

## LESSON: What's in a Picture?

**Summary:** Students compare past and current tobacco advertisements for menthol cigarettes to identify common themes among the advertisements' content. By analyzing the extent to which specific variables used (such as the text, models, and scenery) target different audiences, students assess whether the advertisements especially target youth. Extension Lesson—This lesson extends the discussion of cigarette marketing addressed in the *EHP Student Edition* article.

**EHP Article:** "Back-Door Cigarette Marketing?"  
*EHP Student Edition*, May 2006, p. A95  
<http://ehp.niehs.nih.gov/docs/2006/114-2/forum.html>

**Objectives:** By the end of this lesson, students should be able to

1. list the adverse health effects of smoking;
2. analyze and identify common themes and target audiences over time in tobacco advertisements;
3. reach a conclusion about whether tobacco companies target youth in advertisements; and
4. modify tobacco advertisements to make them unappealing to youth.

**Class Time:** 45–60 minutes, with some possible homework

**Grade Level:** 9–12

**Subjects Addressed:** Health, Biology, Social Studies

### ► Prepping the Lesson (15–30 minutes)

#### INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Download the entire May 2006 *EHP Student Edition* at <http://www.ehponline.org/science-ed/>, or download just the article "Back-Door Cigarette Marketing?" at <http://ehp.niehs.nih.gov/docs/2006/114-2/forum.html>.
2. Review the Background Information and Student Instructions.
3. Make copies of the Student Instructions.
4. Either clip tobacco advertisements for menthol cigarettes (Kool, Newport, or Salem brands) from magazines, or download past and current magazine advertisements from the Trinkets and Trash website, <http://www.trinketsandtrash.org>. The Trinkets and Trash website—a project of the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey–School of Public Health—monitors, collects, and documents tobacco products and tobacco industry marketing tactics, and makes high-quality digital images available to public health practitioners and the general public through an easily searchable database. The Resources section of this lesson provides links to past and present advertisements for Kool, Newport, and Salem menthol cigarettes on the Trinkets and Trash website.

#### MATERIALS (per student):

- 1 copy of *EHP Student Edition*, May 2006, or 1 copy of "Back-Door Cigarette Marketing?" (preferably in color)
- 1 copy of the Student Instructions

#### MATERIALS (per group):

- 2 tobacco advertisements, one past and one current, for Kool, Newport, or Salem menthol cigarettes (if downloaded from <http://www.trinketsandtrash.org>, print advertisements in color, if possible, and write the year of the advertisement on the copy, if necessary)
- Black-and-white copies of the current advertisements (for redoing advertisements as homework)
- Construction paper and white paper (students may need to supply their own if redoing advertisements as homework)
- Colored markers and pens (students may need to supply their own if redoing advertisements as homework)



**VOCABULARY:**

- menthol

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

In an effort to not glamorize flavored cigarettes, which are new to the cigarette market, this lesson is presented in the context of menthol cigarettes, which have been available for many years. Menthol is an additive that tobacco companies use in cigarettes. Menthol is an organic compound of peppermint oils that occurs naturally in plants belonging to the *Mentha* species (Ahijevych and Garrett 2004). Menthol is added to many kinds of products including tobacco, and is known to have a “cooling” effect (Ahijevych and Garrett 2004).

Menthol cigarettes were first introduced for sale in the cigarette market in the 1920s (Gardiner 2004) and were originally marketed with “health” themes (Gardiner 2004; Sutton and Robinson 2004), being promoted as soothing alternatives to regular cigarettes when sick or suffering from a sore throat (MSA, Inc. 1978; Levy and Tindall 1984). Menthol ads of the 1950s, ‘60s, and ‘70s no longer made such direct references to health but instead used themes of “nature” and “refreshment,” featured images of couples in various nature settings, and used descriptive words like “cool” and “fresh.” (Sutton and Robinson 2004; Trinkets and Trash). White women appeared to be the primary target of these ads. Over time, however, menthol cigarette brands began marketing specifically to minorities, using black models and more urban references such as slang and hip-hop music–related themes.

Today, about 27% of all cigarettes sold in the United States are menthol cigarettes (FTC 2005), with popular menthol brands including Newport, Kool, and Salem. Research shows that black smokers are more likely than other groups to choose menthol cigarettes: approximately 75% of black smokers prefer menthols, while about 25% of white smokers prefer menthols (U.S. DHHS 1998). Targeted marketing of black smokers is believed to be a likely reason for this disparity. With respect to age groups, menthol smoking is also prevalent among adolescents (Giovino et al. 2004) and according to the 2004 National Youth Tobacco Survey, approximately 43% of high-school smokers are menthol smokers (CDC 2004). The popular and disproportionate use of menthol cigarettes by minorities and young people is of concern since recent tobacco control research suggests that menthol cigarettes may be more addictive and harmful than regular cigarettes.

