

Lesson Four:

Flavored Tobacco, Menthol and E-Cigarettes

This lesson looks at flavored tobacco, menthol and e-cigarettes. Students will learn how these products are marketed toward youth. Students will show their understanding of marketing tactics by creating an advertising campaign.



Learning Objectives

After Lesson Four, students will be able to:

- 1 Explain how and why tobacco companies market flavored tobacco, menthol and e-cigarettes toward youth;
- 2 Discuss marketing tactics that work to attract younger customers; and
- 3 Create a marketing campaign using tactics similar to those of the tobacco industry.

Materials Needed

- Computer with ability to project images and video
- Whiteboard markers
- Copies of Electronic Cigarettes, Flavored Tobacco Products and Menthol Factsheets
- Four different candy or snack products
- Paper
- Markers
- Surgeon General Warning Labels
- Copies of Advertising Worksheet
- Copies of Post Activity Worksheet

Overview of Lesson

- Warm-up and Introduction: **5 Minutes**
- Videos: **16 minutes**
- Video Discussion: **5 minutes**
- Factsheet Jig-Saw: **15 Minutes**
- Marketing Activity: **35 Minutes**
- Marketing Activity Debrief: **10 Minutes**
- Exit Ticket: **5 Minutes**



TOTAL TIME: 91 minutes

Before the Lesson

- Have questions typed on PowerPoint slides
- Cut out Surgeon General Warning labels



Warm-up and Introduction

TOTAL TIME: 5 minutes



- Have the following questions projected on the board as students walk in:

1. What is the last advertisement that you remember seeing? This could be an advertisement on TV, on a billboard, online or in a magazine.
2. What makes you remember this advertisement?

- After the students are done reading, ask for three students to share their answers.



Videos

TOTAL TIME: 16 minutes



- Before playing the videos, ask the students to listen for things that surprise them. Play the videos back to back.

1. Video: JUUL E-Cigarettes

- JUULers Against JUUL (6:24)

➔ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7EsNG7RcStQ>

1. Video: E-Cigarettes

- E-Cigarettes in Minnesota (2:56)

➔ <https://vimeo.com/106003257>

2. Video: Flavored Tobacco Products

- The Problem with Flavored Tobacco (2:23)

➔ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hm9EzB9C1-o>

3. Video: Menthol

- Menthol Cigarettes 101 (4:50)

➔ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9gyb9J9JA8Q>



Video Discussion

TOTAL TIME: 5 minutes



- After the videos finish, have the students share with a neighbor one thing that surprised them



Factsheet Jig-Saw

TOTAL TIME: 15 minutes



- Count the students off by three.
- Give one group the factsheet for menthol (pg. 113), one group the factsheet for electronic cigarettes (pg. 111) and the other group the factsheet for flavored tobacco (pg. 112).
- Give the students the following directions. If possible, project the directions on a PowerPoint slide:

- 1. With your group, read your factsheet.**
- 2. Together, write down three important pieces of information you learned.**

- Give the students 7-10 minutes to read and write their main points. Circulate around the room to ensure students are on task and understanding the material. If students finish early, encourage them to practice saying their three main points.
- Re-shuffle the group and put the students in groups of three with one student who read the menthol factsheet, one student who read the electronic cigarette factsheet and one student who read the flavored tobacco factsheet. Have each student talk about the three pieces of information they learned to their new group members. If there is extra time, have the students share additional information or discuss what they found interesting.

Electronic Cigarettes

Electronic cigarettes, e-cigarettes, vape pens, JUULs, e-hookahs or hookah pens are battery-operated devices that contain a mixture of liquid nicotine and other chemicals. The device heats this mixture, called e-juice, producing a nicotine emission that is inhaled. There is no evidence that using e-cigarettes or inhaling the secondhand emissions from an e-cigarette is safe. Studies have found nicotine, heavy metals, toxins, and carcinogens in e-cigarette emissions. ^{1,2}

E-cigarettes first resembled conventional cigarettes and now have morphed into sleek gadgets, like the JUUL. They are very appealing to youth for their big nicotine hit and stealthy, easily-hidden looks.

