

Analyzing Food Ads

Being overweight is associated with many serious health problems, including type 2 diabetes. Ads for fast food and high-calorie snacks may influence young people to consume foods that contribute to unhealthy weight gain. In this activity you will learn to recognize the different techniques food advertisers use to appeal to children and teens.

Language	Color	Music	Types of Characters	Editing Methods

ACTIVITY

One way to critique a TV ad is to consider its style. An ad's style includes its use of language, color, and music; types of characters featured; and methods of film editing. Ads for breakfast cereals, for example, often feature cartoon characters to draw in children. Fast-food ads may have a fast-paced editing style, such as that seen in music videos, to appeal to teens.

Critique a TV ad for a food product that is targeted to children or teens. Use a chart like the one above to describe each element of the ad. Then write an essay indicating how

the style of the ad is attempting to draw in its target audience. Explain why the advertised food should not be targeted to children or teens. Include information on why the food is a poor nutritional choice for a healthful eating plan.

EXPRESS YOUR VIEWS

Should fast-food and convenience-food manufacturers be required to put warning labels on their products that describe the health risks of consuming a particular food? Hold a class debate on this issue.