

## Perception of “Cool” and the Use of Alcohol 8<sup>th</sup> Grade

### Standard Addressed:

- Communication Arts Standard 4 (Media Literacy) – Students recognize, analyze, and evaluate . . . the impact of media messages on individuals and societies.

### Objectives:

- Students will analyze the credibility of the sources of media messages (4.2).
- Students will analyze the inherent consequences to self and others in the use and creation of media messages (4.5).
- Students will identify how media messages embed values and influence individuals, cultures and societies (4.7).

Lesson Rationale: Students will analyze their own perceptions regarding teen alcohol use and compare/contrast them with media’s portrayal of teen alcohol use. Students will evaluate how media affects their perceptions and develop a plan for standing up to media’s message(s) about teen alcohol use.

Materials: Notebook paper, pencils or pens, DVD player or computer, TV or projector, 10 Things I Hate About You party scene clip, colored pencils and blank copy paper for invitations

Time Frame: This lesson is designed for two, consecutive fifty-minute class periods.

### Instructional Procedures:

1. **Party planning** (25 minutes) – Divide the class into groups of 3-4 students. Explain to the groups that they are going to plan a party for their friends. They have a budget of \$150. They need to decide when and where the party will take place, as well as the occasion for the party (birthday, Super Bowl, holiday, end of school, etc.) and how many guests will be invited. Then they need to decide what the decorations will look like, what food and beverages will be served, what party guests will do at the party, what the party will sound like (will there be music, games, movies, etc?), and how many people they will invite to the party. Once these decisions have been made, they should create a “party plan” outlining their decisions. If they have extra time, they can create an invitation to the party.
2. **Party presentations** (10 minutes) – Give each group one-two minutes to present their party plans to the class.
3. **Discussion/brainstorm** (10 minutes) – Ask students to think about how the parties they planned are similar to and different from parties portrayed in the media (TV, movies, advertisements, music videos, you tube, etc.). Then discuss the similarities and differences they see by creating a Venn diagram or chart on the board.
4. **Video clip deconstruction** (20 minutes) – Deconstruct the party scene clip from the movie 10 Things I Hate About You using the following questions.
  - a. What are the messages about “being cool” in this clip?
  - b. What techniques are used to convey the messages?
  - c. What products are being marketed in this clip?
  - d. How is underage drinking portrayed in this clip?

- e. What consequences to underage drinking are portrayed in this clip? What consequences to underage drinking are omitted in this clip?
- f. How is the party in the clip different from the one you planned? Why?

5. **Think-Pair-Share** (30 minutes) – Have students find a partner and sit next to their partner. Students need a piece of paper to jot down their individual ideas. Ask each of the following questions one at a time. Allow students a minute or two to think about their answer. They may write down their ideas or just think. After the allotted “think time” is up, ask students to share their ideas/answers with their partner. After a couple of minutes of sharing, ask a couple of duos to present the ideas they discussed. Follow this procedure for each question. These questions could be listed on the board or projected.
- a. Based on your experience, in real life, how do people look/act while they are drinking? Is this different from how media portrays drinking? Why or why not? If so, how is it different?
  - b. Are marketers concerned with the well-being of the alcohol consumer? Do they answer to consumers? If not, who do they answer to?
  - c. Is alcohol marketing to teens different from alcohol marketing to adults? If so, how is it different?
  - d. When and on what channels are alcohol advertisements most prevalent? Why?
  - e. Besides in advertisements, when is drinking portrayed in media? How is it portrayed?
  - f. What misconceptions about alcohol do media portray (for examples see the resource section)?
  - g. Why do we hear about the harmful effects of some drugs in the media, but not as much about the harmful effects of alcohol? Do you think this is related to the way media companies make a profit? Why or why not?
  - h. How is alcoholism portrayed in media? Is this an accurate portrayal? Why or why not?
  - i. How would parties, sporting events, concerts, etc. be different if alcohol were not served? Describe an experience where you’ve witnessed alcohol enhancing an event and/or ruining an event (ex. the drunken person in the crowd at a game).
6. **Exit slips** (5 minutes) – Individually, on a piece of notebook paper, list three ways you can fight back against the “perception of cool” related to alcohol use, two things you’ve learned about media’s influence on people’s alcohol perceptions, and one thing you would like to say to media about their portrayal of alcohol use among teens. Collect the exit slips as students exit the classroom.

Assessment: Assess students’ participation in all of the activities. Grade students’ party plans and exit slips.

Resources:

Devereaux, Danielle. “Deadly Persuasion – The Advertising of Alcohol & Tobacco Study Guide.” *MEF*. Media Education Foundation. n.d. Web. <[http://www.mediaed.org/assets/products/202/studyguide\\_202.pdf](http://www.mediaed.org/assets/products/202/studyguide_202.pdf)>.

Kilbourne, Jean. “Deadly Persuasion: 7 Myths Alcohol Advertisers Want You to Believe.” *CML*. Center for Media Literacy. Spring/Summer 1991. Web. <[http://www.medialit.org/reading\\_room/article64.html](http://www.medialit.org/reading_room/article64.html)>.

## **Video Clip Deconstruction Questions**

1. What are the messages about “being cool” in this clip?
2. What techniques are used to convey the messages?
3. What products are being marketed in this clip?
4. How is underage drinking portrayed in this clip?
5. What consequences to underage drinking are portrayed in this clip? What consequences to underage drinking are omitted in this clip?
6. How is the party in the clip different from the one you planned? Why?

## Think-Pair-Share Questions

1. Based on your experience, in real life, how do people look/act while they are drinking? Is this different from how media portrays drinking? Why or why not? If so, how is it different?
2. Are marketers concerned with the well-being of the alcohol consumer? Do they answer to consumers? If not, who do they answer to?
3. Is alcohol marketing to teens different from alcohol marketing to adults? If so, how is it different?
4. When and on what channels are alcohol advertisements most prevalent? Why?
5. Besides in advertisements, when is drinking portrayed in media? How is it portrayed?
6. What misconceptions about alcohol do media portray (for examples see the resource section)?
7. Why do we hear about the harmful effects of some drugs in the media, but not as much about the harmful effects of alcohol? Do you think this is related to the way media companies make a profit? Why or why not?
8. How is alcoholism portrayed in media? Is this an accurate portrayal? Why or why not?
9. How would parties, sporting events, concerts, etc. be different if alcohol were not served? Describe an experience where you've witnessed alcohol enhancing an event and/or ruining an event (ex. the drunken person in the crowd at a game).

## Exit Slip

List:

**3** ways you can fight back against the “perception of cool” related to alcohol use

**2** things you’ve learned about media’s influence on people’s alcohol perceptions

**1** thing you would like to say to media about their portrayal of alcohol use among teens