E-Cigarette Facts:

- Youth tobacco use in Minnesota has risen for the first time in 17 years, largely due to e-cigarette use. ³
- 99% of e-cigarette products contain nicotine, according to their labeling. ⁴
- Studies have shown e-cigarettes labeled as containing no nicotine actually contained nicotine. E-cigarettes labeled as containing the same nicotine level emitted varying levels of nicotine. ^{1,2}
- Minnesota law prohibits e-cigarette use in public schools, hospitals, clinics and government-owned buildings, including city and county buildings. Many cities have prohibited their use in all indoor public spaces.
- E-cigarette liquids must be sold in child-resistant packaging. E-cigarettes usually contain nicotine, an extremely addictive stimulant. High amounts of nicotine can be fatal, especially to small children.
- Nicotine's side effects include increased blood pressure, bronchospasms, joint pain, insulin resistance, heart arrhythmias and coronary artery constriction. Nicotine is harmful to developing adolescent brains. It interferes with brain development and can have a long term effect on mental health. ^{5,6}
- E-cigarette use is increasing rapidly among youth. E-cigarette companies sell thousands of different flavors of e-cigarettes. These flavors appeal directly to youth. ⁷
- E-cigarettes have not been proven safe or effective in helping people quit smoking. ^{8,9} Research shows current smokers are more likely to use e-cigarettes than former or never smokers. ¹⁰
- Smokers might use e-cigarettes where they cannot use conventional cigarettes, which might deepen their addiction to nicotine. Some e-cigarettes are marketed with taglines such as "smoke anywhere."
- Research shows that youth and young adults who are introduced to tobacco through e-cigarettes are more likely than their peers to start smoking. ^{11,12,13,14}
- The three largest cigarette companies, Altria, R.J. Reynolds and Imperial Tobacco, have an e-cigarette brand. These companies are employing the same marketing tactics used in the past to lure young people into a lifetime of nicotine addiction.

Flavored Tobacco Products

What types of tobacco products are flavored?

There are several types of flavored tobacco products on the market, including cigars, chewing tobacco, blunt wraps, electronic cigarettes and shisha, the tobacco used in hookah.

What are common flavors used in tobacco products?

Products are sold in an endless array of fruit, candy, dessert and novelty flavors. Scientists recently found that the same flavorings used in tobacco products are also used in candy and Kool-Aid.⁹

Who uses flavored tobacco products?

Because of their sweet flavors, low cost and attractive packaging, flavored tobacco products are especially appealing to youth. Young people are much more likely to use flavored tobacco products than adults.¹⁰ Studies show that young people perceive flavored tobacco products as tasting better and being safer than unflavored products, even though they are just as dangerous and addictive as unflavored tobacco products.¹¹

How do flavors in tobacco products affect youth?

Nearly 90 percent of adult smokers began smoking before 18.¹² The flavoring in these products makes it easier for new, young users to take up tobacco, because the flavoring masks the harshness of the tobacco and enhances the user's pleasure.^{13,14} Flavored products often serve as a "starter" product for young people, many of whom eventually move to smoking cigarettes.

What does the tobacco industry say about flavored tobacco?

The tobacco documents from the U.S. Tobacco Master Settlement revealed the "Graduation Theory," a method used by the tobacco industry that aims to secure customer loyalty.¹⁵ This approach implies that new users start with milder tasting and flavored products. They then graduate to full-bodied, less flavored items that often contain more nicotine and remain addicted for life.

Why should people care about flavored tobacco products?

Flavored tobacco products are a major public health concern because they encourage young people to start using tobacco. While the FDA banned flavored cigarettes other than menthol in 2009, the ban does not affect other tobacco products, many of which are now heavily marketed by the tobacco industry.¹⁶ The use of these products, especially among young people, has spiked.

