

## More Than A Price Tag

Written by mImoment

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We're so used to advertising, and it comes in so many forms, that we sometimes forget that all commercial messages are asking us to do something. Regardless of whether it's stated or not, all commercials leave us with the message "Buy this product now!" The messages in public service campaigns, by contrast, usually leave little to the imagination. We need to stop smoking, or take action to stop drunk driving. In this MediaLit Moment, your students will have the chance to discover how the 'call to action' in a public service announcement can be communicated in a variety of ways.

*Ask students to interpret the values, lifestyles and beliefs in a PSA delivered in an unconventional format.*

**AHA!:** Even a price tag can send a message!

**Key Question #4:** What values, lifestyles and points of view are represented in, or omitted from, this message?

**Core Concept#4:** Media have embedded values and points of view

**Key Question #2:** What creative techniques are used to attract my attention?

**Core Concept #2:** Media messages are constructed using a creative language with its own rules

**Grade Level:** 7-9

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**Materials:** high speed internet connection, computer, projection screen

**Activity:** Have students watch a PSA created by UNICEF for one of its campaigns against child labor. You'll find the PSA at the following link: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-JQCo0\\_RvuZk](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-JQCo0_RvuZk)

The initial frames of this video show what looks like a sneaker with a price tag attached. But the price tag is actually a small flip book. As the pages of the flip book are turned, the bar code transforms into an image of a child gluing the sole of a shoe. The final two pages read "The real price is paid by others," and "Stop Child Labor," followed by the UNICEF logo and website address. Play this video for students at least one more time, then ask for their reactions to the PSA. As discussion progresses, work with Key Question #4 and ask, "From UNICEF's point of view, what do regular price tags leave out that potential buyers should know about?" You might need to briefly explain why child labor has become a cause for concern: in many countries outside the United States and Western Europe, young children work alongside adults in factories under poor working conditions, receive subsistence pay (or may receive no pay at all), while the shoes and other products they make are sold at a substantial profit. Discuss UNICEF's call to action. What might UNICEF like potential buyers of these shoes to do in response to this message? If you get the chance, work with Key Question #2 as well. Explain that these flip books were given to groups of activists who entered shoe stores and quietly replaced regular price tags on shoes with these books. Ask, why do you think UNICEF would focus on price tags to attract attention to their message?

The Five Core Concepts and Five Key Questions of media literacy were developed as part of the Center for Media Literacy's MediaLit Kit™ and Questions/TIPS (Q/TIPS)™ framework. Used with permission, © 2002-2011, Center for Media Literacy, <http://www.medialit.com>