**References:**

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- Gardiner PS. 2004. The African Americanization of menthol cigarette use in the United States. *Nicotine Tob Res* 6(S1):S55–S65.
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- Sutton CD, Robinson RG. 2004. The marketing of menthol cigarettes in the United States: populations, messages, and channels. *Nicotine Tob Res* 6(S1):S82–S91.
- U.S. DHHS. 1998. Tobacco Use Among U.S. Racial/Ethnic Minority Groups—African Americans, American Indians and Alaska Natives, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, and Hispanics: A Report of the Surgeon General. Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

**RESOURCES:**

- Environmental Health Perspectives*, Environews by Topic page, <http://ehp.niehs.nih.gov>. Choose Children’s Health, Environmental Tobacco Smoke/Smoking, Industry Issues
- American Heart Association, Tobacco Industry’s Targeting of Youth, Minorities and Women, <http://www.americanheart.org/presenter.jhtml?identifier=11226>
- Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, Increased Cigarette Company Marketing Since the Multistate Settlement Agreement Went Into Effect, <http://www.tobaccofreekids.org/research/factsheets/pdf/0128.pdf>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Tobacco Industry Marketing Fact Sheet, [http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/factsheets/Tobacco\\_Industry\\_Marketing\\_Factsheet.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/factsheets/Tobacco_Industry_Marketing_Factsheet.htm)
- Trinkets and Trash, <http://www.trinketsandtrash.org/>



Below are specific advertisement links on the Trinkets and Trash website that you could use for the lesson, or feel free to search the website for more options (see Notes & Helpful Hints for searching instructions).

**Kool Ads:**

Past—

1999: <http://www.trinketsandtrash.org/tearsheet.asp?ItemNum=210908>1999: <http://www.trinketsandtrash.org/tearsheet.asp?ItemNum=210856>

Current—

2005: <http://www.trinketsandtrash.org/tearsheet.asp?ItemNum=211119>2005: <http://www.trinketsandtrash.org/tearsheet.asp?ItemNum=211096>2005: <http://www.trinketsandtrash.org/tearsheet.asp?ItemNum=211062>2005: <http://www.trinketsandtrash.org/tearsheet.asp?ItemNum=211061>**Newport Ads:**

Past—

1973: <http://www.trinketsandtrash.org/tearsheet.asp?ItemNum=800738>1973: <http://www.trinketsandtrash.org/tearsheet.asp?ItemNum=800767>1975: <http://www.trinketsandtrash.org/tearsheet.asp?ItemNum=800740>1975: <http://www.trinketsandtrash.org/tearsheet.asp?ItemNum=800744>1976: <http://www.trinketsandtrash.org/tearsheet.asp?ItemNum=800743>

Current—

2004: <http://www.trinketsandtrash.org/tearsheet.asp?ItemNum=210195>2004: <http://www.trinketsandtrash.org/tearsheet.asp?ItemNum=210449>2005: <http://www.trinketsandtrash.org/tearsheet.asp?ItemNum=210692>2005: <http://www.trinketsandtrash.org/tearsheet.asp?ItemNum=211010>2005: <http://www.trinketsandtrash.org/tearsheet.asp?ItemNum=211092>**Salem Ads:**

Past—

1957: <http://www.trinketsandtrash.org/tearsheet.asp?ItemNum=801446>2000: <http://www.trinketsandtrash.org/tearsheet.asp?ItemNum=210977>2000: <http://www.trinketsandtrash.org/tearsheet.asp?ItemNum=210946>

Current—

2004: <http://www.trinketsandtrash.org/tearsheet.asp?ItemNum=210211>2004: <http://www.trinketsandtrash.org/tearsheet.asp?ItemNum=210216>2004: <http://www.trinketsandtrash.org/tearsheet.asp?ItemNum=210291>2004: <http://www.trinketsandtrash.org/tearsheet.asp?ItemNum=210330>

## ► Implementing the Lesson

**INSTRUCTIONS:**

1. Divide students into small groups of 2–3 students and hand out the Student Instructions.
2. In their groups, have students discuss for 5 minutes what they know about the health effects of smoking. (Step 2 on the Student Instructions).
3. As a class, make a list on the blackboard of what students know about the health effects of smoking. Ask the students: why do people smoke even when they know it can kill? Students may answer that it's cool, everyone is doing it, etc. Ask students how they know this. Lead them to how images in the media can influence what we think and do, and that advertising is one way that companies try to influence what products people buy and use.
4. Hand out the article and have students read it.
5. Review the remainder of the Student Instructions.



6. Distribute the tobacco advertisements you collected prior to implementing the lesson. Each group should receive one past and one current advertisement for ONE brand of menthol cigarettes.
7. Have students compare their advertisements and complete Steps 3–7 on the Student Instructions. OPTIONAL: As homework, have students modify one of the current advertisements to make it less appealing to youth. You may want to provide students with a black-and-white copy of one of the current advertisements so that they can mark it up.
8. As a class, discuss students' reactions and conclusions about tobacco advertising.

