In this MediaLit Moment, your students will have the chance to explore the differences between social and commercial marketing campaigns for the same product, and also to investigate the motivations driving the organizers of each campaign.

Have students compare and contrast a public safety message about bicycle helmets and an advertisement for a popular helmet brand.

AHA! The people who made these videos want me to buy a bicycle helmet for very different reasons!

**Key Question #5:** Why is this message being sent?

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

**Grade Level:** 6-8

**Materials:** Computer with high speed internet access, data projector, projection screen

Public service announcement from the Brain Injury Association, accessed at: [http://www.biami.org/bully.mpeg](http://www.biami.org/bully.mpeg)

Giro bicycle helmet advertisement accessed at: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vTT9tr68V8E](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vTT9tr68V8E)

**Activity:** View the two videos with students. Start with the public service announcement. Since this video is only 30 seconds long, you may want to show it two to three times. What is the message of this video? Ask students how they feel about the risks of riding a bicycle without a helmet after seeing the announcement. How high do they believe these risks are now that
they’ve seen this PSA? Next, show the Giro advertisement to students. Since this video is only 30 seconds long, you may want to show this video two to three times as well. Ask students questions about the message of this video. Does the commercial tell viewers that they will be safer if they wear this helmet? Why--according to the commercial--should they buy a Giro helmet? How do they feel about buying a Giro helmet after seeing this commercial?

Ask students questions about technique: Key Question #2: What creative techniques are used to attract my attention? Core Concept #2: Messages are constructed using a creative language with its own rules.

How did each video attempt to get and keep their attention? How did each video attempt to persuade them to buy a helmet? Next, ask students why each message was sent. Why do they think the Brain Injury Association decided to produce this PSA? Why did Giro decide to produce this commercial? In discussing the public service announcement, you may want to explain that non-profit organizations need to convince people that their organization addresses a serious social problem so that they have a better chance of attracting people and funding to their cause.

Ask students to write down a list of purposes for each video, and ask them to compare and contrast the answers they wrote down for each. Do Giro and BIA have any motivations in common?

Extended Activity: This activity is adapted from one of the sample 8th grade activities from the Partnership for 21st Century Skills “Science Map,” reviewed elsewhere in this issue. Ask the students to apply what they’ve learned about the marketing of bicycle helmets to the task of product evaluation. Now that students have seen videos which encourage them to perceive the benefits of bicycle helmets in different ways, ask them to objectively evaluate the product.

Begin with this question: Why should you buy a helmet?

Here are some questions for research: What are the risks of injury for children and adults who ride a bicycle without a helmet? How effective are bicycle helmets in reducing these risks? If your state requires cyclists to wear helmets, have these laws reduced the number of head injuries among cyclists? Are some helmets more effective than others in reducing the risk of injury? If yes, what makes these helmets more effective? Design? Materials? What brand or
model of helmet do they recommend? Why?

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