

## Teenagers and Advertising

It's the job of advertisers and marketers to encourage you to purchase an item they are trying to sell. The teen audience is particularly attractive because teens have an incredible amount of influence on purchasing – not only for what they buy, but what they also encourage their parents to buy. This includes cell phones, electronics, and sometimes even vehicles.



Research indicates that children and teens view more than 400,000 ads on television every year. Congress passed The Children's Act of 1990 to limit the number of television commercials airing during children's programming. During the weekend, television channels cannot air more than 10.5 minutes of advertising per hour and the limits are at 12 minutes per hour during the week. One of the ways advertisers get around this regulation is by broadcasting kids' ads during prime time, when 16 minutes of ads are permitted per hour.

Product placement is another tactic used to try and influence purchases. When you see a character in your favorite sitcom wearing a famous brand of jeans, drinking a particular soft drink, or using the latest cell phone, it's typically not just by accident. Companies pay to have their products used in television shows. Some marketing companies use movie-themed toys in kids' meals at fast food restaurants to help promote a product.

One of the big problems with marketing to teens is the number of ads for unhealthy food products. More than \$2.5 billion is spent to promote restaurants and another \$2 billion to promote food products. Sadly, about half of the TV ads kids see each year are for food, especially sweetened cereals and high-calorie snacks (kids rarely see an ad for healthy vegetables).

**Your Turn:** Keep a journal of a variety of TV viewing for a week. Pick the same time each day on the same channel. Note the time and the program you were watching and list the ads you see. Is there a link between the ad and the program? Between the ad and the time of day? Do you see lots of toys during a kids program? Do you see lots of ads for medication during programs that older people like to watch?

# My Advertising Journal

Time & Day of the Week	Television Show	Ads	Links