**NOTES & HELPFUL HINTS:**

- To search the Trinkets and Trash archives, go to <http://www.trinketsandtrash.org>, select a brand (Kool, Newport, or Salem), and type in a date range of interest (i.e., 1950–1999; 2000–2003; 2004–2006). Select “magazine” as media type, and select “advertisement” as the item category.
- On the Trinkets and Trash website, there are instructions for saving just the advertisement as a graphic. If you choose to do this, you will need to insert the graphic into a program such as PowerPoint or Word, where you can resize the graphic and add text (i.e., year of publication).

**▶ Aligning with Standards**

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**SKILLS USED OR DEVELOPED:**

- Classification
- Communication (note-taking, oral, written)
- Comprehension (listening, reading)
- Critical thinking and response
- Observation
- Research

**SPECIFIC CONTENT ADDRESSED:**

- Advertising
- Marketing
- Smoking

**NATIONAL SCIENCE EDUCATION STANDARDS MET:****Science Content Standards****Science in Personal and Social Perspectives Standard**

- Personal and community health
- Natural and human-induced hazards

**History and Nature of Science Standard**

- Nature of scientific knowledge
- Historical perspectives

**▶ Assessing the Lesson**

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**Step 2:** Students' responses for the health effects of smoking may include eye, nose, and throat irritation; lung cancer; other cancers; heart disease; stroke; emphysema; and other respiratory diseases.

**Steps 4–8:** Answers will vary depending upon the tobacco advertisements used in the lesson. Evaluate the student answers on their ability to provide clear, concise, and complete descriptions. Writing should be accurate and grammatically correct. Explanations should be complete and logical. Students could also describe their contribution to the group and personal impact of the project. If you assign the modification of the advertisement as homework, this could also be evaluated. The modification of the advertisement should carefully consider factors listed in the table under Step 4, such as the words used in the ad, the setting, the models, and the Surgeon General's warning. Students need to provide an adequate explanation of why they are making each specific change, as well as a detailed enough description of their change such that a new image is generated in the reader's/grader's mind.



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**▶ Authors and Reviewers**

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**Give us your feedback!** Send comments about this lesson to [ehpscienceed@niehs.nih.gov](mailto:ehpscienceed@niehs.nih.gov).



**Step 1:** Read the background information below.

Menthol is an additive tobacco companies use in cigarettes. Menthol is an organic compound of peppermint oils that occurs naturally in plants belonging to the *Mentha* species. Menthol is added to many kinds of products, including tobacco, and is known to have a “cooling” effect.

Today, about 27% of all cigarettes sold in the United States are menthol cigarettes, with Newport, Kool, and Salem being the most popular menthol brands. Research shows that black smokers are more likely than other groups to choose menthol cigarettes; approximately 75% of black smokers prefer menthols, while about 25% of white smokers prefer menthols. Targeted marketing of black smokers is believed to be a likely reason for this disparity. With respect to age groups, menthol smoking is also prevalent among adolescents. According to the 2004 National Youth Tobacco Survey, approximately 43% of high-school smokers are menthol smokers. The popular and disproportionate use of menthol cigarettes by minorities and young people is of concern since recent tobacco control research suggests that menthol cigarettes may be more addictive and harmful than regular cigarettes.

**Step 2:** Discuss what you know about the health effects of smoking. List the health effects below.

**Step 3:** Read the article “Back-Door Cigarette Marketing?,” *EHP Student Edition*, May 2006, p. A95

**Step 4:** Compare past and current tobacco advertisements for the brand provided by your teacher and answer the questions on the next page for each ad.



**Cigarette Brand (circle one):**                      **Kool**                      **Newport**                      **Salem**

Questions	Year of Ad:	Year of Ad:
What is the ad's general look?		
What copy, or descriptive words, are used?		
What colors are used?		
What is the "setting"?		
Describe the types of models used in the ad, if any.		
What activities are people doing in the ad?		
To whom does the ad appear to be aimed? How can you tell?		
What does the ad symbolize?		
What does the Surgeon's General Warning include?		

**Step 5:** What are the common themes between the ads, and how did the ads change over time?

**Step 6:** List the elements of the ads that make them more appealing to young people.



**Step 7:** How can the more current ad be modified so it is less appealing to young people? Consider some of the factors listed in the table under step four, such as, the words used in the ad, the setting, the models, and the Surgeon General's warning. Explain your changes in enough detail to generate a new mental image and also provide reasons for the changes you made.

**Step 8:** Write a statement about whether you think tobacco companies target their marketing strategies to young people. Do you think it is ethical to do so? Why or why not?

