

# Beat the Drum in Your Own Community

## Enduring Understandings:

- Persuasive language and other techniques may be used by the media to manipulate the audience for positive as well as negative reasons.
- Persuasion is effective when we uncover and challenge people's misconceptions.

## Essential Questions:

- What are the best ways to educate people about HIV/AIDS locally?
- How can young people involve themselves in effectively addressing challenges in the community?

## Notes to the Teacher:

This is a service-learning project that seeks to teach students the power of persuasion, media, and social change. It asks them to research HIV/AIDS organizations in their community and select one; to contact and interview its representative(s); to review and analyze persuasion in *Beat the Drum*; and then to use those understandings to create a project to raise awareness of HIV/AIDS. Your role is to serve as a coach who oversees student projects and helps the students set their schedules, design their tasks, and evaluate their efforts. The rubric does not assign number grades, but you may wish to do so.

In the lesson, students collect information about the work of a social-service agency in your community and about attitudes and knowledge about HIV/AIDS in your school. Then students design a public-awareness campaign, using persuasive media techniques.

Before the lesson begins, identify several organizations in your community that focus on HIV/AIDS. You should also identify a contact person, such as a public-relations liaison, with whom to communicate. Telephone directories, a local website, or social service agencies could be helpful tools. If time permits, you may have students do the research and give presentations about the organizations instead.

Students could work on several organizations if you wish, depending on the size of your class and the number of organizations in your community. The lesson plan is written as if only one organization is selected.

You may find it better to make the initial contact with the organization and then allow a student to follow up. Also, if making arrangements will be too time intensive, try to involve a few parents, an administrative assistant, or another teacher to join you in this project.

It is advisable to share your plans with the administration of your school before you begin, in case questions arise.

**DURATION OF LESSON:**

Approximately five 45-minute periods, plus time to do interviews and design projects.

**ASSESSMENTS:**

- Letter writing
- Journal
- Ad campaign
- Reflective essay

Rubrics for student self-evaluation and teacher evaluation may be found on **HANDOUT 3**.

**VISUAL ARTS STANDARDS**

Indicators addressed by this lesson:

1. Understand and applies media, techniques, and processes related to the visual arts

**LEVEL IV (9–12)**

2. Understands how the communication of ideas relates to the media, techniques, and processes one uses

**LANGUAGE ARTS STANDARDS**

Indicators addressed by this lesson:

**LEVEL IV (9–12)**

9. Use viewing skills and strategies to understand and interpret visual media
12. Understands the effects of visual media on audiences with different backgrounds
10. Understands the characteristics and components of the media
1. Understands that media messages have economic, political, social and aesthetic purposes (e.g., to make money, to gain power of authority over others, to present ideas about how people should think or behave, to experiment with different kinds of symbolic forms or ideas)

## Materials needed:

Strips of paper or large stick-on notes  
 Additional materials as required by individual projects

### HANDOUTS 1–3

## Procedure:

### ACTIVITY 1: THINK LOCAL—SELECTING AN ORGANIZATION

1. After gathering the information about HIV/AIDS organizations in your community, describe the organizations to the class and ask students to indicate which one they want to work with.
2. Tell students that their next task will be to interview people from their selected organization to seek advice on how to raise awareness about HIV/AIDS in their school. Before doing so, they must prepare a letter of introduction.
3. Review the fundamentals of formal letter writing with the class. Have students compose a letter that explains who they are, what they are doing, and how they would like to be of assistance to the organization by raising awareness about HIV/AIDS in their school. The letter should include that they wish to interview workers, volunteers, and, if possible, people living with HIV/AIDS. Finally, the letter should explain that the interviews will be brief and that confidentiality will be honored. Have each student submit a typed, one-page letter.
4. Choose the top few letters yourself and then have the class select the one they would like to send.
5. Make copies of the letter and have the class edit it for content, structure, word choice, and succinctness.
6. Next, have one person make the final changes and then mail or deliver the letter.

### ACTIVITY 2: WRITING INTERVIEW QUESTIONS AND ASSIGNING ROLES

1. Choose one person to be the class liaison. After the letter has been sent, the liaison must call the organization to arrange the interview.
2. Now the class will design the interview questions for the organization. Provide examples:
  - What is the main thing that you would like our school community to know about HIV/AIDS?
  - What misconceptions would you would like to see changed?
3. Give students strips of paper or large stick-on notes. Have them develop two to four more questions that they would like to ask and write each one on a separate strip or note. The questions may be directed to a patient, volunteer, or worker. Post the questions on the walls as students finish. Next, have the class walk around and read each, deciding which has the best content and wording. They should move those questions to a “favorites” section. (This process could also be executed using a webpage or projected computer screen if you have such access.)
4. Using the same process, ask students to write questions to poll the school population in order to help them ascertain commonly held beliefs and misconceptions about HIV/AIDS. Sample questions could be:

- What are some reasons that people should get tested for HIV?
- Is HIV the same as AIDS?

