the toy work)
- Finding “tricks” used in food and drink commercials to make the products seem like they have a lot of fruit in them when they really do not
- Looking for “100% juice” or “100% fruit” on package labels
- Checking out the products advertised when you see them in stores to see how the real product compares with the way it was advertised
- Remembering that celebrities, kids and other people in TV commercials are just actors who are paid to look excited and happy when playing with these toys

TEACHER GUIDE



Video Clips

More Commercials for Practice

Note to Teachers

The best way for students to learn how to think critically about advertising messages, including misleading messages about nutrition, is practice! These additional commercials can be used for students to practice identifying the tricks used to make products look fun, foods and beverages that contain a lot of fat or sugar, times toys are shown doing things they really cannot do, and what actually comes with the toy when you buy it ("parts sold separately"). Students can also identify the target audience (adults versus children, boys, girls, or both), toys that are made to look bigger than they really are, and huge portions of cereal. We recommend showing each commercial at least twice to give students the chance to thoroughly analyze the messages, including verbal statements and disclaimers.

****Access to all media clips listed here can be found online or via the First Grade More Commercials digital media folder****



Commercial 1: *Lucky Charms 2*

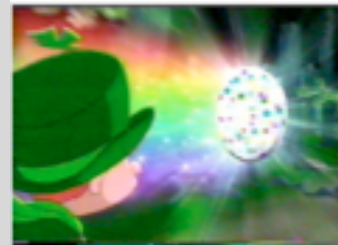
(:35 seconds)

Commercial 1

Useful for Practicing: Complete breakfast shot, sugared cereal, tricks

Target Audience: Children

Tricks Used: Funny looking and sounding leprechaun, magic mirror, special effects, sparkling "new" marshmallow, chase scene, music, word "special box"



Commercial 2: *Sunny D*

(:35 seconds)

Commercial 2

Useful for Practicing: Target audience, real juice versus "fruit" drinks

Target Audience: Adults and teens

Tricks Used: Girl and boy listening to rock music, close-ups of soda and product, camera shots of car driving through desert





Commercial 3: *Juicy Juice*

(:35 seconds)

Useful for Practicing: Target audience, real juice versus “fruit” drinks

Target Audience: Adults

Tricks Used: Piles of fruit with signs saying they have artificial ingredients, cute little boy, cute mom with dimples, words “very best”

Commercial 3



Commercial 4: *Hot Wheels 2*

(:35 seconds)

Useful for Practicing: Target audience, tricks, toys doing things they can’t really do, toy size, disclaimers

Target Audience: Boys

Tricks Used: Real monster trucks, special effects, music, excited voiceover, intercut scenes with actual trucks, animations, cars flying over doghouse, “Faster than fast”

Commercial 4



Commercial 5: *Magic Kissing Dragons*

(:35 seconds)

Useful for Practicing: Target audience, toys shown doing things they cannot do, tricks, parts sold separately and other disclaimers, toy size

Target Audience: Girls

Tricks Used: Animation, sparkles in air, music, happy girls playing with dragons, extreme close-ups, lots of accessories, special effects, sound effects

Commercial 5



**Commercial 6: *Fairytopia***

(:35 seconds)

Useful for Practicing: Target audience, toy size, toys shown doing things they cannot do, tricks, parts sold separately and other disclaimers

Target Audience: Girls

Tricks Used: Animated fairies, sparkles, fairies flying through air, music, voiceover, special visual effects, sound effects

Commercial 6**Commercial 7: *Polly Pocket***

(:20 seconds)

Useful for Practicing: Target audience, toy size, tricks parts sold separately

Target Audience: Girls

Tricks Used: Extreme close-ups, intercut animation, toys moving, music, lots of accessories, girl saying "Sweet!"

Commercial 7**Commercial 8: *Giga Pets***

(:35 seconds)

Useful for Practicing: Parts sold separately and other disclaimers, toy size, tricks.

