

TITLE: Creating and Evaluating Ethnic Advertising

GRADES: 9-12

SUBJECT AREA(S): US History (Twentieth Century)

American Democracy

Economics

English/Language Arts

OVERVIEW:

Since its beginning, the African-American press has helped to create and stabilize communities. These newspapers spoke for the political and economic needs of their readers while also employing thousands of African-Americans. They provided a forum for debate on current issues and gave a voice to people who were voiceless. African-American newspapers were originally able to maintain their independent positions because their profits depended mainly on circulation. That is, they did not have to rely on advertisers and their demands that could affect the editorial content of the newspapers. This economic independence allowed them to report on what they saw as the truth. Ironically, the Civil Rights Movement would eventually help put the African-American newspapers out of business. Many black journalists were wooed away from African-American newspapers and offered higher paying positions in the mainstream press. This “brain drain” resulted in decreased circulation for African-American newspapers. As a result, the newspapers then had to rely on increased advertising to remain profitable. This increased advertising had an effect on editorial policy. African-American newspapers could not criticize white Americans and still rely on its advertising business. Eventually the black press backed away from overt confrontations at a time when racial violence was erupting around the country.

Program Segments:

- 1) 0:00 – 16:43 *“Too Long Have Others Spoken for Us”*: Freedom’s Journal created to respond to the mainstream press’ vilification of African-Americans; Frederick Douglass said the press is vital to social change; Ida B. Wells of The Memphis Free Speech investigated lynchings and was run out of town by a lynch mob; Robert S. Abbott said the vehicle for America’s change will be the newspaper.
- 2) 17:36 – 23:20 *“Standing Up for the Race”*: By 1910, over 275 African-American newspapers in print; The California Eagle told African-Americans how to get jobs and find housing in the Los Angeles area; newspapers depended on subscription sales; by 1920, the Chicago Defender was reaching millions of Americans per week; Robert S. Abbott became the first African-American to become a millionaire from publishing.
- 3) 42:49 – 50:35 *“A Separate World”*: Most newspapers remained independent because they did not rely on advertisements; some African-American newspapers were in financial trouble and had to publish outrageous ads; The Pittsburgh Courier became the first national African-American newspaper and was published in 15 editions.
- 4) 59:00 – 1:11:36 *“Treason?”*: Double V campaign, victory over enemies from without and enemies from within; government felt black press would hinder war effort; FBI Director, J. Edgar Hoover wanted to indict a group of African-American publishers for treason; Double V campaign became the catalyst for the Civil Rights Movement.
- 5) 1:11:36 – End *“Putting Itself Out of Business”*: The Civil Rights Movement would eventually put the African-American press out of business; white media began reporting what was happening to African-

Americans; mainstream press hired African-American reporters; created “brain drain” in African-American press; decreased revenue led to increased advertising in black newspapers; African-American newspapers could no longer criticize white America and expect white-owned companies to purchase ads; African-American newspaper circulation declined in the 1960s, and its power began to wane; without the black press it became more difficult for African-Americans to debate issues and choose their own leaders.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Students will research how advertising agencies market products for different ethnic groups and how they generally target specific audiences.
- Students will interview representatives from local advertising agencies about marketing, particularly marketing within ethnic communities.
- Students will work in groups and decide on an objective as it relates to reaching a particular audience by designing two different advertisements for one product, each targeting at a different ethnic group.

MATERIALS:

- The Black Press: Soldiers Without Swords video
- The Black Press: Soldiers Without Swords website (www.pbs.org/blackpress) or KQED website (www.kqed.org/ednet)
- Local ethnic newspapers
- Ethnic media online:
www.bet.com
www.netnoir.com
- Marketing companies (may specialize in ethnic research):
www.arbitron.com
www.asiacentral.com (analyzes Asian markets)
www.gallup.com
www.hispanicmarketing.com
http://hispanic-research.com
www.jdpa.com (JD Power and Associates)
www.rightbrainpeople.com (emotional research, consumer psychology)
www.nielsenmedia.com (measures ethnic tv audiences)
- Political:
www.rockthevote.org

TIME:

3 class periods (60 minutes each)

PRE-VIEWING ACTIVITIES:

- Have students think about popular advertising campaigns in various media.
- Discuss: Can students think of examples of ads that target specific audiences, based on age, gender, interests, etc.? Can they think of advertisements in any media that target specific ethnic groups? What are they? In what ways do they target specific ethnic groups? Can students find any relationships between the products/ideas that are being marketed and the target audience? Are advertisements aimed at certain ethnic groups a good idea or a bad idea? Why are advertisements so

important in today's society and in today's business world? Are there any advertisements that have made you want to purchase something? What about this advertisement appealed to you?

FOCUS FOR VIEWING:

The following segments of the video and suggestions for showing the segments provide effective preparation and points of focus for this activity.

- **Segment 1: *"Too Long Have Others Spoken for Us"***

For viewing Segment 1, write the following questions on the board or overhead:

- *What does the title of the segment mean?*

The segment shows the birth of the African-American Press, which for the first time gave African-Americans a voice. Its advent gave African-Americans the opportunity to counter the stereotypes prevalent in the Mainstream Press. This answer can be inferred early on in the viewing of Segment 1.

