



# Living in a Material World:

Lessons on Commercialism,  
Consumption, & Environment



## IN A NUTSHELL

Developed by: Environmental  
Education Exchange

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## SUBJECTS

Economics  
Fine Arts  
Health  
Language Arts  
Social Studies

The eight lessons in this book address three facets of commercialism: pressures to consume, effects of commercialism and consumption, and countering commercialism. A bar graph in each lesson indicates the extent to which each of these facets is addressed. Students analyze advertising techniques, complete questionnaires regarding their responses to advertising, evaluate packaging used in common products, and analyze their feelings regarding happiness and quality of life. Activities include discussions, surveys, drama, and experiential exercises (such as trying to avoid advertising and commercialism for 72 hours).

Each lesson lists a goal, subjects involved, materials needed, teacher notes, variations and extensions, and resources. Illustrations consist of transparency masters, charts, and photographs of actual advertisements. The text also includes a list of references and resources and several pages of additional activities.

Grade Level	8-12
Length	82 pages
Date Published	1996

THE BOTTOM  
LINE

"I am pleased with the attempt to have students look deep into consumerism."

What the REVIEWERS Said !	Key Characteristics	Strengths Noted	Other Considerations
	Fairness and Accuracy	Reflects both local and international diversity. Promotes inquiry. Information is from respectable sources and is clearly referenced.	Most recent reference is from 1994. Did not include a perspective from the advertising industry or indicate role of advertising in democracy, free speech, etc. Promotes perspectives of a noncommercial society.
	Depth	Pays attention to different ethnicities and scales from local to global. Develops concepts well.	
	Emphasis on Skills Building	Encourages critical thinking.	Doesn't engage students in defining problems or developing surveys. Could emphasize communication skills more.
	Action Orientation	N o t A p p l i c a b l e .	
	Instructional Soundness	Builds on learners' previous knowledge. Encourages expanded learning environment. Connects to learners' everyday lives.	Material may be better suited for 11-12 grade students.
	Usability	Lessons are adaptable, reproducible, and long-lived. Requires minimal equipment.	Overheads are very text-heavy.

"Subject is not integrated into broader subjects of civics or psychology. Too bad the authors don't take the risk of providing more balance."

"Uses wide variety of life skills as it promotes student analysis."