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# MOSQUITO ADVERTISING

## THE CRUNCH CAMPAIGN

### Kate Hunter



## Teachers' Notes

Written by a practising Teacher Librarian  
in context with the Australian Curriculum  
(English and Business Studies)

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**SYNOPSIS**

*Mosquito Advertising: The Crunch Campaign* is the third and final book in Kate Hunter's Mosquito Advertising series. Brisbane-based teenage advertising agency Mosquito Advertising is faced with the Federal Government's new ban on junk food ads. This puts at risk the family owned and operated Parfitt's soft drink company, with whom Katie and her mother have had a lifelong association.

Katie, Lorraine, Clementine, Joel and Dominic undertake the challenge of convincing the prime minister that rather than ban ads for junk food, quality healthy food advertising could be funded by a 'Lettuce Levy' placed on junk food companies.

Katie is also coming to terms with her mother's engagement to Liam Parfitt and the fact that Liam's four young children will soon become part of her world.

**THEMES**

*Mosquito Advertising: The Crunch Campaign* addresses a range of themes in the context of the advertising and junk food industries.

**Family and Friendship**

- Katie's mother becomes engaged to a father of four young children. Katie has to adjust to this change in her life.
- Katie is annoyed by Georgie, her five year old soon-to-be step-sister. Katie eventually realises that Georgie is a lot like her.
- The friendship between Katie, Lorraine, Joel, Dominic and Clementine is loyal and consistent.
- Katie's relationship with her mother continues to be positive and open despite her marriage plans.

**Advertising**

- Campaigns and slogans are featured in *Mosquito Advertising: The Crunch Campaign*.
- Creativity and teamwork are essential components of a successful campaign.
- The Federal Government's ban on junk food advertising creates a major conflict for Katie and her friends.
- Does banning work?

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**Perseverance and Problem Solving**

- Katie uses her problem solving skills to create the concept behind the Lettuce Levy.
- Although faced with defeat, the members of Mosquito Advertising are resilient. They persevere when things get tough.

**Healthy Food vs. Junk Food**

- Is banning junk food advertising the most effective way to encourage better eating habits?
- Fast food (such as MyFries) appeals to consumers because it is cheap to buy.

**WRITING STYLE**

*Mosquito Advertising: The Crunch Campaign* is written in third person, past tense. Adventurous and fast paced, the teenage narrative voice is believable and accessible. The characters are well developed and allow the reader to engage with their stories.

**AUTHOR MOTIVATION**

*Mosquito Advertising: The Crunch Campaign* is the third (and probably final) book in my series about the Brisbane kids who start their own ad agency. In previous books they have saved a soft drink company and exposed a dodgy airline. In this story, I wanted them to explore the more complicated issue of selling an idea, rather than a product. Much of my work in advertising was of this nature. Convincing people to do something differently, or to change their opinion, is challenging and difficult to measure. As a result, it's especially rewarding when you succeed.

There's so much in the news at the moment about junk food and junk food advertising being targeted at kids, I thought this would be a fascinating area for the kids to explore. Especially as their foundation client is a soft drink. Katie and her mates have to wrestle with how to solve a very real problem (childhood obesity) without demonising their client and putting themselves out of business. Throw in some politics and a backdrop of family drama and I hope we have a story that's as much fun to read as it was to write.

*Mosquito Advertising: The Crunch Campaign* is the third and final book in the Mosquito Advertising series, following *Mosquito Advertising: The Parfizz Pitch* and *Mosquito Advertising: The Blade Brief*.

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## SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

- *Mosquito Advertising: The Crunch Campaign* begins with Prime Minister Clara Whiting banning junk food advertising. This storyline drives the narrative. Discuss how this ban threads throughout the text. In a story map or graph illustrate how the author has structured the novel around this key story element.
- In small groups, brainstorm other decisions the prime minister could have made which would create other good storylines. Choose one of these and plan an outline for a *Mosquito Advertising* novel. Write the first chapter of this new novel.
- Nancy says she is critical of the ban because ‘the last time I looked, Australia was a democracy’ (p24). Examine what a democracy is. What features of democracy would make banning junk food advertising undemocratic?
- The author uses figurative language to help paint a picture with words. Discuss Kate Hunter’s use of figurative language and how it contributes to the text. Also consider the use of original figurative language in your own writing. Some examples from this book include:
  - ‘red hair frizzing out like millions of strands of copper wire’ (p22).
  - ‘fear was gnawing at her’ (p26).
  - ‘pulled the blankets off Katie as if they were a giant bandaid’ (p30).
  - ‘Mrs Sinnamon was waiting like a farmer, anxious to shut the gate after the last sheep’ (p32).
  - ‘nothing felt better than bare feet on cool floorboards’ (p34).
  - ‘That’s like telling a condemned man to forget about the firing squad’ (p35).
  - ‘he’s as happy as a chihuahua in Chanel’ (p36).
  - ‘Katie backed away from the computer as if it was an unexploded bomb’ (p38).
  - ‘moved his head like one of those laughing clowns at a show’ (p45).
  - ‘as much a part of summer as cicadas and cane toads’ (p101).
- Put yourself in Prime Minister Clara Whiting’s shoes: Why do you think she has introduced this ban on junk food advertising? What external influences are at play in this decision?
- Re-read Katie’s email to Prime Minister Clara Whiting, starting on p26. Discuss her arguments and persuasive techniques, especially the way in which she expands on her ideas with examples:
  - If you’re allowed to sell something you should be allowed to advertise it (p27).
  - Banning ads is unfair to smaller companies like Parfitt’s (p27).
  - Big companies will find clever ways ... (p27).