5. Assign roles as interviewers and recorders to interview at the organization and survey the school. Make sure students understand their job descriptions and the date by which the interviews are to be completed. Job descriptions are as follows:

#### **For the HIV/AIDS Organization**

Interviewers (3–5): Use the questions that the class wrote to conduct separate interviews with workers, volunteers, medical staff, patients, etc. Ask follow-up questions as necessary.

Recorders (1 or 2 per interviewer): Write notes during the interview or make audio and video recordings of the interview if possible and if the subject gives permission. Take photos if the subject of the interview permits.

Note: While face-to-face interviews would be best, you may wish to allow students to conduct interviews by phone or e-mail, due to time or travel constraints.

#### **For School**

Interviewers (at least 3): Ask different members of the school community (e.g., teachers, students, custodians, parents) the questions that the class wrote.

Recorders (1 or 2 per interviewer): Same as above, within the confines of the school rules or guidelines.

6. Practice conducting interviews.
  - a. Remind students of the importance of interviewing and listening skills (e.g., introducing oneself, stating

the purpose of the interview, maintaining eye contact, asking clarifying questions, etc.) Tell them that for this exercise, everyone is going to practice interviewing, not just those who are conducting the actual interviews.

- b. Divide the class into groups of 3 or 4, with each student taking one of these roles: interviewer, interviewee, recorder. Use the questions the class has chosen. Next, have a group demonstrate their interview process before the class as a whole, with observers giving constructive feedback.

7. After hearing from the organization, arrange to begin interviews. Allow sufficient time for interviews to be conducted—at least two weeks.

#### **ACTIVITY 3: USES OF PERSUASION**

1. When interviews are completed and students are ready for the next phase of this lesson, ask them to retell the story of *Beat the Drum*. If time permits, show selected scenes as part of this review. The following scenes may prove helpful in refreshing students' memories:
  - The teacher and Thandi at the school in the village
  - Nobe deciding to go with the sex worker
  - Letti and Musa discussing AIDS
  - Mr. Botha asking his son Stefan how he got AIDS and Stefan responding, "Does it matter?"
  - The discussion between village elder and Musa in KwaZulu-Natal (Identify scene numbers)
2. Pose the following questions for discussion and write responses on the board:

- What were the common misconceptions about HIV/AIDS in the film?
  - What attempts were made to educate people about HIV/AIDS?
  - Which attempts seemed to fail? Which succeeded? Why?
3. Ask what the title *Beat the Drum* means at the beginning of the film. How does the meaning change as the film progresses?
  4. Distribute **HANDOUT 1: THE LANGUAGE OF PERSUASION**. Go through the terms on the handout to be sure students understand. Ask if any of these techniques were used in the film. Which were used positively? Which were used negatively?

**ACTIVITY 4: INTERVIEW RESULTS**

1. Have the students who conducted and recorded the interviews report their findings, sharing their photos, videos, and other data with the class.
2. On the board or a large pad, create a list of the responses from the organization’s interviewees. Group the ideas that are related to one another. Then, have the class prioritize the top five responses.
3. In the same way, list common misconceptions they heard from their school community. Try to find correlations between student responses and those of the HIV/AIDS organization.
4. Tell students that, based on their interviews, they are going to launch a public awareness campaign that will seek to dispel the major misconceptions community

members hold about HIV/AIDS. Explain that your role is to help them make decisions, but the campaign will be designed by them.

5. Refer to **HANDOUT 1**. Next to their list of responses, have them make a corresponding list of persuasive techniques that could help them target misconceptions through some sort of media. For example:

INTERVIEWEE RESPONSE	PUBLIC MISCONCEPTION	POSSIBLE PERSUASIVE TECHNIQUE
People should get tested for HIV	If tests find I’m HIV positive, I’ll die of embarrassment.	Testimonials from “Beautiful People” who are living with HIV/AIDS

6. Have students write a journal response reflecting on what they’ve learned and list questions that they still may have about HIV/AIDS.

**ACTIVITY 5: DESIGNING THE CAMPAIGN**

1. Ask students, now that they’ve collected their data, how they can use it to send a message about HIV/AIDS. What kind of words could they use to make their message memorable? Is there a slogan they could write that would counter misconceptions? How do they get the word out? What media do they use? What persuasive techniques would work? To generate ideas, you may wish to send them to the “Live With It” website, which features animated mini-episodes on characters living with HIV: [www.livewithit.com](http://www.livewithit.com).
2. Form groups of 4 or 5 students. Distribute **HANDOUT 2: CAMPAIGN STRATEGY WORKSHEET** as a guide to help students plan and implement their campaign.

