

Resource: Marketing website

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Citation:

<http://www.claritas.com/MyBestSegments/Default.jsp>

Context:

As part of a journal assignment in an undergraduate course designed to examine the psychology of social class.

Description:

This is a site designed by Claritas, a marketing information company. Claritas provides “Comprehensive Demographic and Market Segment Profiles” for advertisers who are interested in learning more about particular communities. At this site you can type in a zip code and receive a report on the demographic background of a particular area as well as “snapshots” of other cultural information such as the residents’ ethnic and class background, activities of interest, and eating and shopping patterns.

How it could be used:

This resource could be used in a number of ways to help explain class as a culture, and more specifically, how different types of products are marketed towards different classes.

During a session about class and advertising, I give this website to my students along with several zip codes to look up: the zip code where they grew up, the zip code where they currently live (if different from where they grew up), their parents’ zip code (if different from where they grew up), and the zip code of where they attend school. Additionally, I may give them zip codes of areas they don’t know and maybe even the zip code of where I grew up (without first telling them where it is and why I’m asking them to look it up).

Since this would be part of a journal assignment, the students would analyze and compare the various reports and discuss how marketers might use this information to design and sell products to the intended target community. The teacher should pair this assignment with critical readings on marketing and carefully guide the ensuing discussion so that students do not fall back on stereotypes, allowing the “demographic snapshot” to reinforce what they already believe about a certain population or area. This activity could also be used as a small group project, with each group presenting a different assigned zip code, with an analysis of how and why this information is used.