What communities have regulated flavored tobacco?

New York City, Providence, R.I., Minneapolis, Minn., and Saint Paul, Minn., have passed policies restricting flavored tobacco sales, with the exception of menthol-flavored products.

In Minnesota, many cities, including Minneapolis, Saint Paul, Richfield and Maplewood, have adopted ordinances that require cigars to be sold for a minimum price of \$2.60 each with packs of four or more cigars being sold for a minimum of \$10.40. These ordinances are meant to make cigars, many of which are flavored, more expensive and less appealing to price-sensitive youth.

Menthol

Menthol is a flavor added to cigarettes and other tobacco products.¹⁷ Menthol has a minty taste that masks the harshness of tobacco through the cooling and numbing sensation it provides.¹⁸

Studies show that people who smoke menthol cigarettes have a higher level of nicotine addiction.¹⁹ Menthol users have a harder time quitting smoking than users of non-menthol products.²⁰

Tobacco industry documents show efforts to market menthol products to African Americans, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer (LGBTQ) communities, and young people.^{21, 22} This has resulted in higher usage of these products in these communities.¹⁸

Despite conclusive evidence that menthol cigarettes are particularly harmful, the FDA continues to exempt menthol from the ban on flavored cigarettes. If menthol were banned in the United States, 39 percent of menthol smokers, including 47 percent of African American menthol smokers, would quit smoking.²³

Menthol Facts:

- More than one million youth in the United States smoke menthol cigarettes, a higher rate than any other age group.²⁴
- 70 percent of LGBTQ youth smokers smoke menthols.²⁵
- About half of Minnesota teen smokers – 44 percent – smoke menthol cigarettes.²⁶
- 25 percent of Minnesota adult smokers smoke menthols.²⁷
- 88 percent of adult African American smokers smoke menthols, compared to 26 percent of adult white smokers.²⁸
- 83 percent of African American youth smokers smoke menthols²⁵



Tobacco Marketing Activity

TOTAL TIME: 35 minutes



Marketing simulation for youth on hidden tobacco company tactics.

Adapted from SE MN Tobacco Collaborative

Target Audience

Middle and high school students

Objectives

Teach students about marketing strategies used to target youth.

1. Wrestle with ethical issues concerning media and the public good
2. Identify strategies used for target marketing
3. Recognize different motives used in advertising by tobacco companies (specifically: Altria and RJ Reynolds)

Materials/Preparation

1. 4 different candy or snack products (ex. M&Ms, Skittles, Sprees, Goldfish, Granola Bars, etc.)
2. Blank Paper
3. Markers
4. Tape
5. Magazines with advertisements

Description

Students get inside the mind of a tobacco executive by creating an ad campaign for their favorite brand of candy or snack food to demonstrate the methods tobacco companies use to reach target audiences (youth). The students will become the new marketing team for the company selling the candy product. Throughout the exercise, they discover Breaking News that the product they are marketing and trying to sell is addictive, causes cancer, stains your teeth, causes bad breath, and creates breathing problems. Watch as your students employ different strategies to sell their product. Do they continue their same game plan for marketing their product knowing the health risks associated with consuming the candy or snack product or do they re-evaluate their marketing plan?



Marketing Activity

- Introduce the activity by saying the following:

“A few weeks ago, we talked about how tobacco companies target youth. Today, we talked about how tobacco companies design products specifically to appeal to youth. Now, we are going to use the same tactics the tobacco companies use to market tobacco products, to market candy or snacks. At the end, we are going to do a 30 second presentation of each ad.”

