

Brands play a key role in the representations of organizations, as well as their products and services. Although branding strategies go beyond the visual representations that logos offer, the logos themselves are worthy of observation and study, since they provide the symbolism that represents the organizations and their structures, as well as the products and services offered. Logos provide a “seal,” a trusted and quick way to identify the origins or the integrity of a company and its offerings. Although logos are ubiquitous and often overlooked, what might be the consequences when logos are faked, or subtly changed? What happens to the value of the company brand, or to the trust that we may have for an organization?

AHA! There’s more to logos than the image itself.

Grade Level: 6-9

Materials: Article: *Can you spot the real brand from the fake? We’ve slightly altered 16 well known labels to test your brain* (The Sun, Aug. 30, 2017): <https://www.thesun.co.uk/living/4350996/can-you-spot-the-real-brand-from-the-fake-weve-slightly-altered-16-well-known-labels-to-test-your-brain/>

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

Key Word: Format

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

Key Question #5/Producer: Have I communicated my purpose effectively?

Key Word: Purpose

Core Concept #5: Most media messages are organized for profit and/or power.

Activity: Explain to students that logos are visual symbols that represent – or re-present – organizations, and their products and services. Ask students to give examples of logos that they have seen, and why they think that having logos is important. Then, tell students that sometimes, logos are sometimes “faked,” so that people can become confused about what is a product actually manufactured by a company – or not. Then, tell them that they are going to take a quiz that has some “real” logos and some “fake” logos – and they can see how many logos they recognize. After taking the quiz and seeing how many answers they got correct, divide the students into pairs, and ask them to discuss with each other:

1. What kinds of mistakes did you make in recognizing the logo?
2. Was this quiz easy for you, or hard? Why?

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3. What do you think might happen if a company's logo is "faked" and shown on products or advertised with services? List at least two ideas of these consequences.

4. Do you think that companies care about their logos and how they are used? Why or why not?

5. What can consumers do to make sure that the products or services they are using are really being provided by the company whose logo appears?

6. If a logo is being misused, what can a consumer do?

(Report to the company; report to the store where the product is purchased; in the U.S., report to the Federal Trade Commission).

After students have a chance to discuss, ask each pair to report to the class what they learned in their discussion with their partner.

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