



Seeing Through the Spin

Life Skills

Self Responsibility, Communication

What to Do

Identify bias in media and advertising

Measuring Success

Youth will be able to identify bias and present information in an unbiased manner

Audience

4th - 12th grades

Group Size

5 – 30

Preparation and Materials

- Tape
- Product ads
- Political print ads
- Ballot issue education factsheets for examples (current or old)

Introduction

Tell the students that we are all diverse individuals with different perspectives. Our experiences and personalities form who we are and what we believe. Introduce the word *bias*. [A bias is a point of view influenced by experience.] Tell the students that we all have biases, but we aren't always aware of them. Since people have different experiences, we all develop different biases.

A bias can also be used to influence individuals or groups toward a specific point of view. Many advertisements are “biased” because they are in favor of a consumer purchasing a specific product. The ads share only the good points of the product. An advertisement that would bring up both the good and bad points of a product would be considered “unbiased”, or not influenced by outside interests.

The Activity

Divide the group into teams of two or three. Distribute product and political ads. Ask each team to identify bias in the ads. Tape each ad to the wall as it is discussed by the team.

Reflect/Discuss

Now that you are finished, we will go around the room and ask each team to describe their ads.

(Following are questions to ask as each team makes its presentation):

- Was it easy to identify the bias in each ad?
- What was the viewpoint of the ads?
- What group did the ad target?
- Was there any similarity between the product ad and the political ad?
- Can you change the ads in a way that would change its bias?

Tell What is Important

We are all biased to a certain degree. We can still present information in as unbiased manner as possible. This will make our information more credible and truthful, especially when dealing with groups made up with people holding several different points of view.

Generalize to Your Life

We are exposed to bias every day. Why is it important to be able to identify bias? How is bias used in the marketplace and/or the political world? How can you use your knowledge of bias to make you a more knowledgeable consumer/citizen?

Apply What You Learned

Pass out copies of Ballot Issue Education factsheets and review as a group. What are some ways that the factsheets reduce potential bias? Why is it important to know what others may perceive as biased information?

Follow Up

Prior to a statewide election where Ballot Issue Education factsheets are developed, brief youth on the content and format of the Ballot Issue Education factsheets. Highlight the efforts made to create unbiased information. Utilize youth to distribute and present Ballot Issue Education to their peers. Peer groups could include student councils, 4-H teen leader clubs, civics classes, church youth groups for senior members, beta clubs, family and consumer sciences, FFA and agriculture classes, home schooled teens, and any other organized group or clubs for older teens both in and out of school.