

## REDUCE - JUNIOR ACTIVITY 1

# "Ad" & Subtract

**OBJECTIVE:** To demonstrate how advertising influences purchasing habits and how purchasing habits can influence personal waste production.

**MATERIALS:** television, paper, pencil or pen, and various catalogues and flyers.

**VOCABULARY:** advertising, commercials, media

### **BACKGROUND:**

In today's society we are bombarded by advertising. Television, radio, newspapers and other forms of media overwhelm us with a never ending supply of commercials, ads, coupons and flyers. All of these are designed to make us believe we absolutely must have a particular product and that the newest product is always better. Advertising leads people to believe they will be more attractive or more popular because of the car they drive or beverage they consume.

Children are especially vulnerable to advertising. Most children spend Saturday morning in front of the television. Programmes are filled with commercials for toys, cereals, shoes and other items. Advertising influences are counter-productive to reduction; children are taught to buy and consume not to reduce. Teaching children to be smart consumers will not only save them money but help the Earth by decreasing the amount of garbage they produce. This in turn decreases their consumption of natural resources.

### **PROCEDURE:**

1. Ask the children if anyone knows what advertising is. Field a few responses from the class.
2. Explain to the students the ideas expressed in the **BACKGROUND** section of this activity. Be sure to mention that advertising, especially television commercials, is paid for by manufacturers. It is important for the children to understand commercials are not part of the programmes they watch.
3. Now tell the class they are going to do homework while watching television. State that their homework, in fact will be to watch television.
4. Children are to watch two hours of cartoons or similar children's programs on a Saturday morning. They must write down all the products advertised in commercials they see over the two hour period.
5. When the two hours are over, the next step is for each child to find the total cost of all the products on his or her list. Catalogues from companies such as Sears and Consumers Distributing or flyers from local stores can be used to find prices. In some cases a phone call or trip to a supermarket etc. may be necessary to retrieve a price.

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# "Ad" & Subtract (cont.)

### **PROCEDURE (cont.)**

6. Students now subtract any items from their original lists that they already have, then remove items from the lists that are unnecessary (i.e. the latest junk food, action figure, etc.).
7. Finally, have the children compare their two totals. Mention the idea of how money is saved when a person buys what he or she really needs versus what he or she is told to buy.

### **EXTENSION:**

1. Write two headings **WHAT WE WANT** and **WHAT WE REALLY NEED**. On the chalkboard under the first heading write down each student's total and add the figures. Repeat this for the second heading. Compare the two new totals. Tell the class or ask them how much they would save by purchasing necessary items only.
2. Ask the class to think of things (i.e. paper, plastics, steel, natural resources) besides money they could save by purchasing only what they need.
3. Tell the children to calculate how long it would take each of them to earn enough money to buy all of the products they saw on television if each child earned \$2.00 per hour for helping around the home.

### **EVALUATION:**

1. Will the children think twice before asking for an item seen through some form of advertising?
2. What are the differences between commercials and programmes?
3. Have each child subtract his or her total calculated in Step 6 of the PROCEDURE from the **WHAT WE WANT** total.