

language
arts

art

Memorable Media Messages



Objective

To encourage students to develop their own environmental beliefs and messages by creating a public service announcement (PSA) about the topics they have covered previously in the Quest for Less curriculum.



Activity Description

Work in groups to develop a live production (a live “television” or “radio” PSA) promoting environmental messages from the Quest for Less curriculum to present to other students.



Materials Needed

For a televised PSA, students can create props using classroom materials, or items made during other Quest for Less activities.



Key Vocabulary Words

Natural resources
Products
Waste
Recycling
Composting
Source reduction
Landfills
Combustion



Duration

Two classroom periods



Skills Used

Communication
Research



Activity

Step 1: Introduce and define a public service announcement (PSA) with students. Explain to the students that successful PSAs must grab the attention of the intended audience and present the key message effectively so that it is retained in the minds of the target audience. To do this, the PSA must use an appropriate type of appeal/incentive and be credible, understood, and considered relevant by the intended audience. Present to students examples of a television, radio, or magazine PSA (refer to PSA example on page 217) so that they understand the concept.

Step 2: Divide students into groups. Assign or allow them to choose a topic from the Quest for Less curriculum (e.g., the value of composting, recycling, reducing waste).

Step 3: Devote one classroom period for students to research, brainstorm, and plan their PSA.

Step 4: Give students a deadline for research homework to supplement information gleaned from Quest for Less.

What Is a Public Service Announcement (PSA)? A PSA is an announcement on television, radio, or promotional materials (e.g. billboards, posters, brochures) serving the public interest and run by the media at no charge. PSAs differ from regular commercials because rather than selling a product, they are generally developed to prevent a behavior from starting, stop a behavior, or encourage adoption of a new behavior.

Step 5: Devote a second classroom period for each group to perform their PSA for the class.



Assessment

1. Ask students which PSAs were the most effective and why.
2. Ask students why PSAs are an effective method of educating the public about environmental issues.
3. Ask students to discuss what other methods can be used for disseminating environmental information to the public.



Enrichment

1. Have students create a survey assessing knowledge on their designated PSA topic. Allow students to administer the survey to another class, preferably a class that had not worked on the Quest for Less curriculum. Then allow students to perform their PSAs to the other class. They may also create a follow-up survey to compare to the first survey to determine how effective their PSAs were to the other class.
2. Have students create print PSAs (e.g., posters or brochures) advocating their positions. These could be displayed in the school or in a community center.
3. Allow students time to create props and costumes for their PSAs. Videotape their commercials and have them broadcast on a school educational channel or a public access television. Radio PSAs can be recorded or broadcast over the school's public address system.

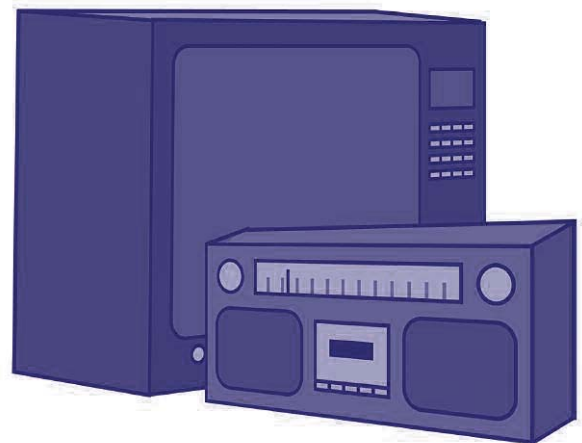
Examples of Public Service Announcements

Radio

1. <<http://www.epa.gov/safewater/psa.html>>
2. <<http://www.energyhog.org/>>
3. <<http://www.italladdsup.gov/>>

Television

1. <<http://www.epa.gov/iaq/tvads.html>>
2. <<http://www.energyhog.org/>>
3. <<http://www.turner.com/planet/tune-in/psa.html>>
4. <http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=promotions.pt_psa>
5. <<http://www.italladdsup.gov/>>
6. <<http://www.smokeybear.com/>>
7. <http://www.kab.org/site/PageServer?pagename=media_multimedia>



Examples of Public Service Announcements

Print

This PSA, used to promote sun safety, was used in subway stations and on city buses in Washington, D.C.

MAKE SUN SAFETY YOUR GOAL

Overexposure to the sun can result in a painful sunburn and more serious health effects like skin cancer, premature aging of the skin, cataracts, and immune system suppression.

Most people are not aware that skin cancer, although largely preventable, is the most common form of cancer in the United States, with more than 1 million new cases annually.

To help prevent the harmful effects of sun exposure, follow these simple action steps:

- Apply sunscreen
- Cover up with protective clothing, a hat, and sunglasses
- Use lip balm
- Seek shade
- Check the UV Index
- Check your body regularly, and if you see anything suspicious, see your dermatologist

For more information visit the EPA SunWise website at www.epa.gov/sunwise.

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