

OVERVIEW FOR PRESENTER

This 45-minute lesson is part 2 of the Open Truth lesson. Part 1 exposes the truth that sugary drinks are making us sick. Part 2 exposes the marketing tactics of the sugary drink industry. The activities are designed to teach the following key messages in an interactive and engaging way:

1. Who is *Big Soda*?
2. *Big Soda* spends millions of dollars targeting kids with marketing tactics that associate harmful drinks with fame, athleticism, sex appeal, health, and happiness.
3. *Big Soda* targets Latino and African American youth, even though they know that their drinks are making us sick.
4. Take Action! Don't be a target. Get informed, share what you know, and speak up for your health, your family's health, and your community's health.

SUPPLIES

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|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Logo worksheet and Answer Key | <input type="checkbox"/> What's in an Ad? worksheet |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Trivia worksheet and Facilitator Key | <input type="checkbox"/> Big Soda Targeting Youth of Color & Children Handout |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Samples of ads | |

INTRO (5 min)

Last time we talked about how sugary drinks affect health. Does anyone remember the activities we did? We talked about:

1. What is a sugary drink and how to convert grams of sugar into teaspoons. Can anyone tell me what the formula is? (Lined up bottles from lowest to highest sugar. Grams divided by 4 times the number of servings = total teaspoons in a container.)
2. How sugary drinks affect the body differently than sugary food. (We threw sugar packets in rapid fire to our "liver", who wasn't able to "catch" them.)
3. How much is too much sugar? (We showed you 5 pounds of sugar – what the average American eats in a month or 66 pounds in a year!)
4. How sugary drinks are making us sick. (Human body with different diseases like type 2 diabetes, heart disease, tooth decay)

Today we are here to talk about **sugary drink marketing and how it is targeted at young people. Why is this important?**

Studies have shown that ***until kids are 8 years old, they have difficulty distinguishing advertising from reality¹ and may not understand that the ads are trying to sell something.*** Which is a problem because advertising is everywhere – not just on tv or online, but on buses,

¹ Mary Story and Simone French, International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity

buildings, our phones (Instagram, TikTok), even in your classroom! So young people are especially vulnerable to advertising.

LOGO ACTIVITY (5 min)

(Alternative: Hand out logo activity as students arrive. This will save some time and give students who arrive earlier something to do, and will begin getting the students to think about pervasiveness of marketing.)

Write on the blank below each logo the brand and what it's trying to sell you. If there's a tagline, write that down too.

- *Did anyone notice anything similar about the logos on the left vs. the column on the right?*
- *Which column was easier to fill out?*
- *Why do you think the junk food and sugary drink logos were easier to fill out?*

The sugary food and drinks **industry spends MILLIONS of dollars on advertising** – and not just through traditional advertising like billboards and commercials. **They get their brand EVERYWHERE** on products, through famous people as paid endorsers, through online games, sponsorships and more. Public health just doesn't have that amount of money to compete, which is why you probably didn't recognize many of the logos in the first column.

TRIVIA GAME (10 min)

Now let's take a few minutes to play a trivia game. Choose someone from your table to record the answers, and we'll see which group gets the most correct answers. After we go through the questions, I'll tell you the right answers and each table should count how many they got right. (If you have small giveaways, you can offer the table with the most correct answers will get a small prize.)

What was the most surprising fact you learned from this trivia game? [Discuss]

WHO IS BIG SODA? (2 min)

So now let's focus on sugary drink advertising. **What does "Big Soda" mean to you, if anything?**

Big Soda is a term used to describe the soft drink industry as a whole. **Can anyone name the 3 "giants" of the sugary drinks market?** These three companies are responsible for more than $\frac{3}{4}$ of ALL the drinks on the shelves.

The Coca-Cola Company, PepsiCo, and Dr Pepper Snapple Group

How many of you have heard of Big Oil or Big Tobacco? It's the same idea – that altogether, the oil companies, the tobacco companies and even the sugary drink companies have a lot of money and power to influence many things – studies, votes, politicians etc.

WHAT'S IN AN AD? (10-15 min)

Our last activity will focus on the *tactics* that Big Soda uses to convince you to buy their products. A primary tactic is marketing. [Write on whiteboard or flip chart paper: Target Audience, Endorsements, Health Halo, Social Media and Games, Appealing to emotions and attitudes, Sponsorship of sporting events]

The main goal of advertising or marketing is to sell products to make money for the company. ***Their job is to make money.*** They do this by targeting people they want to buy their products, and using tactics they know will work to get you to buy what they are selling. I'll explain a little more about how advertising works.