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- As a class, brainstorm a range of national topics/issues that you could be concerned about. Choose one on which to write your own email to the prime minister.
  - Carefully consider the structure, language and tone of an email sent to an unknown audience, such as a political leader.
  - How would this email differ to one you may write to a known audience, such as a friend or relative?
- Research the effect of advertising bans on products such as cigarettes. How has the advertising ban affected smoking rates? How long does a ban have to be in place before society begins to see the outcome of such a ban?
- Discuss the Federal Government's recent introduction of plain packaged cigarettes. What arguments have come forth from both sides of this debate? Should a government have the power to impose such bans?
- What does Katie mean when, regarding Nancy, she says: 'for someone who was good with words, it was weird that she didn't use nicer ones' (p23)?
  - Discuss the author's choice to include observations like this to help create a deeper understanding of Nancy's character.
  - Find examples throughout the text that help give the reader three-dimensional views of characters, such as Lorraine, Joel, Tania Mantelle etc.
- Caesar Maxwell, the owner of MyFries, wants his ads to criticise the government. Find examples of political advertisements that criticise opponents on YouTube (e.g. the mining industry's objection to the Mining Tax or tobacco companies' objection to plain packaged cigarettes) to help analyse and discuss whether or not ads that simply criticise are effective.
- MyFries uses cheap oil from overseas. Re-read p50-51 and discuss the ethics behind the purchasing of cheap products made using cheap labour.
- Write a reflection of Katie's treatment of Georgie throughout the text.
- Complete a PMI chart of Katie's idea of the Lettuce Levy.
- Tania Mantelle has her 'ten beliefs' written on her office wall (p63-64). Later, Katie writes a list of ten things she needs to do (p95). Compare Katie's and Tania's characters using these lists as a window into each character.
- Discuss the author's choice to place Katie's list half way through the story (p95).

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- Evaluate Katie's decision to leave Georgie with Nancy while she went to Rocklea.
- On p121, Nancy tells Katie to 'stop blaming everyone else for your stuff-ups.' Write a reflection of a time that you blamed others for your mistakes.
- Explore the use of alliteration in the Mosquito Advertising series, and in advertising in general. Discuss why this technique is so effective. Keep a journal of examples of alliteration both in the novel and in ads during the reading of the text. To begin with consider these examples:
  - The Crunch Campaign
  - The Blade Brief
  - The Parfizz Pitch
  - The Lettuce Levy
- Woven throughout the text are subtle examples of healthy eating – for instance, Katie makes her friends a roast lamb lunch, making sure she includes a range of vegetables. Make a list of examples like this as you read *Mosquito Advertising: The Crunch Campaign*.
- Throughout the novel, various characters claim that banning doesn't work. Using the inquiry question 'Does banning work?' complete an information report that examines this concept. Use the following process as a guide:
  - Formulate questions to help guide research. Examples may include:
    - What has been banned in Australia? (E.g. marijuana and other illicit drugs, cigarette advertising/sponsorships.)
    - Throughout history, what examples are there of successful / unsuccessful banning? (e.g. Prohibition of alcohol in the USA during the 1920s.)
    - How is banning policed?
    - What statistics could help answer this inquiry question?
  - In The Netherlands, marijuana has been legalised for many years. Research how this legalisation has impacted on Dutch society. Has this been a positive or negative move for the country? Why?
  - Read various viewpoints on the topic of banning. Make notes to record your findings. Compare these with other students. Discuss your findings.
  - Use De Bono's 'Six Thinking Hats' to discuss this topic in more depth.
  - Create an information report to explain your findings.
- In small groups, create an advertising campaign for a healthy food. Include posters, jingles and a filmed ad.
- Conduct a class debate on the topic: 'All junk food ads should be banned.'

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- Using a Y Chart, brainstorm what 'healthy eating' should look like, feel like and sound like.
- Choose a scene from the novel to dramatise. Create a script and re-create this scene in front of an audience.