

## LESSON 4: MESSAGES IN THE MEDIA

**Overview:** Pupils interrogate advertising for period products

**Great For:** Exploring how different media contribute to cultures of shame & taboo

<b>Resources Needed:</b>	Projector; printed example adverts; [optional – laptops /tablets]
<b>Prep Time Needed:</b>	10 mins
<b>Works best in:</b>	Classroom
<b>Number of participants:</b>	Full Class; split into groups
<b>Time Needed:</b>	50 minutes
<b>Set Up:</b>	Print example adverts (see pages 7-16); review and pre-load TV adverts (see pages 4-6)

Age 13+

### Learning Outcomes:

Pupils understand that there are many myths and taboos associated with periods and how to use facts to form their own opinions. Pupils understand that advertising and the media influence opinion about periods and the menstrual cycle.

**Who is this for:** *It is expected that students have a good working knowledge of periods and puberty before this lesson begins. Review all clips before using and ensure that you feel that they are suitable for your students. If it is not possible to play youtube videos in your school, print adverts are below.*



# LESSON 4: MESSAGES IN THE MEDIA

**Introduction** Introduce the topic to the class  
5 minutes Establish ground rules (see Teachers' Guide)  
Remind the class that periods can be a sensitive topic

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**Starter Activity** Explain that today we will be looking at adverts for period products and thinking about the messages they send to the people who see them  
10 minutes

Show the class the following advert.

Bodyform; 1993 – A woman in pale shorts climbs a tower to impress men – enabled by her 'invisible' bodyform pad <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lwpp-THRH-4>

Ask the class to note down in private and in silence the first three words that come to their mind watching this video.

When everyone is done, ask pupils to share their first words with their neighbours. Why did they pick those words? How did the advert make them feel? Ask for some examples from the class.

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**Main Activity** For the main activity, invite the class to review a range of adverts. There are many ways you could do this, depending on your resources. The following pages give links to TV adverts and show examples of print adverts – all across different times from the 1920s to the present day. It is up to you to choose which adverts you want to show your pupils and how – you could choose to use tablet, laptops or computers to view TV adverts in small groups, or view these together as a class. Print adverts are best viewed in pairs or small groups.  
30 minutes

Give pupils time to explore the adverts and make notes of their ideas.

Then, working in groups or as a full class, lead a discussion on what the viewer may 'take home' from seeing these adverts. Prompt Questions include:

- 'Is this a positive or negative message?'
- 'What might this make someone believe about periods?'
- 'How might this make someone feel about their bodies?'
- 'What do you think maker of the advert wants you to think and feel after watching this?'
- 'Why do you think the maker of the advert thinks this will persuade people to buy their products?'

While the main focus of the lesson is to interrogate the messaging in these adverts, you may also ask pupils to compare the adverts across time, and interrogate the adverts as sources.

If working in groups, ask each group to present their adverts to the rest of the class, reporting their answers to their peers

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**Plenary** Ask the group what messages we are given in the media about menstruation and female bodies. Ask if they are happy about this? How would they like to see adverts for menstrual products?  
5 minutes

## LESSON 4: MESSAGES IN THE MEDIA

### KEY POINT

Advertising reinforces:

- That periods should be hidden/ secret
- That periods are an unseen and an embarrassing occurrence
- That periods are a women's only topic
- The need for an invisible product
- The need to just get on with doing everything
- Use of the colour blue, not red to depict period blood

**Note:** There has been a recent shift in advertising in response to heavy criticism. For example, the Blood Normal advert (2017) was the first time real blood was shown in an advert on TV. (Although the advert draws on a long history of the portrayal of female blood in film.) There is an increasing use of empowering messages to sell products – is this empowering or is it still just sales?

WHY IS  
PERIOD BLOOD  
BLUE IN  
ADVERTS?

## LESSON 4: EXAMPLE ADVERTS - FILM

Please review each advert before showing to your pupils.



Testimonial about how fresh and dry always pads are

(DATE UNKNOWN):ALWAYS

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FZM15khll4M>



A woman in pale shorts climbs a tower to impress men – enabled by her 'invisible' bodyform pad

1993: BODYFORM

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lwpp-THRH-4>



Animation

1980s: OB

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mVnvLwEOqjw>



Mother and son have fun on the dodgems, thanks to her winged pantyliner

1994: KOTEX

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DtySDYZDXuE>



## LESSON 4: EXAMPLE ADVERTS - FILM



Girls rollerblade along the beach and play football thanks to Tampax

1994: TAMPAX

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w3zrk4Krk9U>



Hand drawn tampon designed by women

2008: LIL-LETS

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FtCdXeg4NgE>



Woman is too hot in her car

2001: ALWAYS

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aj5C7h\\_Usac](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aj5C7h_Usac)