- Count off by four to create groups of students.
- Give each team a different type of candy (ex. M&Ms, Skittles, Sprees, Goldfish, Granola Bars, etc.) and congratulate each team on being the new marketing department for the candy or snack.
- Tell each group, “It is your job to create a brand new magazine advertisement for this candy or snack product. You will have 20 minutes to come up with your ad.” Give each group markers, paper and some magazines with advertisements to use as examples.
- After the students have worked for 5 minutes, say “Breaking News: This just in... Research has now shown that candy/snack 1 and 2 cause lung cancer.” Give Group 1 and Group 2 the top secret letter.
- 3 minutes later, say “This just in... Research has now shown that candy/snack 3 and 4 cause heart disease.” Give Group 3 and Group 4 the top secret letter.
- 2 minutes later, say “Breaking News: This just in... 1200 people die every day due to consuming candy/snack products.”
- 5 minutes later, say “Breaking News: This just in... All candy or snacks must now have a warning sign on the package and on any advertisement to warn individuals of health risks associated with consuming your product!” Give each group two Surgeon General warning labels--one for the advertisement and one for the package of candy. Have the students write the disease their candy/snack product causes on the label.

TOP SECRET

IMPORTANT: PLEASE DO NOT SHARE THIS INFORMATION

Dear Marketing Team:

Our research department has come to the conclusion that loyal and longtime customers of our product are becoming ill and dying from its prolonged use.

We need you to design a new marketing campaign that appeals to teens, females and/or ethnic groups. These groups are our next generation of loyal and longtime customers. These customers will replace those who are no longer using our product due to death or illness.

The law states that our advertising cannot target children or people 18 and younger. With this said, we have faith in your marketing team that you will find creative ways to get children/teens to notice your advertisement. This could be achieved by the advertisement itself or in the placement of the advertisement.

We look forward to your contributions in making our company a success. Without your expertise in marketing to these target groups, we would not be able to sell our product!

Thank you for your support and we look forward to seeing your new advertisement soon.

Sincerely,

Ickey Mouse

CEO of Your Candy Product

Surgeon General's Warning Labels

SURGEON GENERAL'S WARNING:
This product

Advertisement Worksheet

To be completed by groups after their ads are completed.

CANDY PRODUCT COMPANY NAME:

NAMES OF MARKETING TEAM MEMBERS:

1. What target audience(s) did your team focus on? (youth, females or ethnic groups)

2. Did the Top Secret letter and Breaking News announcements change your strategy in developing your ad? If yes, how?

3. If you were to place your ad in a magazine, which magazines would you put it in, and why?



Teacher Wrap-Up on Project

- Tobacco companies market their products to youth, females and ethnic groups to replace those customers who have died or have quit using their products. They know if they target younger customers they will have a customer for life.
- When tobacco products were first introduced, the harmful side effects were unknown. The candy products used in this activity demonstrated a similar scenario where a thought-to-be safe product was marketed and then later discovered to be unsafe and still sold.
- After tobacco products were found to contain harmful and addictive chemicals, restrictions were established as to who could buy them and what advertising techniques were used.
- Tobacco companies know they cannot survive without gaining new customers. Advertising marketing tactics they use to appeal to certain populations include:
 - Youth: Representing independence, rebellion against authority, fitting in, participating in activities associated with adults
 - Females: Conveying body image, independence, sophistication, glamour
 - Ethnic Groups: Representing independence, fitting in
- Tobacco use causes:
 - Cancer
 - Heart Disease
 - Stroke
 - Emphysema
 - Bad breath, tooth decay
 - Premature birth and low-birth weight in babies
- Tobacco companies claim that they do not target youth. However, next time you are at a store or looking through a magazine, look at their choice of colors, images, wording and placement of the advertisement and ask yourself if they are targeting you, your parents, or your grandparents?

Post Activity Worksheet

Name: _____

1. How did this activity make you feel?

2. Were you surprised to hear that these are the same tactics that tobacco companies use?

3. Have you noticed tobacco advertisements that target you?

4. Do you think your friends know about these marketing tactics?

5. Would you ever work for a tobacco company or any other company that sold dangerous products, and aimed their marketing and advertisements directly to youth to increase their usage of that product?

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