TARGET AUDIENCE – Advertisers design most ads for a specific group of people and place them where they think their target audience will see them. *What are some products that might be targeted at people your age?* [Ex. video games, cereal, soda, etc.]

[Hand out Big Soda Targeting Youth of Color and Children]

BIG SODA TARGETS AFRICAN AMERICAN AND LATINO YOUTH

In 2010, African-American children and teens saw [80 to 90 percent more ads](#) on TV for sugary drinks than their white peers. Beverage companies spend more than [\\$28 million](#) a year on marketing campaigns specifically targeting African-American and Hispanic youth ages 2 to 17. They create entire departments whose job it is to only target these groups.

BIG SODA TARGETS YOUNG CHILDREN

Just as the tobacco industry used Joe Camel to lure kids, Big Soda uses cartoon characters like Coke's cute and cuddly [polar bears](#) to appeal to their youngest targets.

In 2013, Coca-Cola Co. placed [38 million ads](#) for products or promotions on children's websites, despite promises they would not advertise these products to children.

BIG SODA USES CELEBRITY AND ATHLETE ENDORSEMENTS [Refer to Vitamin Water and Kobe Bryant Ad]

[Over \\$28 Million](#) is spent annually for celebrities and athletes to promote sugary drinks. Just like Beyoncé got \$50 million from Pepsi, lots of celebrities have taken money from Big Soda. They use celebrities and athletes to associate their drinks with fame, power, money, success, and being a good athlete. But most of these celebrities and athletes don't even drink sugary drinks!

HEALTH HALO [Refer to Vitamin Water and Kobe Bryant Ad]

Big Soda creates new drinks that claim to be healthier but are not. They do this by using names or words in their ads that make people think they are healthy, such as: "Vitamin Water", "Energy drink", Made with "Real Fruit Juice" or "Part of a healthy breakfast".

They also use images to make things look healthy—such as fruit for drinks that have no actual fruit in them or using athletes to sell their drinks.

BIG SODA USES SOCIAL MEDIA, GAMES AND CONTESTS [Refer to Capri Sun Contest Ad]

Every drink company uses social media, games, and contests to advertise their drinks. They all have websites, Instagram accounts, Twitter, TikTok, and more to get their message out. They all use contests—such as trips or free gear-- to get people to buy more of their drinks. They even create all kinds of free video games online and for use on phones to promote their drinks even to small kids. Often the celebrities or athletes they've paid will promote their drinks with contests and games online and on social media. All of these brands have hundreds of thousands of followers. For example, Pepsi's 'Live for Now' campaign included 'exclusive' content on the company's Facebook and Twitter sites, [bringing it 250,000 new fans in one month alone](#).

APPEALING TO EMOTIONS AND ATTITUDES [Refer to Santa Claus Coke Ad]

Using images that make consumer feel more attractive, sexier, happier, cooler, patriotic, etc. For example, Coca-Cola's tag line is "Open Happiness."

SPONSORSHIPS OF SPORTING EVENTS [Refer to Coke Slide at AT&T Park]

Big Soda sponsors sports and events at all levels from giving money to schools for scoreboards to being major sponsors of the World Cup, the Olympics, the Super Bowl (e.g. Pepsi Halftime), and the World Series. And as we have all seen at the SF Giants stadium, they also do things like build big slides for kids that look like a big soda bottle.

AD ACTIVITY

[Pass out What's in an Ad? worksheet and several sugary drink ads for each group]

Now that we've gone over some of the tactics Big Soda uses in advertising to target you, we'd like each group to analyze an ad for a sugary drink. Choose one of the sample ads and answer the questions on the worksheet with your group. In a few minutes, each group will share their answers.

[Each group describes their ad, what they are selling, and the tactics they are using to sell their drink. If it's a large audience, just choose 1-2 groups to share.]

- *What is the brand and what are they selling?*
- *What tactics did they use in this ad?*
- *Do you think their tactics work? Does the ad make you want to buy the drink?*

DON'T BE A TARGET- TAKE ACTION (5 Min)

So what can we do to not be a target of Big Soda?

Learn how sugary drinks are making us sick and the tactics Big Soda uses to get you to buy their drinks to become an informed consumer so you can't be as easily manipulated. Share what you learn with family, friends, teachers, and other adults in your life can also help.