- *How did the ending of the Civil War affect the African-American Press?*

Half-way through the segment, it shows how the ending of the Civil War made it so African-Americans didn't have to fear being caught reading in public. The freedom of slaves provided a whole new audience for newspapers, so the number of African-American newspapers proliferated, often being printed with church printing presses.

The first question is a good one for students to try to answer before watching the video. It will encourage prediction and anticipation. Plus, it is one that students are likely to guess at an answer which comes close to answering it correctly. It also serves as a good introduction to thinking about providing a product for a specific audience. The second question will likely require the context provided by the video. It is a good idea to stop the video to discuss the importance of the booming audience for African-American newspapers.

- **Segment 2: *"Standing Up for the Race"***

For viewing Segment 2, write the following questions on the board or overhead:

- *How did the California Eagle demonstrate Charlotta Spears Bass' emphasis on social change?*

Early in the segment, it shows how the paper served as a draw for African-Americans to Los Angeles by providing valuable information on housing, jobs and so on.

- *How did the Chicago Defender act as an "advertisement" for the North for southern readers? What effect did this have?*

Midway through the segment, the audience learns that World War I created a need for workers in the industrial cities in the North and Midwest and that the publisher of the Chicago Defender used the newspaper to point out the availability of jobs and to encourage readers in the South to move North for those jobs. It also promoted the numerous social activities available to African-Americans in Chicago, Detroit, etc. The result was the Great Migration.

The first part of the segment details the California Eagle and what the role of the newspaper was and what roles a newspaper can serve, especially for audiences whose needs are not being met anywhere else. In essence they assist their audiences in what to do in the way that advertisements can. The Chicago Defender took that to a new level in its promotion of migration North.

Stop the video when it points out the attempts to ban African-American papers. Ask students how they think the papers overcame the attempt to ban them.

Start the tape again, and they will learn that railroad porters were instrumental in the dissemination of the papers. The messages — which is at the heart of advertisements — still spread.

- **Segment 3: “*A Separate World*”**

For viewing Segment 3, write the following question on the board or overhead:

- *How did advertisements steer readers to “friendly” establishments?*

Midway through the segment, the video shows sample ads that promoted businesses that would not turn away African-American patrons. Jim Crow still existed in the South and prejudice was still rampant in other parts of the country, so readers benefited greatly from finding out about friendly establishments.

Before showing the segment, ask students if they know what the question is asking, i.e., what does “friendly” mean? Encourage responses, but leave the question unanswered. At the point in the video in which it is revealed, compare the definition with those that came up beforehand. Expand the discussion to include why such a simple message of being friendly to African-Americans would carry such weight and create consumer loyalty.

- **Segment 4: “*Treason?*”**

For viewing Segment 4, write the following question on the board or overhead:

- *How did the Double V Campaign spread commercially beyond the newspapers?*

The first part of the segment shows how the Pittsburgh Courier coined the phrase Double V to signify victory overseas against the Germans and Japanese and victory at home over second-class status. The phrase made its way onto buttons, into songs and even into a hairstyle for women.

Before showing the segment, you may need to explain the meaning of commercially. After showing the entire segment, you should discuss how one man (James Thompson) coining one phrase in one newspaper can have such an impact. This impact is similar to the way an advertisement today can become prevalent, e.g., “Whassssuuupppp!” from the Budweiser commercial.

- **Segment 5: “*Putting Itself Out of Business*”**

For viewing Segment 5, write the following questions on the board or overhead:

- *How did growing numbers of advertisers affect the editorial content of African-American newspapers?*

The segment talks about how the growing number of readers after WW II led to increased advertising, including companies like GM. Those advertisers didn’t want any inflammatory articles about white people to be run in the newspapers. As a result, the papers toned down their editorial.

- *Why did many prominent African-American journalists leave African-American papers for mainstream newspapers?*

Towards the end of the segment, one journalist talks about the financial incentive to write for the Mainstream Press. This migration to the Mainstream Press created a “brain drain” for the African-American Press, resulting in its downfall.

Both of these questions are good ones for students to try to guess at their answers before viewing and then discuss post viewing. Their relationship to the activity is mainly that they address the economic side of the press. Today, advertising is the dominant form of revenue for newspapers.

POST-VIEWING ACTIVITIES:

- Have students brainstorm a list of advertisements that appear to be aimed at specific ethnic groups. (Or, students can first categorize commercials based on other types of target audiences, e.g., specific age, gender and so on. This should help ensure that students understand how ads target audiences before they analyze those that are geared toward ethnic audiences.) Discuss why these advertisements might appeal to members of each group.
- Have students research how advertising agencies market products for different ethnic groups. Students can interview representatives from local ad agencies and marketing firms. Plus, some information can be found on the web. Sites such as www.nielsenmedia.com and www.hispanicmarketing.com could be helpful in the early stages of the research. Invite professionals from local advertising agencies to speak to students. Have students come up with a list of questions to ask regarding target audiences, particularly ethnic advertising.
- Once information about ethnic advertising is gathered, have students divide into groups. Have each group choose a consumer product on which to focus. Each group should then use what it has learned about marketing towards ethnic groups to design two advertisements for the product that they have chosen. Each advertisement should be targeted at a different ethnic group. Student groups will then share their advertisements with the class. During their presentations, students should explain how their marketing techniques will appeal to their intended audience.

