

Ad Alert! Becoming a Super Smart Health Consumer!

Time: 40 minutes

Materials Needed:

- A few magazines or newspapers with various advertisements (especially for food, drinks, or health-related products).
- Access to 1-2 kid-friendly TV commercials (e.g., via YouTube, pre-selected by the teacher). Device for viewing (tablet/laptop).
- Plain paper or a notebook.
- Colored pencils, markers, or crayons.
- Optional: Pre-cut paper in a shield shape for the 'Consumer Rights Super Shield' activity.

Lesson Activities:

1. Introduction: What's the Buzz? (5 minutes)

Teacher: "Hi Cora! Have you ever seen an advertisement—maybe on TV, in a magazine, or online—that made you really, really want something, especially if it was for a food, a drink, or something that was supposed to be healthy or super fun?"

(Allow Cora to share an example or two).

Teacher: "Advertisers are very clever at grabbing our attention! Today, we're going to become 'Ad Detectives.' Our mission is to figure out the tricks advertisers sometimes use, especially when they're trying to convince us about health products or habits. We'll also learn about your special 'Consumer Super Rights' that help protect you!"

2. Activity 1: Ad Detective - Spot the Tricks! (15 minutes)

Teacher: "Alright, Detective Cora, let's investigate!"

Part A: Print Ad Investigation (Magazines/Newspapers - 7 minutes)

Teacher: "Here are some magazines/newspapers. Can you find 2-3 ads for food, drinks, or anything that seems health-related? For each ad, let's think like detectives:"

- "Who do you think this ad is trying to talk to? Kids? Grown-ups?"
- "What does it promise or make you think the product will do for you? (Make you stronger? Happier? Cooler? Healthier?)"
- "What makes it eye-catching? (Bright colors? Funny characters or cartoons? Famous people? Exciting words?)"
- "Does it use any 'magic words' like 'new,' 'amazing,' 'best ever,' 'guaranteed results,' or 'all natural'?"

(Discuss Cora's findings for each ad. Highlight techniques like using appealing characters, bright colors, emotional appeals (fun, joy), and persuasive language.)

Part B: Commercial Break Investigation (TV Commercials - 5 minutes)

Teacher: "Now let's watch a TV commercial or two. Keep your detective eyes and ears open for the same kinds of things, plus look out for catchy jingles, exciting music, or fast action."

(Watch a pre-selected kid-friendly commercial for a food or health-related item. Pause and discuss similar questions as above.)

Part C: Fads, Quackery, and a Healthy Dose of Skepticism (3 minutes)

Teacher: "Sometimes, these really persuasive ads can make everyone want a certain product, and it becomes a 'fad' – super popular for a while, even if it's not actually the best choice. Can you think of a toy or food that was a fad?"

"Even trickier is 'quackery.' That's when people make totally false or unproven claims about a health product, saying it can cure things it can't, or that it's a miracle solution. Ads can unfortunately spread these ideas. So, it's important to be a critical thinker and not believe everything you see or hear, especially when it sounds too good to be true!"

3. Activity 2: Your Consumer Super Rights! (10 minutes)

Teacher: "Good news! Even though advertisers are clever, you have special powers as a consumer. These are called Consumer Rights, and they help protect you, especially from false health claims or unsafe products. Let's learn about five important ones:"

1. **The Right to Safety:** You have the right to expect products to be safe when used as intended. (Example: A new cereal shouldn't have dangerous ingredients.)
2. **The Right to Be Informed:** You have the right to get truthful and complete information about a product *before* you decide to get it. No hidden tricks! (Example: Health claims on food packaging should be accurate.)
3. **The Right to Be Heard:** If you have a problem with a product or think an ad is misleading, you have the right to voice your complaint and have someone listen. (Example: Telling a trusted adult or writing to a company if a health product doesn't work as advertised.)
4. **The Right to Have Problems Corrected (Redress):** If a product is faulty, doesn't work as promised, or is unsafe, you have the right to get things made right – like a refund, a replacement, or a repair. (Example: Getting your money back for a 'health' gadget that breaks immediately or doesn't do what the ad said.)
5. **The Right to Consumer Education:** You have the right to learn how to be a smart and safe consumer – just like you're doing right now!

Creative Task: My Consumer Rights Super Shield!

Teacher: "Let's make a 'Consumer Rights Super Shield!' On this paper (or shield shape), can you write down these five rights, and maybe draw a little symbol for each one that helps you remember it? This shield represents your power to be a smart consumer!"

(Cora creates her shield while discussing the rights.)

4. Activity 3: Community Health Watch Detective (7 minutes)

Teacher: "Now that you're an expert Ad Detective and know your Consumer Rights, let's put on our 'Community Health Watch' hats. Thinking about our town or community, can you identify any consumer health problems? This could be misleading ads you've seen locally, a fad that seems unhealthy, or maybe a place where people aren't getting good health information."

(Help Cora brainstorm. Examples: Lots of ads for sugary drinks near places kids go, a local product making unverified health claims, neighbors falling for a diet fad without checking facts.)

Teacher: "Let's pick one of those. How could knowing your consumer rights help you or others with this problem? What's one small thing you think could be done to help people make smarter choices or avoid being misled?"

(Encourage Cora to think creatively – e.g., telling friends/family to be careful, making a poster for your home about checking claims, or even (as an exercise) writing a pretend letter to a company about a misleading ad.)

5. Wrap-up: Be a Health Hero! (3 minutes)

Teacher: "Fantastic work today, Super Detective Cora! You've uncovered advertising tricks and armed yourself with your Consumer Rights! What's the most important thing you learned today about ads and health?"

(Listen to Cora's response.)

Teacher: "Remember, being a smart consumer means thinking critically about messages, especially those about your health. When you see an ad for a health product or food, what will you try to remember to do now?" (Guide: Ask questions, talk to a trusted adult, check if it sounds too good to be true.)

Teacher: "You're now officially a budding Health Hero! Keep those detective skills sharp!"