

Lesson Plan 23

Shana Ferguson

TikTok & Branded Content

Grade Level: Secondary

Subject: ELA

Time to complete all activities: 3+ class periods

Slide deck: [Social Media & Paid Content – Google Slides](#)

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Lesson Overview:

This lesson introduces students to the ways in which various TikTok artists may be promoting products, their brand or outside interests to viewers. It also examines whether or not social media outlets should make branded content transparent to viewers. This unit can easily be adapted to include examples from other social media platforms.

Essential Questions:

- How can you identify sponsored or paid content on social media?
- What techniques do social media influencers use to “sell” their brand, products or ideas to audiences?
- To what extent should sponsored content be transparent to viewers?

ELA Standards Addressed:

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.1](#)

Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.6](#)

Determine an author’s point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how an author uses rhetoric to advance that point of view or purpose.

WA EdTech Standards Addressed

3.b. Students evaluate the accuracy, perspective, credibility and relevance of information, media, data or other resources..

Before You Begin:

- Check with your district tech department to ensure students will be able to view select TikTok videos for analysis on the school’s network.
- Communicate with students, families and administration about why students are viewing TikTok videos in class and that they do not need a TikTok account to participate in activities.
- Check for updated posts, articles and influencers to keep content up to date and relevant.

Resources Used:

Dutch Bros Ads to help students compare more traditional advertising to videos created by influencers.

- [Sample TikTok Dutch Bros Ad](#)

Tik Tok Influencer Videos for Analysis

- [Michael Le Tik Tok video from July 27, 2021](#)
- [Will Smith Video from July 2, 2021](#)
- [Abby Roberts video from July 28, 2021](#)
- [Demi Bagby video from July 24, 2021](#)
- [Spencer X video from July 27, 2021](#)

Related resources for influencers:

- <https://thegate.boardingarea.com/the-top-earners-of-tiktok-around-the-world-2021/>
- [Fiik Drifter Website](#)

[Lesson Slide Deck](#)

Lesson Plan

Before the lesson: Social Media Pre Survey

This information can be gathered in a digital survey like Google forms, posted informally to a message/collaborative board, etc.

- What social media platforms do you view/engage with at least once a week? (YouTube, Instagram, Facebook, gaming sites, TikTok, Snapchat, etc.).
- How much time would you estimate you spend in a week on various social media sites? (Hint: your phone may have that data!)
- What products do you see when you are on a social media platform?
- Have you ever purchased something based on a social media post / ad?

Opening activity:

Share survey results in pairs, small groups or as a whole class.

Introduce elements that can be used in paid content to promote a product, person or idea:

- Music
- setting/background/lighting
- Product placement / endorsement
- Camera angle / zoom in / zoom out
- Subjects: animals, people, other
- Humor / action
- Text / Dialogue
- Hashtags / weblinks / links to other accounts

Use the [lesson slide deck](#) to guide activities and discussion:

Activity 1: Do we need to know when content has been paid for and who has paid for it? Why or why not?

- Students can work in pairs or small groups. Challenge them to come up with as many reasons for each category – 1-2 m minutes per category as a lightning round consideration of all sides:
 - Yes, because
 - No, because
 - Sometimes, when
- Groups can share ideas on a class padlet, on a shared Google doc, or as a quick discussion to consider the various points of view.

Activity 2: Analyzing ads with a clear sponsor.

- Make sure students have some practice examining how social media ads are constructed, what to look for, etc. before moving to more subtle influencer content. Instagram images can be on a document that students download, TikToks can be screen recorded, etc. to avoid students actually going to a social media platform. Analysis can be done alone, in pairs or in small groups.

Activity 3: Evaluating influencer social media posts that don't have a clear sponsor.

- Have students choose one sample to scour for clues about whether or not they think it has been sponsored by a company or other outside party.
- More than one group can examine a post.
- Have students report their findings. They can record them on a doc, in a slide deck, etc. They can pause and take screen shots of videos to illustrate observations.
- Encourage them to do some lateral searching to analyze

the person posting, products that may appear in the image/post, etc.

- Not every example needs to have a clear answer. Some influencers are merely appealing to their target followers to keep their own brand interesting.

Activity 4: Should influencers label their content when it has been sponsored?

- Students could work in the same groups as before or new ones. Again, this is not a debate but a lightning round to consider all perspectives.
 - Yes, because
 - No, because
 - Sometimes, when

Activity 5: Reading

- Use any article or text set that helps students dive more deeply into the role of influencers on politics, commerce, etc. This link in the slide deck helps students to realize that some companies or groups may try to skirt legal barriers or other issues to promote their ideas or products. Articles can be read outside of class for in class discussion.

Activity 6: Homework

- Students may need a weekend or several days to find or create their own example. If they make their own branded content video, remind them that they should be more subtle than a traditional ad.
- Students can showcase their analysis or products in class to a partner, as a carousel where they rotate a

few times to new partners, or as a whole class. Encourage students to identify techniques/clues in each piece.

Key questions for examples:

- Is the media a paid promotion for something? How can you tell?
- Who is the target audience? How can you tell?
- What visual, sound, text or other elements would appeal to that audience?

Further Support

Branded Content Definition and Examples

Advertising and branded content examples. How are they similar or different?

- [Branded Content Video from BMW](#)
- [YouTube BMW Ad](#)

Vaping Promoted by Social Media Influencers to bypass advertising laws and target teens

- CNN article:
<https://www.cnn.com/2019/06/07/health/fda-ftc-influencer-marketing-vaping-ecigarettes-bn/index.html>
- LA Times Article:
<https://www.latimes.com/business/la-fi-vaping-social-med>

ia-influencers-20190607-story.html