Target Audience: Children

Tricks Used: News flashes, animation, huge TV screen, extreme close-ups, special effects, excited children, lots of accessories, "new" pets, words "hero," "magic"

Commercial 8

**Commercial 9: *Old Hot Wheels***

(:35 seconds)

Useful for Practicing: Tricks, parts sold separately and other disclaimers, toy size, toys doing things they can't do

Target Audience: Boys

Tricks Used: Real racing cars, fast action, exciting music, excited voiceover, special effects, lots of track and loops, lots of cars, excited boys playing with cars and saying "wow!," words "Screaming," "Crazy," "Wicked jumps," "Fast track," offer of free track

Commercial 9**Commercial 10: *Barbie Kitchen***

(:35 seconds)

Useful for Practicing: Parts sold separately and other disclaimers, tricks, toy size

Target Audience: Girls

Tricks Used: Catchy song, extreme close-ups, moving camera, happy girls playing with toys and saying "Wow!," Barbie and Ken dolls

Commercial 10

Resources

Resources	97
<i>Buy Me That!</i> Video Tape Series	98
<i>How Much Sugar?</i> Chart	99
<i>How Much Fruit?</i> Chart	101
<i>ChooseMyPlate</i> Diagram.	103
How Families Can Help.....	105
About Project Look Sharp	109
Project Look Sharp Curriculum Kits	111

Resources

Project Look Sharp, Ithaca College
www.projectlooksharp.org

Books

Loreen Leedy, *The Edible Pyramid: Good Eating Every Day*, Holiday House, Inc. Reading Rainbow Books, 2007.

For other good suggestions, see PBS website:
www.pbs.org/parents/special/books-healthy eating.html

Videos

Buy Me That! series (see next page for full description)

Magic School Bus: For Lunch (1994)

Web Resources

Government Websites:

- *ChooseMyPlate*: www.choosemyplate.gov
- Team Nutrition: www.fns.usda.gov/tn
- Eat Smart Play Hard:
www.teamnutrition.usda.gov/resources/eatsmartmaterials.html

Media Literacy Websites:

- National Association for Media Literacy Education: www.name.net
- Media Literacy Clearinghouse: www.frankwbaker.com/default1.htm
- Center for Media Literacy: www.medialit.org

PBS Websites:

- PBS Parents: www.pbs.org/parents
- PBS Kids: www.pbskids.org/dontbuyit

“How Families Can Help Children Think about Advertising and Nutrition”

For a downloadable version that can be folded into an eight-page pamphlet and distributed to families, visit: www.projectlooksharp.org and select *Health: Kindergarten and First Grade* under the Curriculum Kits and Lesson Plans tab.

Buy Me That! Videotape Series
(A Kids' Survival Guide to T.V. Advertising)

This 3-part series was produced by Consumers Union and shown on HBO during the late 1980s and early 1990s. Each program is about 30 minutes long, and features Jim Fyfe as the host. Each program begins with an introduction by the host, and ends with a recap in the form of a number of "tips" for smart viewing. In addition to the segments listed for each program, there are also a number of "Kids Talk" segments in which kids between the ages of 4 and 12 talk about advertising issues. The points are clearly made, and often involve showing actual kids attempting to use the products as they were advertising (and their comments when the products don't work as expected). The segments are nice and short, allowing the teacher to stop the videotape after each one to discuss the points made, or to use only the segment(s) that relate to the topic of interest. *Time given is (minutes:seconds).*

Program #1, Buy Me That!

- 1 - **Do Commercials Use Tricks?** misleading claims and images, including toys that are shown talking. (4:45)
- 2 - **Food Makeup** male food makeup artist demonstrates how he makes cereal & milk, grapes, hot cocoa, and ice cream look so good. (3:30)
- 3 - **Magic of Editing** shows how editing is used to make toys look easier to use than they really are. (3:00)
- 4 - **Parts Sold Separately** using many examples of commercials that imply that toys come with more accessories than they really do. (3:35)
- 5 - **900 Numbers** talks about how 1-900 phone calls work, with examples of kids who have racked up enormous phone bills unknowingly. (2:40)
- 6 - **Some Assembly Required** shows just how long it takes to put together some of these toys. (1:35)
- 7 - **Celebrity Sneakers** general discussion about how commercials make it seem like wearing your favorite celebrity's sneakers will make you fast or dance as well as they do. (1:35)

Program #2, Buy Me That Too!

