

Ten Steps to a Winning PSA

Begin by distributing the mini-magazines to each student and reviewing the contest details together. Then use the easy activities below to help your students create persuasive public service announcements and build communication skills.

WHAT'S THE STORY? Ask each student to write a story describing how he or she feels about wearing a seat belt and why. Include characters, setting, introduction, body, and conclusion.

KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE: Make a list of all the ways to grab a teen's attention. What do teens care about? What's stopping them from wearing seat belts now? What might convince them to change?

WRITE A CATCHY SLOGAN: Explain that the most memorable slogans are short and descriptive, and capture the entire message of an ad campaign in just a few words. Ask each student to brainstorm a few memorable slogans and then pick a favorite.

CREATE DRAMATIC VISUAL IMPACT: Discuss how the images in a PSA should be as memorable and dramatic as the slogan. Brainstorm a list of ways to tell the story from Step 1 visually (see "Here's Where You Start" in the mini-magazine). Each student should sketch his or her ideas or find examples in magazines, in newspapers, or on TV.

SEARCH FOR SOUND AND MUSIC: Discuss the powerful, emotional impact of sound effects and music. Students should choose thirty seconds of a song that will tell their story emotionally.

WRITE A THIRTY-SECOND SCRIPT: Students should write a script for a 30-second PSA and read it aloud to the class. Does it sound natural? Based on the story, every piece of dialogue should be essential to relaying the main message.

DRAW STORYBOARDS: Ask students to use the **Official Storyboard Template** worksheet on the back cover of the mini-magazine. Students should pull their slogan, images, sound, and script together with a storyboard that outlines how each shot in the commercial will look. Each 30-second PSA should have six storyboard frames.

ROUND UP YOUR GEAR: Distribute copies of the **Video Production Resources** reproducible on the back cover for local organizations that can help students create their commercial. Students will need a video camera, video/DVD, and microphone, or they may use other multimedia resources if desired.

PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE: Students should practice their PSAs in front of the class before filming.

ENTER TO WIN: Collect each entry (including an entry form, a six-frame storyboard, and a video/DVD of a completed public service announcement). Mail all entries to: **Fasten Your Seat Belt...Go Far! Contest**, Scholastic/SMP, P.O. Box 713, New York, NY 10013-0711.