

Public service announcements

This lesson should be carried out prior to visiting the 'Move over Einstein: the next generation is here!' exhibition. There are three activities in total:

- the pre-visit lesson
- visit information and
- the post-visit lesson.

Aim

To learn about public service announcements and use the format to express a view about a controversial scientific topic.

Objectives

- Students understand the common uses of print media techniques including advertisements and public service announcements
- Students develop skills in thinking critically about the messages promoted in print media .

Curriculum links

Science, Citizenship, PSHE, Art and design

Resources required

A selection of past public service announcements

Teaching activities

Introduction

Advertisements or commercials inform the public about products they can buy (like cars, shoes or fireplaces) or services they can pay for (like lawyers, music concerts or cinemas). Public service announcements (PSAs) instead inform the public about a **message or an idea**. Some of the most famous PSAs that might be familiar to students involve campaigns encouraging people to stop smoking, or to vote for a certain political party. Public service announcements can be effective because they use traditional advertising techniques in a familiar format.

Ask the students what public service announcements they can remember. What formats were these in?

Are they Controversial? Not necessarily! Some public service announcements express a strong opinion, or try to encourage people to change their mind about an idea (eg messages about government policy). Other announcements try to raise awareness (eg environmental issues), raise money for a charity (eg an AIDS campaign) or encourage better health (eg healthy eating, stopping smoking or drinking and driving).

Ask the class to classify public service announcements they can remember and those you have as examples into these categories:

- raising awareness
- changing people's behaviour.

Activities

- 1 Look through different magazines and count how many traditional advertisements and public service announcements are inside. Can students find any differences between the two formats?
- 2 Create a temporary wall display where students can stick print media public service announcements or print outs from web announcements.

Plenary

Hold a discussion on what makes an effective television, print or web advertisement. Practice writing the copy for a piece: who, what, where, when, why. Brainstorm what other information is important to include: perhaps contact details, images, where to find reports or findings.

Suggested homework

Listen to the radio or watch television for 30 minutes. Make a chart of how many advertisements and how many public service announcements you hear. Note the time of day. When comparing your findings at school, does it make a difference what day and time of day you listened or watched?

Public service announcements

Objectives

- Students practice assimilating large amounts of information and distilling it into a major message
- Students practice evaluating and choosing language and visual techniques for a specific communication goal.

Curriculum links

Science, Citizenship, PSHE, English, Art and design

Resources required

Pens, paper

Teaching activities

At the exhibition students have the opportunity to explore the interactive displays on a number of exciting and emerging scientific topics. During the visit students should choose one message that can later be developed into a public service announcement about emerging research in physics.

Students should choose one exhibit, and use the time to record information for their PSA. Students should be encouraged to write one sentence that sums up the message that they think will be interesting and evocative for a public service announcement.

If possible, students may complete rough design templates that can include:

- what sentence or message will be included on the PSA?
- what images/drawings will appear?
- what colours will be used to gain attention?
- how to get further information (phone number, website address, etc).

Plenary

Students choosing to write a message from the same exhibit can discuss their ideas in small groups.

Suggested homework

Plan your public service announcement. Write down what resources you will need on a design brief.

Public service announcements

Objectives

- Students complete a creative visual arts exercise
- Students choose the appropriate style, colours and layout to create an effective message.

Curriculum links

Art and design, English

Resources required

Large pieces of paper, art materials

Teaching activities

Remind the students of the different styles and media available for public service announcements. Ask the students to summarise the visit, in particular uses of colour and style that attracted them to particular galleries or exhibits. By the end of the visit, students should have chosen the message for their public service announcements. They should now create design briefs and sample drawings. After the students have completed the task, create a wall display or share your designs with the venue.

Samples

Here are some examples of public service announcements:



www.madd.org



www.americansforthearts.org



www.hullcc.gov.uk