Advertising in America: A Brief Look at Advertising During the Civil War Era
by Amber Laquet

Students will analyze advertisements from the Pre-Civil War and Civil War Era in order to determine the purpose and audience targeted from the advertisements. Using prior knowledge of advertisements today, the students will compare and contrast the advertisements from 19th century to todays. The students will apply their knowledge of the Civil War to determine the function of the advertisements. The final assignment will be the students presenting their own advertisements to the class as well as a final written extension on what they learned from the experience.

Overview

Objectives: After completing the activity, students will be able to:
- analyze advertisements and determine the audience and purpose of the document
- analyze advertisements for an understanding of life and culture in the Civil War era
- research further advertisements from the Library of Congress website
- use this knowledge to create an advertisement of the Civil War era
- utilize public speaking skills by presenting advertisement to class
- communicate ideas about advertising in written form

Understanding Goal: Primary sources of advertisements of the 1800’s give students an interesting look at how the media influenced consumers during the Pre-Civil War. By utilizing these advertisements and researching the Library of Congress website for more primary sources, the students will have a better understanding of the life and times of the Civil War Era and compare and contract these times to their own.

Investigative Question: How do the advertisements from today differ than those of the 1800’s and how does the Civil War have an affect on the consumers of that era?

Time Required: Five 40-minute class periods
**Grade Level:** 6 - 8

**Topic:** Advertising, Culture, Folk Life, Literature, Technology/Industry

**Era:** Civil War and Reconstruction, 1861 - 1877

**Illinois Learning Standards:** Social Science: 16A
Language Arts: 2B, 3B, 3C, 4B, 5A, 5B, 5C

For information on specific Illinois Learning Standards go to www.isbe.state.il.us/ils/

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**Preparation**

**Background for Lesson:**

**Library of Congress Items:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Collection or Exhibit</th>
<th>Media Type</th>
<th>URL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Sweetser’s panacea..(Philadelphia, October 22, 1847)</td>
<td>An American Time Capsule: Three Centuries of Broadsides and Other Printed Ephemera</td>
<td>Image</td>
<td><a href="http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/rbpebib:@field(NUMBER+@band(rbpe+15500800))">http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/rbpebib:@field(NUMBER+@band(rbpe+15500800))</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The original rubber store, under Goodyear’s patent. Established in 1839. C. Hayes, 26 School St., Boston (1861).</td>
<td>An American Time Capsule: Three Centuries of Broadsides and Other Printed Ephemera</td>
<td>Image</td>
<td><a href="http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/rbpebib:@field(NUMBER+@band(rbpe+06802500a))">http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/rbpebib:@field(NUMBER+@band(rbpe+06802500a))</a></td>
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Additional Materials:

- Advertisements and questions on PowerPoint.
- Art Supplies
- "Brainstorming" worksheet
- Computers with Microsoft Publisher.
- "Advertisement Analysis" worksheet
- "LOC and Useful Links" handout

Procedure

Description of Teacher Actions:

1. Introduce advertising. The teacher will pass out a brainstorming activity for the students to think about all forms of advertising including television, magazines, radios, and even the Internet. The students will have a few minutes to write everything they know about advertising and discuss it as a class when finished.

2. Go over power point with students showing and explaining advertisements from the Civil War Era. Stop after each advertisement and have students answer the questions from the power point on a worksheet with the corresponding questions. This will help the students have an understanding of the culture in the Civil War Era, as well as the companies, products, and consumers being targeted. The students may answer at their seat and then go over the answers as a group.

3. After learning about advertisements from the 1800’s, have the students get in groups and (using a Venn Diagram or other graphic organizer) have the students compare and contrast advertisements from today to the advertisements from the 1800’s. (The students will need to keep this graphic organizer to write their paper).

4. (Optional-if time) For one day, the students will research other advertisements from the Library of Congress. They should be encouraged to find advertisements from products that are still in existence today (if possible.)
6. The teacher will instruct the students that they will make their own advertisement, using methods from the 1800’s (pamphlets, newspaper ads, or flyers) but by using a product from today’s culture.

7. After the advertisements are finished, the students will present them to the class, informing the students of what their audience, function, and purpose would be if seen in the 19th century.

**Extension Ideas:**
After all of the presentations of the advertisements, the students will need to write an extended response on the following question; advertisements have been critical for both consumers and the industries for promoting products. Why do you think advertisements have changed so much in the past 150 years? Remember to use evidence from the times and culture in the Civil War Era to our culture today to compare and contrast.

**Evaluation**
Teacher will monitor students to make sure they are on task in both seatwork and group work.
Teacher will ask and answer questions pertaining to the discussion.
Teacher will analyze student answers to determine if relevant to lesson; if not, re-teaching may be needed.
Brainstorming Activity

- Using the worksheet provided, write down as many things as you know about advertising. There are no wrong answers. We will discuss these ideas when everyone is finished.

Advertisements including:
- Dr. Sweetser’s Panacea
- Daily Evening Circular
- The Original Rubber Store (Goodyear)

Analysis of advertisement #1
- What is the first thing you notice about this advertisement?
- What year do you think the advertisement was made? What clues help determine the date?
- What does the product offer to do?
- Do the pictures add anything to the advertisement?
- Do you think the product does what it claims?
- Why would someone be interested in buying a product that can cure everything?
Analysis of Advertisement #2
• How is this advertisement different from the first?
• What is the first thing you notice about this advertisement?
• How is it similar to our want-ads from today? How is it different?
• What is the function of a want ad?
• Is the function the same or different of today’s want-ads?
• What phrases or words catch your attention as a consumer?
• From what you know about history, why do you think want-ads were important in the 1850’s-1860’s?

Analysis of Advertisement #3
• What product is the company trying to sell?
• Does the product name look familiar?
• What types of products does the company make? With what material are all of these things made with?
• What audience do you think the advertisement is targeting?
• What year do you think this ad was made?
• What clues help you determine the date?

Compare and Contrast
• Using information from the brainstorming activity and the analysis worksheet, get into groups of 2 and determine the similarities and differences between advertising today and advertising in the Civil War Era. On the back of the paper, write a few reasons why there are differences (think about what was going on during the 1850’s and 60’s vs. today’s society.)
Name:_________________

Brainstorming activity:

Consider everything you know about advertising from today! Using the worksheet provided, write down as many things as you know about advertising. There are no wrong answers. Try to get as many ideas written down as possible. We will discuss these ideas when everyone is finished.

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#1- Dr. Sweetser’s Panacea

1. What is the first thing you notice about this advertisement?
   
   
2. What year do you think the advertisement was made? What clues help determine the date?
   
   
3. What does the product offer to do?
   
   
4. Do the pictures add anything to the advertisement?
   
   
5. Do you think you would buy this product?
   
   
6. Do you think the product does what it claims?
   
   
7. Why would someone be interested in buying a product that can cure everything?
1. How is this advertisement different from the first?

2. What is the first thing you notice about this advertisement?

3. How is it similar to our want-ads from today? How is it different?

4. What is the function of a want ad?

5. Is the function the same or different of today’s want-ads?

6. What phrases or words catch your attention as a consumer?

7. From what you know about history, why do you think want-ads were important in the 1850’s-1860’s?
1. What product is the company trying to sell?

2. Does the product name look familiar?

3. What types of products does the company make? With what material are all of these things made with?

4. What audience do you think the advertisement is targeting?

5. What year do you think this ad was made?

6. What clues help you determine the date?
Name: _____________

Comparing Advertising from the Civil War Era and Today

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advertising in the Civil War Era</th>
<th>Both (similarities)</th>
<th>Advertising Today</th>
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