

Ad:Check

Big Question Two: How much do ads influence children and young people?



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How much do ads influence children and young people?

Using industry and ASA information, students will have opportunities to:

- evaluate information and make informed judgements
- argue a case on behalf of others as well as themselves
- clarify their own values and attitudes
- examine some of their own spending habits
- discuss ASA rulings relating to children and advertising.

They will explore:

- how the Advertising Codes define a “child”
- what the limits are on what children and young people can see
- whether young consumers need protection and what the dangers are
- whether we are obsessed with consumerism.

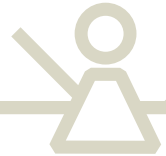
Teacher context

The size of the UK market for products aimed at children and young people is large and growing. Children and young people often have an influence on family spending, including over what goods are bought for the home as well as products they want to own for themselves.

There are strict rules on how goods and services are marketed to children and young people so that they are protected from unfair pressure to buy products and aren't encouraged to engage in dangerous behaviour. Ads must not undermine parental authority, although a recent report, commissioned by the Government, “The Bailey Review”, found that some parents in the UK are concerned by the increasing commercialisation of modern childhood, resulting in children and young people feeling under pressure to have specific branded clothes and consumer items in order to “fit in” with their peers.

Teacher note

The Advertising Codes class a child as someone under the age of 16 – see the [CAP website](#) for the rules relating to advertising and children.



Teacher note

At some point teachers may choose to raise the topic of “Brand bullying” – being bullied or stigmatised for not having the “right” labels, clothes, accessories or gadgets. It is perhaps a topic that will already have been addressed in previous work on bullying in general.



Lesson one: Young people as consumers 1 hour

Objectives

- To consider whether young consumers need specific protection.
- To evaluate advertising rules and make informed judgements.
- To argue a case on behalf of others as well as themselves.

Activity one: But everyone's got one!

Step one 5 mins Starter

1. Ask students to think about the things in their life that they enjoy and that make them happy. They have 30 seconds to write down a list of all of these things – it's a list just for them; they won't have to share it if they don't want to.
2. Ask students to look at their lists – Did anyone list things in life that are free? (Family, friends, hobbies, socialising ...)
3. How many of the items on their lists are the sort of things we could define as consumer goods or "must-have" items? (Phones, games, clothes ...)
4. How many of the things they have recorded have a preferred brand? Why do you need a preferred brand?

Step two 10 mins Debrief

Q / A

Are young people at risk of becoming too concerned about having the right labels or the right consumer goods? Some people have argued that we are at risk of becoming "obsessed" with consumerism.

Looking at the so-called "must-have" items:

- What makes you want these goods? What are the main influences?
- What about people who don't have these items? What might their reasons be for not buying them?
- Do you think there might be some people who place consumer goods as being more important than friends and family? Why might this be? Is this right?
- Do you think that advertisers need to be made aware of these issues?

Step three 5 mins Link

There are strict controls on advertising aimed at children and young people.

The ASA makes sure that ads targeted at children don't contain anything that is inappropriate or harmful and also ensures that young adults are protected.

The Advertising Codes define a child as someone under the age of 16, but there are further rules in place, like timing restrictions, that are designed to protect younger children.

Teacher note

You may want to recap – the ASA's role is to regulate ads by applying the Advertising Codes (see BQ1, Lesson 2, Activity 1 / Resource sheet 3). The rules are written to ensure that ads do not mislead, harm or offend and that they are socially responsible.



- How aware are students of what these controls mean?
- Do they think any controls are needed at all? Or do they think there should be more controls?

See the key rules relating to children and advertising [here](#).

Big question two: How much do ads influence children and young people?

Activity two: Advertising controls – Justified?

Step one 10 mins Statement line-up

Tell students that they will be presented with a range of descriptions of ads that could be encountered in different contexts. They will be given a choice of deciding whether they think the ads in their suggested context present no problems or whether they think that the ads should be subject to some control. They should consider whether the ads raise general issues or issues more specific to children and young people.

Identify one end of the room as “No problem” and the other as “Problem”. Using **BQ2 / Resource sheet 1**, read out the description of a potential advertising scenario and then ask students to place themselves somewhere along the “Problem / No problem” continuum.

Once students have settled themselves somewhere along the line, they should be prepared to justify their position and explain the reasoning behind their decision.

- Can they arrive at a consensus?
- A majority decision?

Reveal whether the scenario would actually be permitted using the information from the Teacher notes on **BQ2 / Resource sheet 1** before moving on to discuss the next scenario.

Step two 15 mins

Now ask students in pairs to consider some more ads to identify the issue raising concern and make a judgement about the level of control needed.

Using **BQ2 / Resource sheet 2**, students should consider the ads and the context given on the task sheet and decide:

- Is this an issue most likely to affect children, or does it affect everyone?
- Is this an issue needing a lot of control, or none at all?

