

LESSON

Before and After



After playing Before and After, students look at the web site of a professional photo re-toucher and read and discuss a persuasive essay about the impact of digitally manipulated images on personal identity and cultural values. This activity strengthens reading comprehension, critical thinking, and writing skills.

After reviewing the vocabulary as a pre-reading activity, students read independently and complete the questions. Afterwards, they discuss the questions provided on the worksheet.

Before reading, students will benefit from studying the vocabulary words used in this article:

scantly	bare, usually referring to a small amount of clothing
repercussions	after-effects or consequences
adorn	to dress up or add something to make more attractive
positioning	to move into place
flattering	enhancing, improving (usually appearance)
discolorations	unattractive, off-color or poorly colored
fundamental	important
noteworthy	something worth paying attention to
provocative	sexually attractive
publicist	someone who helps get TV, magazine and newspaper attention for their client
warped	distorted
projection	an image

Discuss: Some students believe that the professional re-toucher will disagree with Hilary Rowland while others will think he agrees with her. Discuss the possible reasons behind these different opinions.

Try This. Have students create a photo collage using selected quotes from this article and images from fashion magazines. Through the juxtaposition of words and images, students can creatively subvert the meaning of these images to create a poster that promotes critical thinking about digital image manipulation.



NAME: _____

Before and After

Take a look at professional photo re-toucher Greg Apodaca's portfolio of work:

<http://homepage.mac.com/gapodaca/digital/blonde/blonde1.html>

Then read the excerpt below, taken from a persuasive article by Hilary Rowland from her online magazine. After reading, answer the questions below.

"As a child, I don't remember seeing **scantly** clad women on the covers of magazines as excessively as today. And I feel it's negative for young boys to grow up thinking that that's the standard of beauty. The long-term **repercussions** are not good at all."
- Nelly Furtado in Rolling Stone magazine

We all know that pop-stars, supermodels and actresses **adorn** magazine covers. They are revered for their 'natural' beauty--their look. What is not shown on these covers are the many hours of effort that go into achieving their flawlessness. In fact, their beauty isn't natural at all! It's manufactured by an army of makeup and lighting experts, stylists, photo editors, and often surgeons. Go behind the scenes and beauty amounts to highly controlled lighting, perfect **positioning**, stylists who find the perfectly flattering designer outfit and then stuff, tape and pin it, and make-up--lots of make-up.

Once the photos have been shot and developed, they are then digitally enhanced. Blemishes, scars, wrinkles, **discolorations** are all erased. It doesn't end there. It is also during this process that breasts are lifted and enlarged. Skin is enhanced with a glow, cheeks are blushed, stomach muscles are added and fat is cropped out--anything is possible. And this is the norm. This is done not only on *every* magazine cover, but every printed page, every billboard or advertisement, even every music video and movie star film close-up (yes, they do all this to film as well).

There is a **fundamental** issue that is steadily surfacing. Media has brainwashed society to value outward appearances over other qualities such as intelligence and personality. In fact, the individual's intelligence, character, moral worth--or lack thereof--plays not the slightest role in whether they should be (or are) made into a noteworthy icon. The media only considers the amount of skin one is willing to bare; and the more the better. To them, a person has no value unless she can be made to appear visually **provocative**.

It is through a person's outward appearance that people now judge her worth, attractiveness and potential. As long as you can smile at the cameras, are willing to show more skin than the next person, and fit the media's mold, no questions asked. In almost all cases, a person's achievements and intelligence are almost invisible to

the public eye. Being smart is never a requirement. If anything, too much brain can hinder a career--for fear of making everyone else in the industry look bad or speaking from the mind, or heart, rather than from a **publicist's** script. The values that *should* be used to measure an individual's distinction are instead cast aside. To be blunt, the media has formed an army of Stepford Wives, with hardly any room for the diversity that characterizes the real world.

We, the audience of mass media, are rapidly absorbing this **warped projection**--and its aggressive emphasis on appearance. The pressure to be thin, tanned and Barbie-esque is the message sent--and received. Loud and clear.

--by Hilary Rowland, Hilary Magazine
<http://hilary.com>

1. Why doesn't Hilary Rowland like photo retouching?

2. Persuasive writing is writing that tries to influence the reader to accept a particular point of view. Writers often use dramatic language, powerful phrases and attention-getting words to persuade. Write down three words or phrases that Hilary Rowland used in this article to stir up your emotions.

3. Greg Apodaca makes a living by manipulating photos. Would he agree or disagree with Hilary Rowland? Use your imagination and compose a brief email that Greg might write in responding to Hilary's persuasive essay.