- 1 - **Is What You See, What You Get?** dissects claims made about 2 fancy products, with demonstrations of what the products can really do. (4:30)
- 2 - **Product Placements** talks about commercial products shown in movies and video games, acting as hidden commercials. (2:50)
- 3 - **Kids Clubs** discusses various "kids clubs" that imply kids are joining some kind of organization, when they really get almost nothing for it. (2:45)
- 4 - **Sound Effects** demonstrations of how different sounds are created in commercials (sounds of eating, walking, swordfighting, etc.). (4:35)
- 5 - **Rock Group Products** discusses the ads that imply that to be a true fan of a rock group or celebrity, you need to buy every product associated with them, calculating how much this might cost if you bought everything. (2:30)
- 6 - **Celebrity Sneakers** uses kids running and jumping in different kinds of sneakers to make the point that celebrity sneakers don't help you do better. (3:45)
- 7 - **Prizes in Cereals** calculates the mathematical probability of being able to collect all the baseball cards possible and how many boxes of cereal you would have to buy. (2:50)

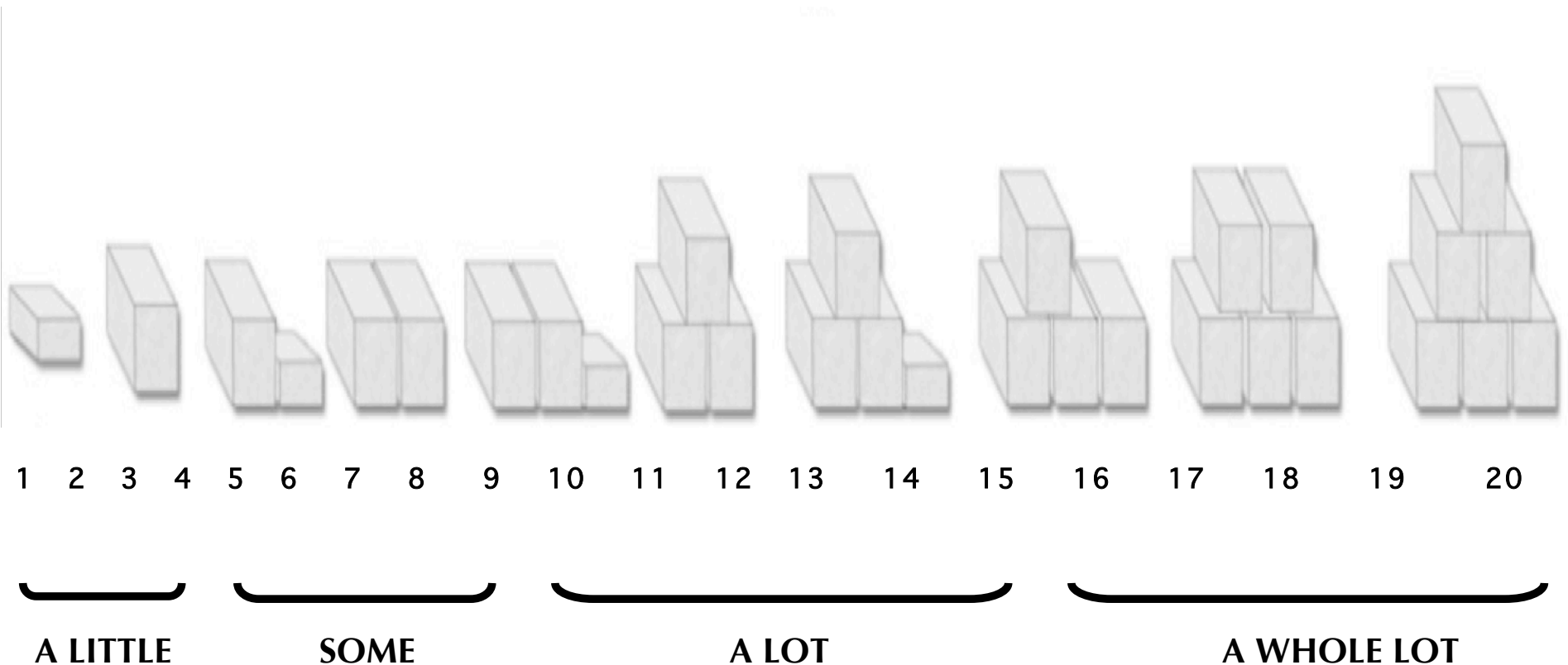
Program #3, Buy Me That 3

- 1 - **Coke vs. Pepsi Taste Test** has kids who are either Coke or Pepsi lovers do a blind taste test with surprising results. (4:30)