Once decided, they should plot a point on the chart for each ad.

Remind students that in this context, “child” is defined as being under the age of 16.

Step three 10 mins Debrief

Take feedback from students. (See teacher background information on the ads on **BQ2 / Resource sheet 3**.)

- Which ads needed most control?
- Which ads needed little or no control?
- What were the topics / contexts they identified as being particularly important for children?

Point out that the work of the ASA in implementing the Advertising Codes involves balancing a range of possibilities, from no action at one end of the scale, to changes in content, changes in location and changes in scheduling all the way to a complete ban at the other end of the scale.

Step four 5 mins Plenary

From the exercises they have just completed:

- Do students accept the need for advertising controls?
- How far do they accept that children and young people need to be protected by additional controls?

Step five Homework

Ask students to visit the Committee of Advertising Practice (CAP) website www.cap.org.uk and research the Advertising Codes relating to children – What are the four main rules governing advertising and children?

Look at the most recent [ASA rulings](#).

Identify one case relevant to children / young people, or one case about an ad they have seen:

- Did they agree with the complaints?
- Did they agree with the ASA's decision?

Lesson two: Marketplace – Is it OK? 1 hour

Objectives

- To explore the advertising rules.
- To make personal judgements on acceptable content.
- To assess the importance of context in acceptability.

Activity one: Is it OK?

Step one 5 mins

Introduction

Explain that this activity gives students the opportunity to further explore the Advertising Codes. They will look at both the content of ads and the context in which they might be encountered. They will be asked to judge how important **context** is in deciding on the acceptability of an ad. See *BQ2 / Resource sheets 4 – 5* for teacher and student resources for this activity, or look at the **Ad banks** for other examples you might want to use.

Step two 20 mins

The marketplace

- Divide the class into groups of five or six students. Give each group a copy of one ad with a note explaining the context in which it appeared see *BQ2 Images* for copies of ads.
- Ask each group to nominate a “recorder” who will stay with the ad at their table and record the opinions of the other groups as they visit.
- Over the course of the lesson, students will move around the room in groups of four or five, discussing each ad in turn.

- Each group has to discuss the ad on the table and help the recorder to summarise their discussion – either using notes or symbols to represent their views. After summarising with the recorder, the groups move clockwise to the next table, leaving the recorder in place.
- Recorders stay to receive members of another group. The visiting group discusses the ad on the table in front of them, with help from the recorder and with reference to the notes the recorder has already made. The recorder adds the group's comments and opinions to their notes.
- All groups then move on to the next task until they are back where they started.
- When groups return to their own tables, they help the recorder compose a summary of all the comments received on their ad.

Step three 20 mins

Debrief

Ask each group to explain their findings on specific ads, making sure all groups comment and all ads are covered.

Teacher note

This exercise easily allows questions of different levels of challenge to be allocated to tables / individuals according to ability. Teachers can ask for part answers from numbered heads: “Can anyone who was number 4 tell me ...”).



Ask recorders and other group members:

- Were some ads easier to evaluate than others? Why?
- How important is the **context** of an ad in determining its acceptability?
- Which of the ads proved to be a problem?

During the debrief, give students information on the complaints made to the ASA and the final ASA ruling.

Were there any ads that the students would not allow in any context?

Step four 15 mins

Plenary

- What did you learn as a result of working with others?
- Was it easy to reach a consensus decision?
- How difficult is it to balance opposing views?
- The ASA Council decisions are based on a majority vote – is this a better method?
- Finally take a class vote on each of the ads. Is it:
Acceptable as it is?
Acceptable with changes?
Not acceptable?

Lesson one

Activity two: Advertising controls – Justified?

Teacher notes

Statement line-up – Problem or No problem?

These are all issues covered in the Advertising Codes. Some would not be allowed, some would be allowed with some modification, while others would pose no problem.

1. Violence being shown as humorous.	Can be a problem but light-hearted, cartoonish depictions of violence may be acceptable.
2. Advertising alcohol around children's programmes.	Strict guidelines – ads can't be shown around children's programmes or channels likely to have particular appeal to children.
3. Advertising gambling at tea time.	Could be a problem – gambling ads cannot be seen to appeal to young people or reflect or be associated with youth culture. Just because it's at tea time, however, doesn't mean the programme is targeted at young people.
4. Using a children's TV celebrity to advertise fast food.	It is prohibited to use a kids' TV personality in an ad broadcast in ad breaks around a programme they're appearing in, because it might cause confusion about the difference between the programme and the ad. Using a children's TV celebrity might be a problem if the fast food is high in fat, salt or sugar – although not all fast food is.
5. Images of guns being brandished in an aggressive manner.	Not acceptable – always likely to be problem.