EXTENSIONS:

- *Media:* Have students keep a media log for a week. While watching TV and movies, listening to the radio, reading magazines or just while driving/walking around, students should look for advertisements that are geared towards different ethnic groups. Record these in the media log, being sure to note where each of the ads occurred (on a billboard in a specific neighborhood, on an ethnically-specific radio station, on a regular broadcast network [ABC, CBS, NBC, Fox], etc.), then share some of the examples with the class, including the ways in which the advertisements target their audiences.
- *Government:* Have students find ways in which political parties tailor their platforms to different ethnic groups. Students can analyze speeches given to different groups, as well as information from political websites and ethnic news Web sites (see sites cited above). AND/OR have students find examples of government-sponsored public service announcements, pamphlets and brochures that are geared toward specific ethnic groups. For example, many of the informative pamphlets are printed in numerous languages.
- *Social Issues:* Have students examine advertisements dealing with social issues, such as education, AIDS awareness and smoking. How do these ads target different ethnic groups? Have students read “Anti-Tobacco Campaign Targets Ethnic Community” from the Los Angeles Sentinel (July 30, 1997). Discuss: Why do anti-smoking ads need to target minorities? Why was a minority-owned firm hired to create these ads? How does each ad target a particular ethnic group? How do you think the ad agency came up with their ideas?

- *Economics*: Have students think about the connection between the level of media advertising for a product and how much that product is desired. That is, is it true that the more a product is advertised, the more it is wanted/desired? Or, does advertising have little affect on how popular a product becomes? Also, students should analyze any connection between the amount of advertising and the price of a product being advertised. Additionally, students can look at the relationship between advertising and a product's need, i.e., is a product more of a luxury item or a necessity? These analyses can occur by giving students the advertisements from a Sunday edition of your local newspaper. Also, students can use these advertisements to create a list of items they might buy on a typical day at the mall. Then have students figure out how many hours they would have to work at minimum wage in order to pay for this shopping trip. Finally, ask students if they would go into personal debt in order to purchase any of the items on their lists.

ASSESSMENT:

- Evaluate students' advertisements with regard to the way in which each advertisement was meant to appeal to a certain ethnic group. Creativity, effort, and presentation may also be taken into account.
- Have students evaluate their own and their peers' advertisements as well. An informal poll could also be taken: Which advertisement would make you want to buy the product? Which advertisement was the most creative?

STANDARDS:

HS History Grades 9-12

- Historical and Social Sciences Analysis Skills
- Chronological and Spatial Thinking
- Students compare the present with the past, evaluating the consequences of past events and decisions and determining the lessons that were learned.
- Historical Interpretation
- Students show the connections, causal and otherwise, between particular historical events and larger social, economic, and political trends and developments.

US History and Geography Grade 11

- Standard 11.2: Students analyze the relationship among the rise of industrialization, large-scale rural-to-urban migration, and massive immigration from Southern and Eastern Europe. Describe the changing landscape, including the growth of cities linked by industry and trade, and the development of cities divided according to race, ethnicity, and class.
- Standard 11.5: Students analyze the major political, social, economic, technological, and cultural developments of the 1920s. Analyze the international and domestic events, interests, and philosophies that prompted attacks on civil liberties.
- Standard 11.7: Students analyze America's participation in WWII. Students analyze the roles and growing political demands of African Americans.
- Standard 11.11: Students analyze the major social problems and domestic policy issues in contemporary American society. Explain how federal, state and local governments have responded to democratic and social changes such as racial concentration in cities.

HS Principles of American Democracy & Economics Grade 12

- Standard 12.8: Students evaluate and take and defend positions on the influence of the media on American political life. Discuss the meaning and importance of a free and reasonable press.

HS English-Language Arts Grades 9 & 10

Reading

- Standard 2.0: Students can read and understand grade-level-appropriate material. They analyze the organizational patterns, arguments, and positions advanced.
- Standard 2.5: Extend ideas presented in primary and secondary sources through original analysis, evaluation, and elaboration.

Writing

- Standard 1.3: Use clear research questions and suitable research methods (e.g., library, electronic media, personal interview) to elicit and present evidence from primary and secondary sources.
- Standard 2.4: Use specific rhetorical devices to support assertions (e.g., appeal to logic through reasoning; appeal to emotion on ethical belief)

HS English-Language Arts Grades 11 & 12

Writing

- Standard 1.0: Students write coherent and focused texts that convey a well-defined perspective and tightly reasoned argument. The writing demonstrates the students' awareness of the audience.
- Standard 1.2: Use a point of view, characterization, style, and related elements for specific rhetorical and aesthetic purposes.
- Standard 1.6: Develop presentations by using clear research questions and creative and critical research strategies (e.g. field studies, oral histories, interviews, experiments, electronic sources)