

Electrifying Minnesota

A traveling exhibit from the Minnesota History Center and The Bakken Museum.

Pitch for Electricity!

Overview

Create an ad to promote Green Energy or Conservation.

This lesson can be used as a response to the Red Wing Films if your class will be going on a field trip to view the Electrifying Minnesota exhibit.

Thirty minutes: Analyze old ads

Materials

- Vintage electricity ads (see PDFs)
- Looking at Advertising worksheets (see PDF)

As a whole class or in small groups, have students choose two print ads and record their observations on the worksheet.

Extension: Make your own ad

Materials:

- A variety of paper sizes (postcard to poster)
- Art supplies:
 - pencils, crayons, colored pencils, markers
 - paint if appropriate
 - collage—magazines, construction paper, glue, scissors

Now it is your time! Create an ad for Green Energy or Conservation.

Things to think about before you start:

- What are you promoting? Example: Wind? Solar? Biking? CFLs? Recycling?
- Who is your audience? Other students- your family- school principal- school community- women- men- families.
- Selling point, importance, or benefit. Why should someone care?
- Where will they see this? Postcard, poster, magazine, other (video/radio per teachers' interest).

Homework

Find a modern ad for an electricity company, green technology, or a power source.

- Where did you find the ad (magazines, newspapers or online)?

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- Who do you think the audience is?
- What is the explicit message of the ad?
- What is the underlying message (e.g. this will make you beautiful, safe, impressive, belong to an important group...)?
- What works about the ad? What doesn't? Do you find it convincing?

Resources:

- <http://www.mnenergychallenge.org/> the **Find Actions** button will give many examples of ways to be Green.

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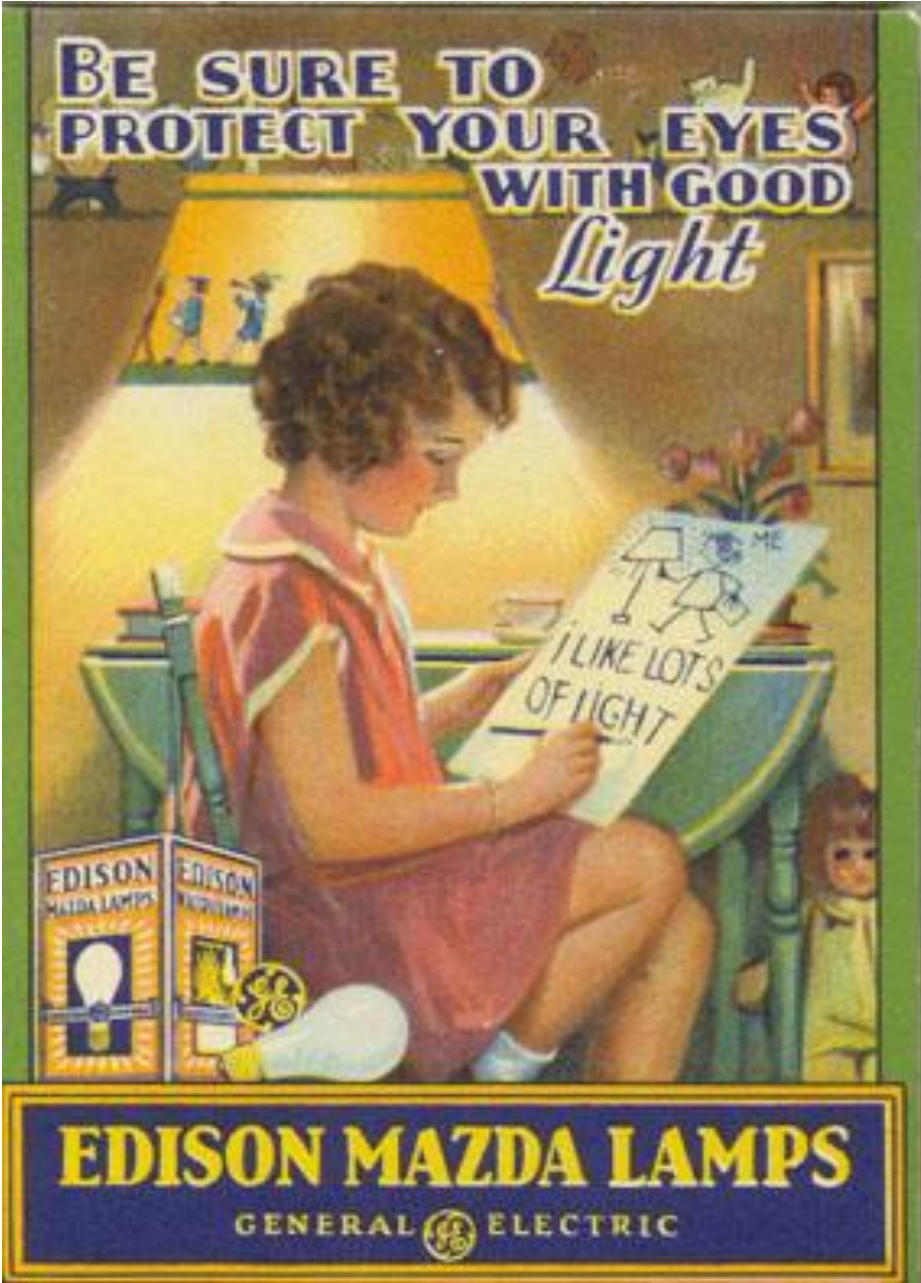
Worksheet—Looking at Advertising