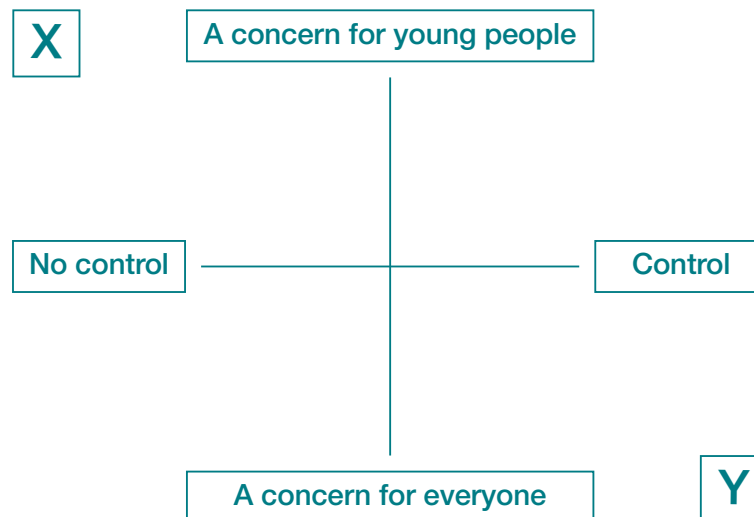
Lesson one

Activity two: Advertising controls – Justified?

Problem or No problem?

Look at these advertising situations. Do any of them pose a potential problem? Might there need to be some regulation of who can see what, when and where? Are some things more concerning if young people are exposed to them? Are some things a concern for everyone, child and adult alike?

Taking each situation in turn, mark on the grid where you think it lies – for example point X shows an issue that would mostly concern young people, but that isn't a very serious issue. Point Y shows an issue that concerns everyone and is a significant problem.



1. Advertising alcohol as something that can make you attractive.
2. Advertising high-fat, high-sugar and high-salt food or drinks around children's programmes.
3. Advertising slimming products on daytime TV.
4. Advertising skin cream to permanently reduce wrinkles.
5. Advertising skin cream to reduce wrinkles using a Photoshopped model.
6. Advertising sexy underwear on a bus stop poster.
7. Advertising sexy underwear on a bus stop poster outside a school.
8. Advertising a sports drink as healthier than water.
9. Advertising a clothes label using skinny models.



Lesson one

Activity two: Advertising controls – Justified?

Teacher notes

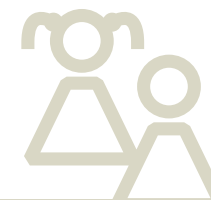
All of the examples would be considered by the ASA. Some would not be allowed, some would be allowed with some modification, while others would pose no problem. They are all issues covered in the Advertising Codes.

- 1 Advertising alcohol as something that can make you attractive – strict guidelines – ads can't link alcohol with seduction, sex or social success.
- 2 Advertising high-fat, high-sugar and high-salt food or drinks – is not allowed around children's programmes.
- 3 Advertising slimming products on daytime TV – no problem in itself, but there are rules on the claims that can be made for slimming products, no matter where and when they are advertised. Claims must be truthful and advertisers must hold evidence to back up their claims.
- 4 Advertising skin cream to reduce wrinkles permanently – would be allowed if the advertiser has evidence it works. It's not allowed at the moment because no creams are proven to do that!
- 5 Advertising skin cream to reduce wrinkles using a Photoshopped model – not allowed. Even claiming temporarily to reduce the appearance of wrinkles would be a problem. See this recent [ASA ruling](#) of a L'Oréal advertisement featuring Julia Roberts.

- 6 Advertising sexy underwear on a bus stop poster – may prompt the ASA to ask for changes if the ad is regarded as too sexual.
- 7 Advertising sexy underwear on a bus stop poster outside a school – may prompt the ASA to ask for changes in content or a change of location.
- 8 Advertising a sports drink as healthier than water – not allowed because it is against good dietary advice. See recent [ASA ruling](#).
- 9 Advertising a clothes label using skinny models – can cause complaints from the public – but complaints are not always upheld. It depends on whether the model is just slim or is unhealthily underweight.

See recent ASA rulings:

[Hennes and Mauritz](#)
[Drop Dead Clothing](#)



Lesson two

Activity one: Is It OK?

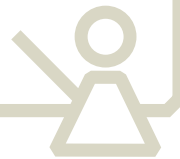
Recording sheet

Ad _____

Context _____

Questions to consider

What is the content of this ad?	What is the context for the ad?
What advertising guidelines could apply to it?	Is it acceptable?



Lesson two

Activity one: Is It OK?

Teacher notes

Ad A – Gambling ad.

Context – YouTube

The complaint – That the ad was irresponsible, because it was likely to appeal to children.



