



Smoking: Background

	<p>Deconstructing Cigarette Ads in a Counter Advertising Workshop ©2004 Frank Baker, media educator</p>	
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BACKGROUND

Teachers, this activity is perfect for language arts, health and [media literacy](#) (read about the key concepts of media literacy by clicking the link) First, students analyze advertising found in magazines for cigarettes. In most cases, your students probably never paid any attention to these ads before. This activity is designed to introduce these ads as unique, persuasive messages, some of which are aimed directly at them, via the magazines they read! During this activity, students will be instructed to look deeper, into what we call “sub-text,” to identify what else might be said in the ad, (i.e. smoking is cool, relaxing, etc) and what is NOT said (i.e. smoking causes cancer, bad breath, yellow teeth, etc).

Secondly, this is a production activity: students will produce their own ad, after they’ve learned some of the more popular persuasion techniques and after they’ve been introduced to the concept of “counter-advertising.” In counter-advertising, we poke fun at ads by

creating parodies. (NOTE to teachers: click on the COUNTER AD EXAMPLES link in the left hand column for plenty of examples)

There is some published research that says exposing students to counter advertising is an effective way to change their attitudes about smoking, and how they are targets of the tobacco industry.