CREDIBILITY

“A claim lacks inherent credibility to the extent it conflicts with what we have observed or what we think we know—our background information—or with other credible claims.”

2 Key Considerations:

1) How credible is the claim itself?

-Does the claim conflict with our own observations?

Note that our observations can be influenced by a variety of factors!

-Does the claim conflict with our background info?

The extent to which a claim fits with our background information will determine its initial plausibility.
2) How credible is the source of the claim?

- Does the source have real knowledge about the issue in question?

Relevant factors: Education, expertise, accomplishments, and reputation

“Dr.” Nick: Expert or no?

- Do we have reason to doubt the source’s honesty, objectivity, or accuracy?
Advertising

All product advertisements are predicated on a common agenda. Namely, they aim to convince us that the following claim is true:

Our lives will be better if we have the product than if we don’t.

Advertisements attempt to persuade us to believe this in one of two ways.

- Some ads provide reasons for purchasing their product.

- Some ads provide no explicit reason for purchasing their product.
What reasons are given in this ad?

Are any of these good reasons for purchasing the product?
Can all of the following claims be true?

- "The medicine in Anacin is recommended by doctors four to one over substitutes like Tylenol."
  —Anacin commercial

- "Aspirin is recommended by doctors four to one over substitutes."
  —Bayer commercial

- "Tylenol is recommended by doctors more than any brand of aspirin."
  —Tylenol commercial

- "Four out of five doctors surveyed recommended Excedrin's formula."
  —Excedrin commercial

- "Bufferin works better than any other pain reliever tested."
  —Bufferin commercial
How does this ad try to persuade you to purchase the product?
Advertising and Credibility

What sort of credibility should we assign to advertisements?

Can an advertisement ever *justify* the purchase of a product?

Whose benefit *really* motivates advertising?