

COST OF COOL

Extension Activity

These classroom activities correspond to the **Don't Buy It** game *Cost of Cool* at <http://pbskids.org/dontbuyit/buyingsmart/costofcool.html>

What is "cool?" Students will explore how marketers use the idea of "cool" to sell clothing and accessories, and become aware of their own attitudes and perceptions about what is cool.

Objectives

- Become aware of what motivates them to buy certain things
- Become aware of how media influences their consumer behavior

Materials

- Copies of "What is cool?" questions
- Ads clipped from fashion, sports and celebrity magazines.
- Internet access

Procedure

Provide copies of the following questions for students to complete. Then review their answers.

What makes a certain style of clothing cool?

- The way it looks
- The logo
- If other people are wearing it
- All of the above
- None of the above

Who is the most influential on what you consider to be cool?

- Celebrities
- Friends
- Older kids
- Popular kids

How important is it to have cool clothes?

- Very important
- Somewhat important
- Not important

Write down the top three clothing brands that you think of.

Next, facilitate a class discussion on clothing and accessory choices.

- Does a certain logo or brand make a difference in how cool something is?
- Who in your life is the most influential in determining what is cool? Why?
- Are you influenced by what you see on TV or in magazines when making clothing choices?

Review the ad clippings from fashion, sports and celebrity magazines.

- How do celebrities look the same or different from people that they know in real life?
- Are they cool? What makes them cool?

Cost of logos: The **Cost of Cool** game compares the prices of higher-priced outfits with similar lower-priced clothes. How much does a popular logo add to the cost of an outfit? Have students use the Internet (or do the research yourself and share it with students) to do clothing comparisons for clothing items like jeans, and discuss the findings with students. Consider using the following Web sites:

Old Navy <http://www.oldnavy.com>

Target <http://www.target.com>

Nordstrom's <http://www.nordstroms.com>

Macy's <http://www.macys.com>

Additional Resources and Activities

Frontline's Merchants of Cool

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/cool/etc/hunting.html>.

This episode of Frontline looks at the business of manufacturing and selling "cool." This clip features an interview with the founders of Look-Look, a research company specializing in youth culture. This company hunts for new trends and ways to sell items to teens. Do you think the Look-Look correspondents are effective?

I Buy Different

http://www.ibuydifferent.org/powerup/why_we_buy.asp

There are many reasons why we choose to buy the products we do. Take this online quiz to consider your shopping habits.

Zillions

<http://www.zillions.org/Features/Brand/brand001.html>

Zillions compares expensive brand-name outfits versus bargain look-alikes. Can your students tell the differences in this game?

Alignments

— McREL Media Standards

Viewing Standard 9: Uses viewing skills and strategies to understand and interpret visual media. Level 2 (Grade 3–5)

BENCHMARK: Understands basic elements of advertising in visual media (e.g., sales approaches and techniques aimed at children, appealing elements used in memorable commercials, possible reasons for the choice of specific visual images). BENCHMARK VOCABULARY: advertising, visual media, sales approach, technique, children, appeal, element, commercial, visual image.

-McREL Media Standards

Listening and Speaking Standard 8: Uses listening and speaking strategies for different purposes. Level 2 (Grade 3 – 5)

BENCHMARK: Listens to and understands persuasive messages (e.g., television commercials, commands and requests, pressure from peers).