3. Have each group assign members to the following roles, if you wish:
  - Project manager, to oversee timing, completion, and implementation of work; also serves as liaison to the teacher
  - Art consultant, to oversee art, graphics, visual representation
  - Technology consultant, to manage any technology concerns
  - Copy editor, to edit the language and mechanics of any writing
4. From this point on, coach students in executing their projects. Alter this phase to fit the needs of your class. You will need to arrange frequent written status reports or oral report-backs.

#### **ACTIVITY 6: DEBRIEFING AND REPORT TO AIDS ORGANIZATION**

1. After the campaigns have been implemented, ask participants to think about their effectiveness. “To what extent was our ad campaign successful? Did we somehow change behaviors or attitudes regarding HIV/AIDS? How do we know?”
2. Give classmates the opportunity to provide “warm” and “cool” feedback to groups after closely observing their productions. (“Warm” feedback describes what worked well. Conversely, “cool” feedback describes opportunities for improvement.) Invite the AIDS organization to view student campaigns. Perhaps they will be able to use them in their work!

#### **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:**

[www.nmmlp.org](http://www.nmmlp.org)

New Mexico Media Literacy Project

<http://www.thebody.com/poetproj/young.html>

The Body—HIV/AIDS resource and poetry project

[www.livewithit.com](http://www.livewithit.com)

Live With It—animated episodes on living with HIV

#### **EXTENSION ACTIVITIES:**

1. Have students write an essay using the following prompt:

It could be argued that misconceptions and truth are at odds in *Beat the Drum*. On one side, ignorance about HIV/AIDS led to many rumors, false ideas, dangerous behavior, and hopelessness. On the other, educating people and influencing change proved a struggle. What finally made the difference? How were people encouraged to listen and behave differently? How do these observations compare with your own campaign efforts?

2. Plan a career fair for your school with particular emphasis on health-related careers. Students may still think of medicine only in terms of becoming a doctor or nurse. Invite doctors and nurses with different specialties. Try also to bring in an array of professionals from other healthcare careers: emergency medical technician, lab technician, nurse practitioner, medical transcriptionist, pharmacist, phlebotomist, X-ray technician, etc. Students may wish to invite some of the people they have interviewed.

HANDOUT 1 ▶ P. 1      

# The Language of Persuasion

Media makers—particularly advertisers—use a number of identifiable techniques to inform and persuade media consumers. We can use our understanding of these techniques as specific tools for decoding media messages.

1. **Symbols** can be words, designs, places, ideas, music, etc., representing or suggesting tradition, nationalism, power, religion, sex, family, or any concept with emotional content. In media, people and things often symbolize some larger concept.
2. **Hyperbole** is exaggeration or “hype.” (For example, “The greatest automobile advance of the century!”) Ads often use “glittering generalities”—impressive-sounding language that is nonetheless vague and meaningless. This technique seeks to impress the targets and make them more susceptible to the sales pitch.
3. **Fear.** Media often try to make us afraid that if we don’t do or buy something, something bad could happen to us, our families and friends, or our country.
4. **Scapegoating** is a powerful technique that blames many problems on one person, group, race, religion, etc.
5. **Humor** is a powerful tool of persuasion. If you can make people laugh, you can persuade them.
6. **The Big Lie.** Most people want to believe what they see and hear. Lies work—on cereal boxes, in ads, on television news. According to Adolf Hitler—one of the 20th century’s most dangerous propagandists—people are more suspicious of a small lie than a big one.
7. **Testimonials** use famous people or respected institutions to sell an idea or a product. The speaker may have nothing in common or no experience with the product he or she is supporting.
8. **Repetition** drives the message home over and over. Even unpleasant ads often work if they are repeated enough to pound their message home.
9. **Leadership** or **charisma.** Be firm, bold, and strong; have dramatic confidence; and frequently, combine this appeal with the “plain folks” technique. It’s amazingly effective.
10. **Name calling** or **ad hominem** is frequently used in media. It can be direct or delicately indirect. Audiences love it. Violent, aggressive, often sex-focused media teach us from an early age to love to hear dirt. (Just tune in to daytime talk radio or TV!)