- 2 - **Fruit Snacks** compares the sugar and nutritional values of "fruit" snacks with real fruit (2:90)
- 3 - **Fruit Drinks** compares the sugar and nutritional values of "fruit" drinks with real fruit juices. (1:05)
- 4 - **Sweepstakes** discusses the probability of winning sweepstakes ("you have a better chance of your teacher begin struck by lightning than winning this sweepstakes"). (2:10)
- 5 - **Artificial Ingredients** shows a mad scientist making something mysterious with horrible sounding ingredients; the product turns out to be Twinkies. (2:45)
- 6 - **Candy for Breakfast?** demonstrates how many tablespoons of sugar there are in various cereals. (1:40)
- 7 - **Lights! Action! Burger!** a female food artists shows how they use tricks to make burgers, fries, and shakes look so good. (3:45)
- 8 - **Sports Drinks** analyzes the ingredients in Gatorade and other sports drinks, concluding that you are better off drinking plain water. (2:00)

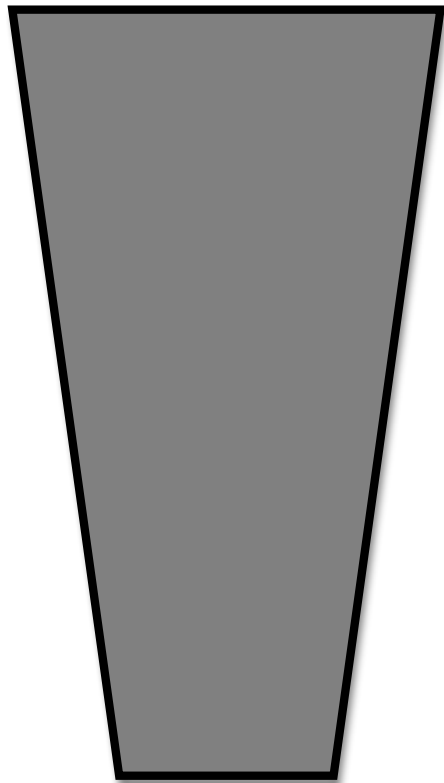
Copyright 1989 by Consumers Union of U.S., Inc. Yonkers, NY 10703-1057, a nonprofit organization. Video segments used in this kit were adapted with permission from *Buy Me That!* produced by CONSUMER REPORTS® Television for educational purposes only. No commercial use or reproduction permitted. Log onto www.ConsumerReports.org

How Much Sugar?

