

# Energy Use Video

## Objective

Students will write, direct and produce a video using persuasive communication skills to illustrate natural resource conservation.

For this first activity, you will need access to videos of a variety of television commercials. Use recent and popular commercials with appropriate content. 10 to 20 commercials would provide excellent material for discussion in the first activity.

## Procedure

Begin by showing the commercials. Ask the class to create a list of the products advertised in the commercials. Then ask students to determine which commercials they liked best and why.

Introduce persuasive techniques at this time. You may wish to include some or all of the following ideas:

### Persuasive Techniques

**Authority** A famous person or someone who has authority in our society pushes a particular product. Examples include commercials featuring a doctor or a professional sports figure.

**Side-tracking** Discusses a subject that seems to be related, but is not. Examples include a basketball player trying to sell hamburgers.

**Bandwagon** “Everyone is doing it and you should too.” This approach appeals to feelings of belonging. Example includes everybody going to see the latest movie and raving about it in a commercial.

**Slanted language** Uses words packed with emotion to make people feel a certain way. Examples of positive slanted language include use of words like smooth, fresh and clear. Negative slanted words might include bumpy, overdue, crowded and noisy.

Show the commercials a second time, asking students to look for persuasive techniques used in each of the advertisements. Inform students that they are going to create a commercial on the topic of natural resource conservation. The commercial should be designed to persuade homeowners that they should use energy more efficiently. Emphasize that one or more of these persuasive techniques must be used in the class produced energy commercial.

Before students make the final determination of the style their commercial will take on, it may be advisable for students to break into smaller working groups and choose energy-saving topics for the commercial. Student groups may choose from a list of the following:

- Energy-efficient showerheads
- Using the clothesline to dry laundry
- Replacing dirty air filters
- Efficient use of the dishwasher
- Faucet aerators
- Closing up leaks in doors
- Closing up leaks in windows
- Opening curtains and shades during winter to let warm sunlight in
- Adjusting programmable thermostats to save on heating or cooling

## Materials

- Paper for storyboarding
- Video recorder
- Editing software

The commercial should contain explanations of procedures involved in making specific changes. Creativity is encouraged, including the use of music, props, etc.

**The important steps in commercial production are summarized below.**

### 1. What's your idea?

- **Audience:** Who is your audience?
- **Length:** How long will your video be?  
The commercial should be no more than two minutes long.
- **Style:** What do you want your video to look like? (Example: humorous, musical, informative?)

### 2. Write a script

- Who are the characters?
- What are they doing?
- What are they saying?

### 3. Construct a storyboard

- Roughly draw a series of “shots” that will communicate your ideas.
- Who is in the shot?
- Is it a long shot (far away), medium shot or close up?
- What action is happening in the shot?
- What dialogue is being spoken?

### 4. Assign all jobs

- Costume design
- Prop assembly
- Make-up artist
- Graphic artist
- Location scout
- Lighting director
- Camera person
- Director
- Actors
- Others

### 5. Rehearse

- How many times have you rehearsed?
- Have you had a dress rehearsal?

### 6. Shoot

- **Lighting:** Did you use as much light as possible indoors? Did you avoid windows? Was the sun behind you outdoors?
- **Audio:** Did you eliminate all background noise?

### Discussion Questions

#### 1. Was your commercial successful? Why or why not?

- *Answers will vary*

#### 2. Name some persuasion techniques in other forms of advertisements like radio or print ads.

- *Authoritative and bombastic voices, images of beauty and popularity, images of fun, etc.*