## HANDOUT 1 ► P. 2

11. **Flattery** is based on the idea that if you make people feel good, they are more likely to buy your product. We like people who like us, and we tend to believe people we like. (We're sure that someone as brilliant as ourselves will easily understand this technique!)
12. **Bribery** seems to give us something desirable: "Buy one, get one free." This technique plays on people's acquisitiveness and greed. Unfortunately, there is no free lunch.
13. **Diversion** seems to tackle a problem or issue, but then throws in an emotional non sequitur or distraction that doesn't logically follow.
14. **Straw man** builds up an illogical (or deliberately damaged) idea and presents it as something that one's opponent supports or represents. Knocking the straw man reduces the opponent and builds up the attacker.
15. **Denial** is used to escape responsibility for saying something unpopular. It can be either direct or indirect. A politician who says, "I won't bring up my opponent's problems with the IRS," has just brought up the issue.
16. **Card stacking** provides a false context, telling only part of the story, to give a misleading impression. Read the critics' quotations in any movie ad; not surprisingly, only the compliments are included—and taken out of context.
17. **Bandwagon** insists that "everyone is doing it." It plays upon feelings of loneliness and isolation. In the United States, with our incredible addiction to sports, this technique is often accompanied by the concept of "being on the winning team."
18. **Plain folks.** Many advertisers and politicians promote themselves or their products as being of humble origins, common, one of the gals or guys. Unfortunately, this technique reinforces anti-intellectualism, implying that to be "common" is unquestionably good.
19. **Nostalgia.** People tend to forget the bad parts of the past, and remember the good. A nostalgic setting usually gives a product a better image.
20. **Warm and fuzzy.** Use of sentimental images (especially families, kids, and animals) often sells products or ideas.
21. **Beautiful people.** Ads often use good-looking models to suggest we'll look like the models if we buy the product.

## HANDOUT 1 ► P. 3

22. **Simple solutions.** Avoid complexities, unless you're talking to intellectuals. Attach many problems to one simple solution.
23. **Apparent scientific evidence** uses the paraphernalia of science (charts, graphs, lab coats, etc.) to "prove" something that may be bogus.
24. **Maybe.** Exaggerated or outrageous claims are commonly preceded by "maybe," "might," or "could." You could win a million dollars!
25. **Group dynamics** replaces the weakness of the individual with the strength of the group. The atmosphere of live audiences, rallies, or other gatherings often carries people away.
26. **Rhetorical questions** get the target to say "yes" to preliminary questions, in order to build agreement and trust before the sales pitch.
27. **Timing** can be as simple as planning your sell for when your target is tired. In sophisticated propaganda, timing is the organization of multiple techniques in a pattern or "strategy" that increases the emotional impact of the sell.

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**HANDOUT 2 ▶ P. 1**

# Campaign Strategy Worksheet

**Names of group members:**

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**STEP 1. Brainstorming Ideas**

List one public misconception you would like to correct:

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Write the message you want to send to address and counter the misconception:

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What are some possible ideas for media that you could use? Here are some examples:

<b>Songs/Poetry</b>	<b>T-shirts with logos</b>	<b>Comic strips</b>
<b>Slogans</b>	<b>Pins</b>	<b>Newspaper editorials</b>
<b>Posters</b>	<b>Bumper stickers</b>	<b>Animation</b>
<b>Radio ads</b>	<b>Websites</b>	<b>Music videos</b>

List other ideas that might work well at your school:

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What general concept do you imagine? For example, you may have a theme or central artistic idea that ties your campaign together.

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**HANDOUT 2 ▶ P. 2**

How much time do you have to complete this project? Can you execute your idea in this time frame?

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**STEP 2. Planning the Campaign**

*Media.* What medium (or media) will you use to send your message?

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What will you need to create it? (For example, a radio ad may need a script and vocal talent; a poster will need clear art and graphics.)

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Where might you place this project in your school, or how will you arrange for it to be broadcast?

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**STEP 3. Choosing Your Words**

How will you word your message? For example, what ideas, words, and phrases are essential?

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Do these words address the misconception? Would this fulfill the needs of your organization?

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**HANDOUT 2 ▶ P. 3**

**STEP 4. Assigning Responsibilities**

Write down each step of the project, who is responsible for each task, and due dates for each task. Use a separate sheet of paper if necessary. Check off when each task is completed.

Task	Responsibility	Due Date	Completed



**HANDOUT 3 ▶ P. 1** Project Rubric for Student *Self-Evaluation*

After you reflect on your work, fill in this self-evaluation. For the comment, pretend you are advising someone who will attempt this project. Describe what worked well and what didn't. What would you change if you could do this again? What would you do if you had more time?

Task	Excellent	Good	Fair	Ineffective
<b>Accountability and timeliness</b> Your comment:				
<b>Analysis: ability to identify and counter misconceptions</b> Your comment:				
<b>Level of effective collaboration</b> Your comment:				
<b>Inventiveness and creativity</b> Your comment:				
<b>Thoroughness and quality of media</b> Your comment:				
<b>Quality of communication</b> Your comment:				



**HANDOUT 3 ▶ P. 2** Project Rubric for Student *Group* Evaluation

**MEMBERS OF GROUP:**

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**PROJECT**

Task	Excellent	Good	Fair	Ineffective
<b>Accountability and timeliness</b> Your comment:				
<b>Analysis: ability to identify and counter misconceptions</b> Your comment:				
<b>Level of effective collaboration</b> Your comment:				
<b>Inventiveness and creativity</b> Your comment:				
<b>Thoroughness and quality of media</b> Your comment:				
<b>Quality of communication</b> Your comment:				