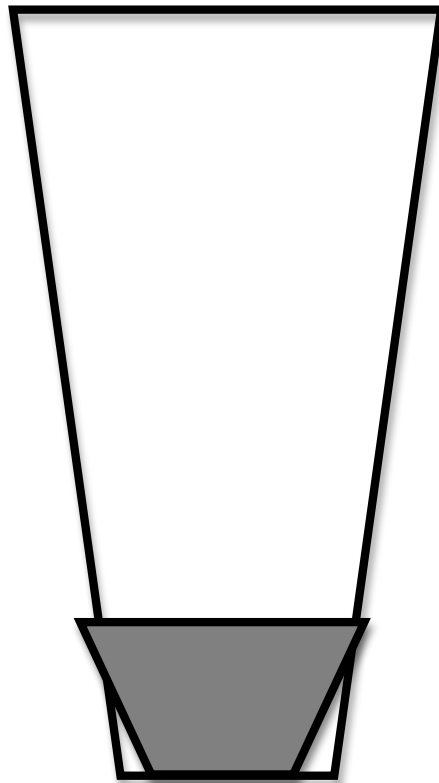
Find out how many grams of SUGAR is in one serving of the food or drink by looking on the package. It will give a number with the letter “g” for grams. Then find that number on the chart below to see if that is A LOT of sugar or only A LITTLE bit of sugar.



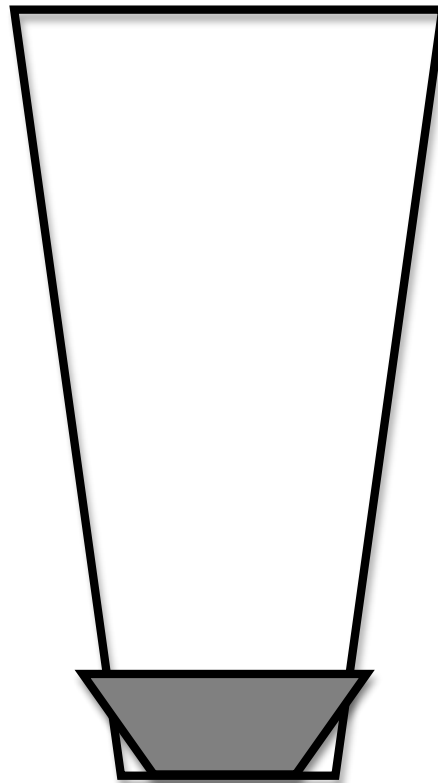
How Much Fruit?