Look at the old ads. See if you can find visual clues to answer these questions:

<u>Ad #1</u>	Observation	What makes you
What do you notice/see?		
Who is the target audience?		
What is the message?		
<u><i>Ad #2</i></u>		
What do you notice/see?		
Who is the target audience?		
What is the message?		

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General Electric ad campaign ink blotter, early 1900s

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1902—Collection from The Bakken Museum

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Synopsis for Teacher:

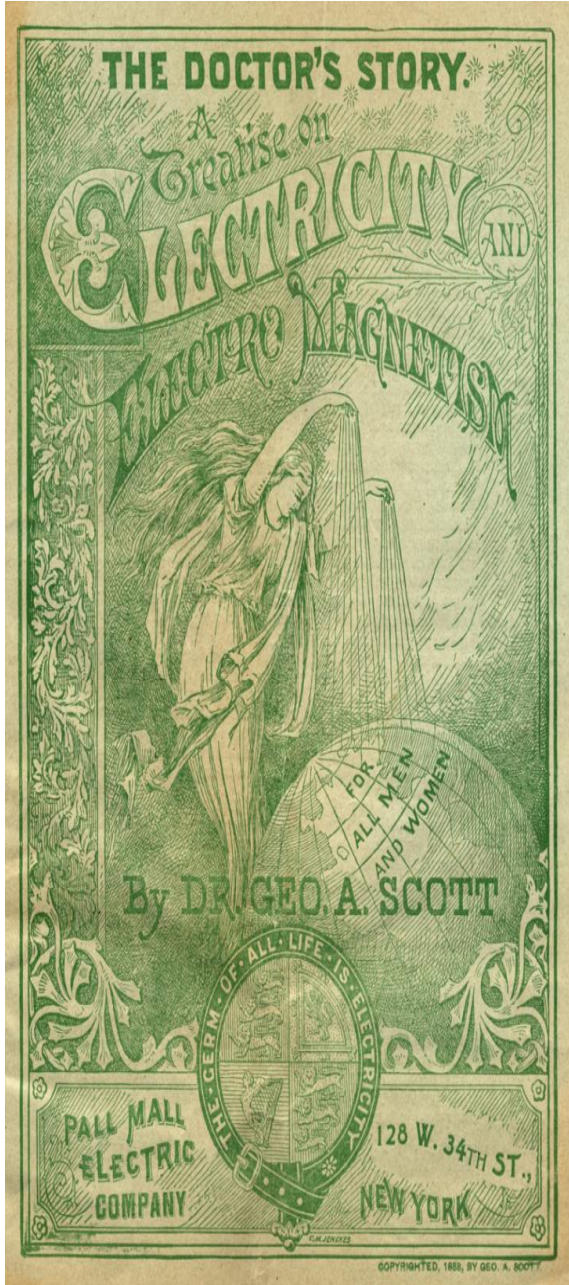
Catalogue cover. *Electrical Goods and Supplies. Sears, Roebuck & Co., Chicago, 1902.*

This catalogue from 1902 shows a relatively relaxed goddess of electricity promoting the products of Sears, Roebuck & Co. She wears no showy accessories or adornments. With remarkable nonchalance, this female Electricity lounges on a heavy-duty set of electrical generating equipment, untroubled by fear or discomfort. She thrusts her left arm toward the viewer – not the customary right arm. In her left fist she holds lightning captured from the electrical devices below, symbolizing the domestication of electricity for safe household consumption. Note how the melodrama here is created by the vivid artwork of straight black and red lines, not romantic myth: this is electricity as modernization, not as magical mystery.

Collection of the Bakken Library.

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c.1888—Collection from The Bakken Museum’s Library

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Synopsis for Teacher:

Pamphlet cover. *The Doctor's Story*. Pall Mall Electric Company, New York, c1888.

The American public has long sought alternatives to conventional medicine. Back in the 1880s, "Electricity is Life" was a typical slogan for those trying to sell electromagnetic remedies for personal health problems. This pamphlet, copyrighted in 1888, advertised electrical corsets and magnetic caps for sufferers of headaches, dandruff, etc. To lend some credibility to these gadgets, the front cover presents electricity personified as a goddess, casting her benevolent influence over the world with her over-arching posture and curative rays emanating from her hands.

Collection of The Bakken Library.