ASA decision – The Advertising Codes require that ads should not be likely to be of particular appeal to children or young persons, especially by reflecting or being associated with youth culture. Even though Spider-Man appeals to some adults, the ASA Council considered that the depiction of the popular comic book character was likely to have particular appeal to children and young people, regardless of the context in which it appeared. Therefore, we concluded that the ad breached the Code. The complaint was upheld.

Details of full ruling

Ad B – Ad for ringtones featuring the American ventriloquist, Jeff Dunham, with his dummy, “Achmed, the Dead Terrorist”. The ringtones used some of the phrases from Mr Dunham’s act, including “Silence! I kill you”, “Stop touching me” and “Knock, knock. Who’s there? Me. I kill you”.



Context – A pop-up ad on a website in paid-for ad space.

The complaint – A viewer challenged whether the ad was offensive because he believed it was racist towards Muslims.

ASA decision – The ASA noted that at no time did the ad make any reference to terrorism or the Islamic faith, and therefore concluded the ad was unlikely to cause serious or widespread offence. The complaint was not upheld.

Details of full ruling

Ad C – Ad for children’s clothing where the child models are shown holding plastic bags near their faces.



Context – In a children’s clothing catalogue.

The complaint – Complainants objected that the ad was irresponsible because it could be copied by children, leading to their physical harm.

ASA decision – Although the catalogue was sent to parents, the ASA felt there was a risk of it being left where children could see it and that they could possibly try to emulate it. The complaints were therefore upheld.

Details of full ruling

Lesson two

Activity one: Is It OK?

Teacher notes *continued*

Ad D – This ad for “Miraculous deals on Samsung Galaxy Android™ phones” featured a cartoon-like illustration of Jesus Christ grinning broadly and winking, pointing a finger with one hand and displaying a thumbs-up sign with the other. The Sacred Heart was featured on his chest.



Context – Poster on the side of a bus where anyone could see it at any time.

The complaint – 98 complainants challenged whether the ads were offensive, because the depiction of Jesus Christ and the Sacred Heart, the use of the term “miraculous” in that context and their publication during the Easter period were disrespectful to the Christian faith.

ASA decision – The ASA agreed with the complainants that the ads were disrespectful to the Christian faith and were likely to cause serious offence, particularly to Christians. The ads were banned and must not appear again.

Details of full ruling

Ad E – Ad for Beyoncé Heat perfume showed the singer wearing a revealing red satin dress and dancing seductively, showing images of her chest, back and thighs.



Context – On TV at 8 pm.

The complaint – Viewers complained that the ad was offensive and not suitable to be broadcast when children might be watching.

ASA decision – The ASA considered the ad was sexually suggestive and might therefore be distasteful to some, but decided that, in the context of marketing for perfume, the ad was unlikely to cause serious or widespread offence to most viewers. However, although the ASA considered that the ad was unlikely to be harmful to adults or older children, it was considered that Beyoncé’s body movements and the camera’s prolonged focus on shots of her dress slipping away to partially expose her breasts created a sexually provocative ad that was unsuitable to be seen by young children. The ASA ruled that the ad should not have been shown before 7.30 pm due to the sexually provocative nature of the imagery.

Details of full ruling

Ad F – Condom ad



Context – This poster formed part of a sponsorship campaign by Durex for Take That’s concert tour.

The complaint – The ASA received a complaint that it was offensive and unsuitable to be seen by children.

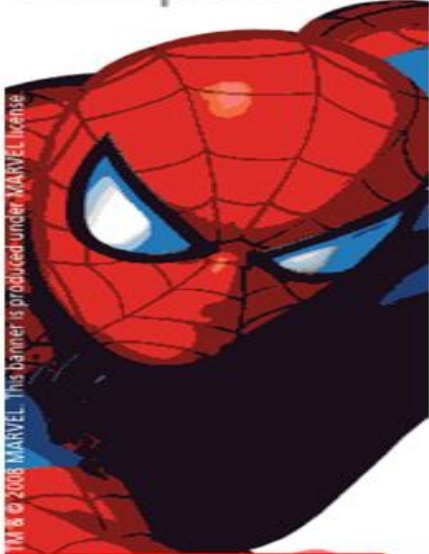
ASA decision – The ASA considered that some people would always find ads for these kinds of products distasteful. In this case, the ASA thought the sexual reference was unlikely to be understood by young children – if young people did understand it, then it was reasonable for them to see it. The complaint was not upheld.

Details of full ruling

MARVEL **Gambler**

**THE AMAZING
SPIDER-MAN™**

25 Line
Jackpot Slot



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Context: YouTube

Legal, decent, honest and truthful

ASA ✓



Advertisement

Context – A pop-up ad on a website in paid-for ad space.



Context – In a children's clothing catalogue.



Context – Poster on the side of a bus where anyone could see it at any time.

Legal, decent, honest and truthful



**Do you
like it
loud?**



Context – This poster formed part of a sponsorship campaign by Durex for Take That's concert tour.