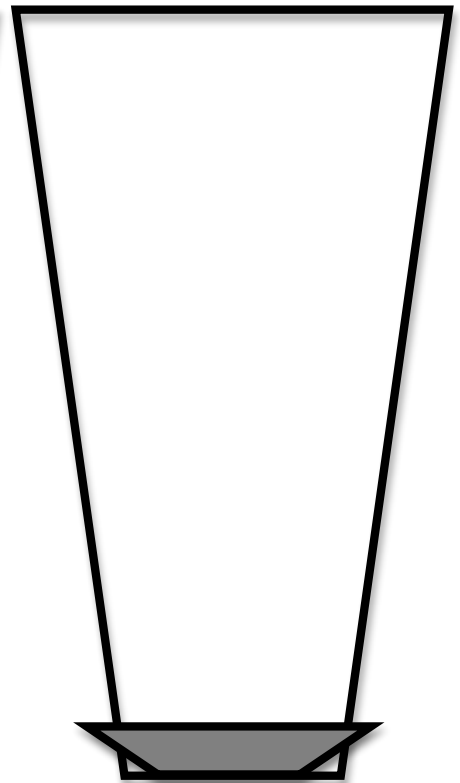
**100%
Juice
(A Lot)**



**15%
Juice**

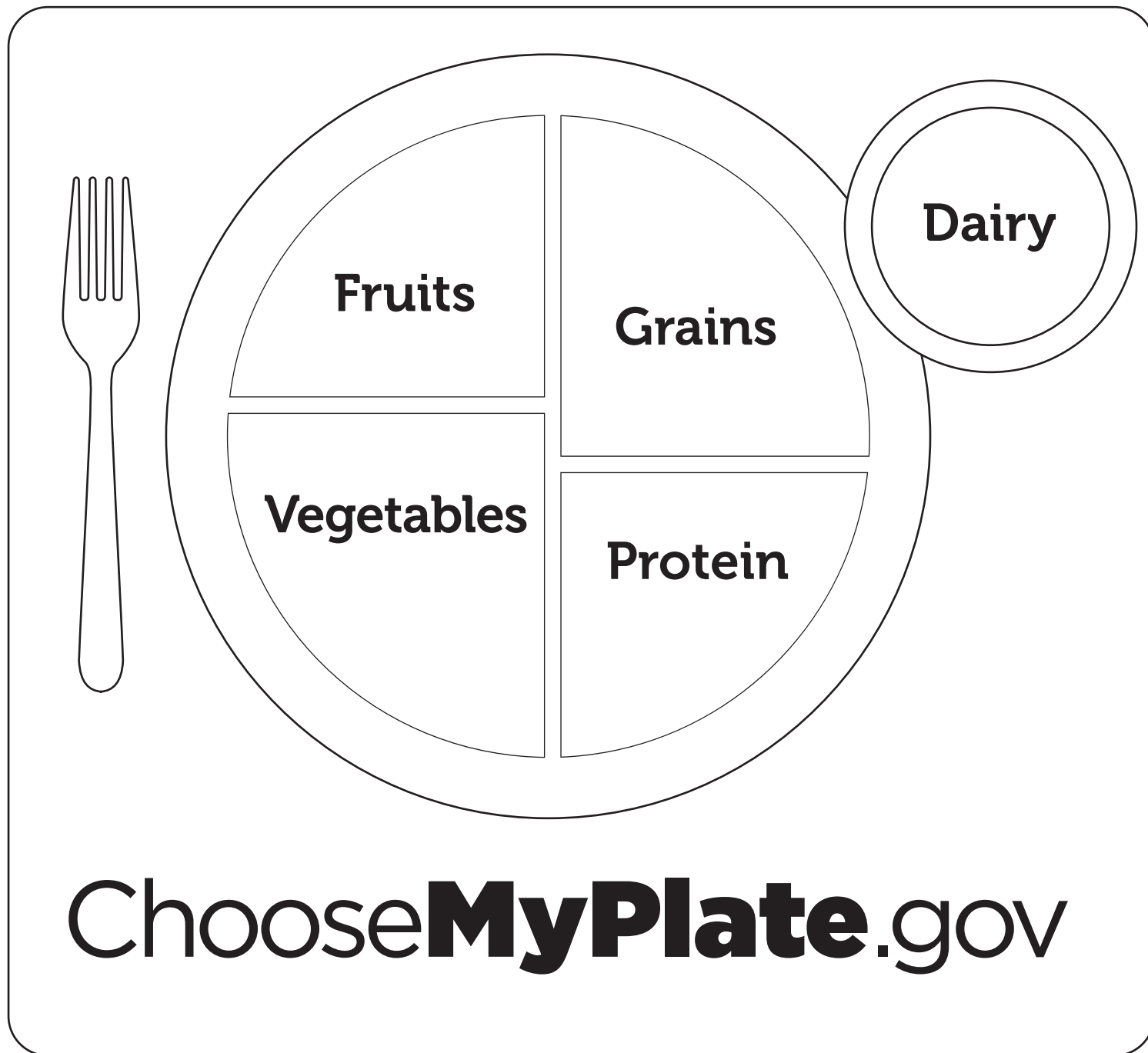


**10%
Juice**



**5%
Juice**

(A Little)



How Families Can Help Children Think About Advertising and Nutrition

Even if your children never watch commercial television, they are still likely to see lots of advertising messages – on signs, in stores, in magazines and newspapers, in movies and videos, almost everywhere they look!

Just like children need to learn to read and write, they also need to learn how to “read” these kinds of media messages, so they can ask key questions about what the advertiser is doing to try to persuade them to want a product, what is true and what isn’t, and what kinds of tricks the advertiser might be using to try to sell them something.

In this pamphlet, families will find many ways to help children use their critical thinking skills when they see advertising messages.

THINKING ABOUT ADVERTISING AND COMMERCIALS

If you are watching TV with your children or see an advertising message somewhere else, you can talk with your children about that message.

You Can Ask Questions Like:

“What are they selling?”

See how fast your children can figure that out. This reinforces the idea that all commercials are trying to sell something, and they want children to ask an adult to buy it for them.

“Who is this message for?”

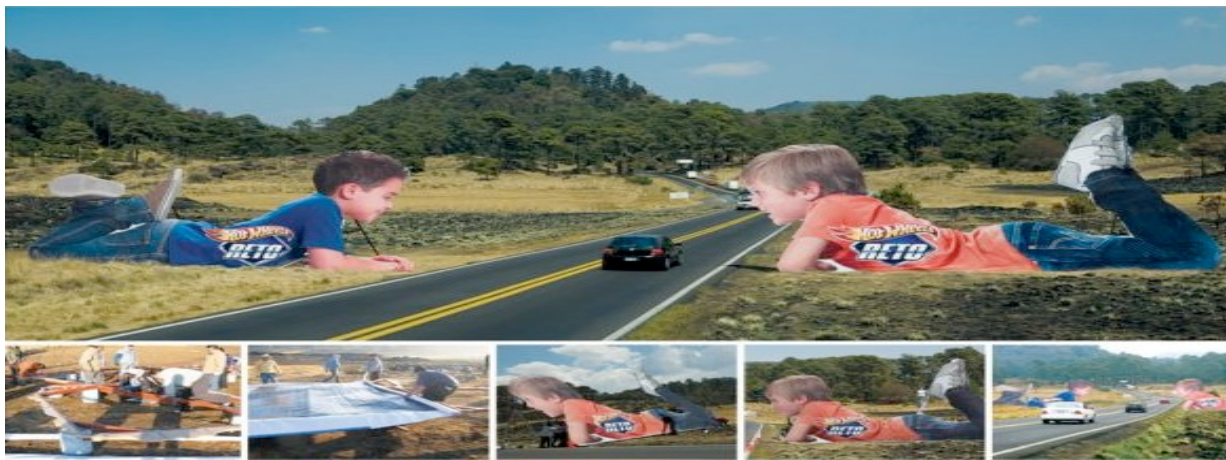
Children need to understand:

- When an advertising messages is designed to appeal to them
- What techniques advertisers are using to reach them
- The techniques used to appeal to boys vs. those used to appeal to girls

“What tricks are they using to make the product look great?”

Even young children should be able to recognize how the music, sound effects, bright colors, special visual effects, funny characters, and celebrities are used to make products look better than they might really be.





You and Your Child Can Identify Techniques Used in Advertising:

- **Size Distortion:** Extreme close-ups makes toys seem much bigger than they really are
- **Editing:** Is often done to make toys seem exciting and easier to use than they really are by cutting out the parts that show the toy not working right
- **Parts Sold Separately:** Disclaimers (like “batteries sold separately” or references to things shown in the commercial that are not included when you buy the toy) usually come at the end of the commercial or are written in small print, so it’s important to teach children to look for them and for other disclaimers (like “some assembly required”)
- **Paid Actors:** Children need to know that the people they see in ads that look like

THINKING ABOUT ADVERTISING MESSAGES ABOUT FOOD AND NUTRITION

Advertising messages about food and nutrition come not only in commercials and advertisements, but also on the food and drink packages. When you are shopping at the grocery store or watching television, you can talk with your children about the message. In particular, focus on the two most misleading nutritional messages found in advertising to children: foods that have a lot of added sugar and foods that pretend to contain a lot of fruit or fruit juice, but really don’t.

You Can Ask Questions Like:

“What kind of food is that?”

Help children recognize that there are different food groups and that different kids of help us be healthy. The USDA recently unveiled “Choose My Plate,” which represents a healthy balanced meal; for more information, go to <http://choosemyplate.gov>

- **Fruits and Vegetables** (which provide vitamins & minerals)
- **Grains**, especially whole grains (which provide energy)
- **Dairy** (which provides calcium)
- **Meat, Eggs, Nuts & Beans** (which provide protein)



Do you think that has a lot of sugar in it? How can you tell?

Helping children understand that many times foods and drinks add sugar to make them sweeter and taste good, but that added sugar isn't healthy so those foods should not be eaten very often.

Ways that children can learn to recognize if there is a lot of sugar (especially for cereals, other breakfast foods and snacks):

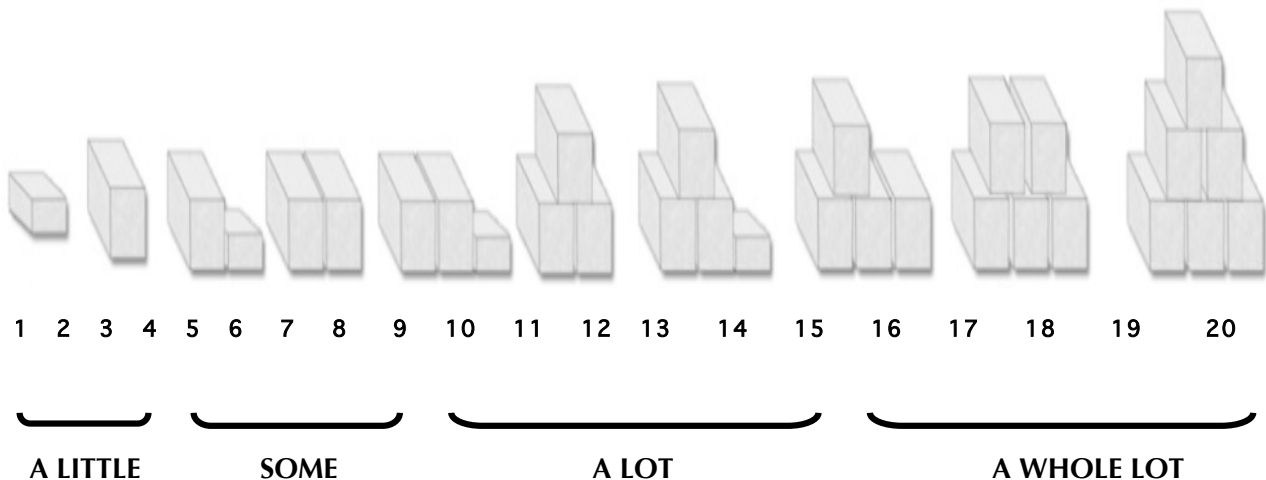
- If the name has words like "frosted" or "honey" in it, or there are sugar "sparkles" on the food shown on the package or in the commercial
- If it is chocolate flavored or has marshmallows in it
- If there are cartoon characters on the package or in the commercial
- If a cereal is brightly colored
- If an adult can read how much sugar is in one serving (from the side of the package) and the ingredients to see if there are variations of sugar listed (high fructose corn syrup, sucrose, glucose, honey, etc.).



Encourage children to use the chart below to figure out if there is a lot of sugar in a product.

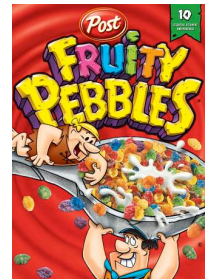
How Much Sugar?

Find out how many grams of SUGAR is in one serving of the food or drink by looking on the package. It will give a number with the letter "g" for grams. Then find that number on the chart below to see if that is A LOT of sugar or only A LITTLE bit of sugar.



Ways that children can learn to tell how much fruit is in a product:

- If a drink says **"100% Juice,"** then it is all fruit juice; if it doesn't, it probably isn't, and it might have only a little bit of juice or none at all. In this case, it's probably made up of mostly sugar and water;
 - They shouldn't be fooled if it says "100% Vitamin C" – that only means they added some vitamins to the sugar and water, but it's not as healthy as actual fruit juice
- If a food is made only of a real fruit (like canned or frozen or fresh fruit), or it says **"100% Fruit"** on it;
 - Words like "real fruit" or "all natural" don't mean the same thing, only that whatever fruit is in it is real fruit, and since sugar is "all natural"
- If an adult can read the ingredients on the side of the package to see if there is any fruit listed (and if so, what kind of fruit) and whether there is added sugar



Encourage children to use the chart below to compare how much fruit is in different drinks.

How Much Fruit?