Awkward moment

2012 (SOUTH AFRICA): LIL-LETS

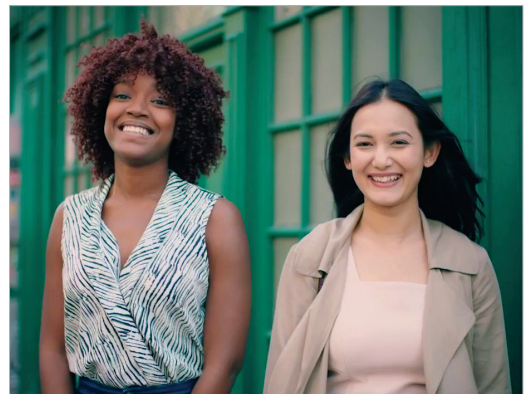
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G5S044knJAY>



We are women

2014 (SOUTH AFRICA): LIL-LETS

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nrm0UNQKJKU>

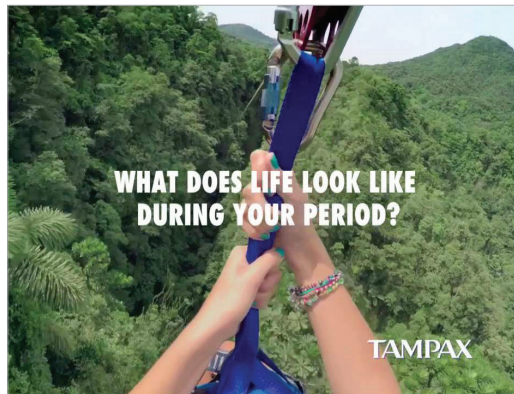


Myfit

2017: ALWAYS

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZsIfXPiYOz8>

## LESSON 4: EXAMPLE ADVERTS - FILM

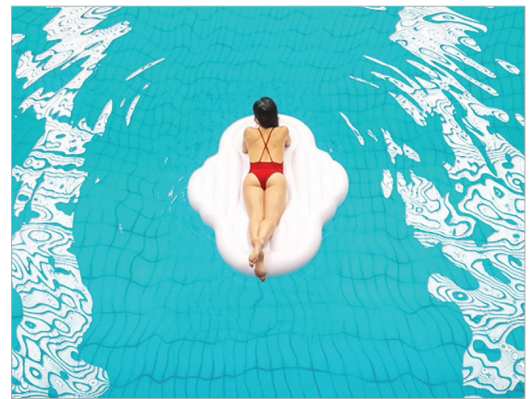


A woman on a zipline on her period and a woman on a waterslide

2016: TAMPAX; 'POWER OVER PERIODS';

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jBVjDVd-Mt0>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7fPtskXi-3A>



Message that 'periods are normal, showing them should be too'

2017: BODYFORM; BLOOD NORMAL

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QdW6IRsuXaQ>



Viva La Vulva – shows various objects that look like a vulva, singing

2018 : LIBRESSE (BODYFORM OVERSEAS)

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0k-\\_4WloY6Y](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0k-_4WloY6Y)



Like a Girl

2018: ALWAYS

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XjjQBjWYDTs>



## LESSON 4: EXAMPLE ADVERTS - PRINT

# The Safe Solution of Women's Greatest Hygienic Problem

Which 8 in 10 Better-Class Women Have Adopted



Positive Protection Under ALL Conditions  
and An End Forever to the Embarrassing  
Difficulty of Disposal, This NEW Way

By ELLEN J. BUCKLAND, Registered Nurse

WITH this new way the hazards and uncertainties of the old-time methods are ended. You wear sheerest frocks and gayest gowns without a moment's fear or doubt. You go about for hours; motor, dance, walk; meet all situations without a second thought. The name is Kotex. Doctors urge it. Nurses employ it. Women find in it the scientific solution of their greatest hygienic problem. Its use will make a great difference in your life.

*The difference between Kotex and ordinary pads*

Kotex is the *only* sanitary pad filled with *Cellucotton* wadding, the extraordinary hospital absorbent recently discovered. Thus Kotex provides the amazing absorbency of 16 times its own weight in moisture! It is 5 times as absorbent as ordinary cotton.

That means protection unknown before—safety under all circumstances, regardless of frock or occasion.

Kotex, a scientifically developed product; the creation of a world-respected maker of hospital absorbents; completely, thoroughly deodorizes.

A process applied under a secret and exclusive method, which ends an annoying problem. Kotex eliminates utterly the problem of disposal—one discards Kotex almost as easily as tissue. No laundry.

Kotex is scientifically designed for safety in wear. That means a special quality gauze. It means ample gauze covering and strong gauze attachment ends, to eliminate absolutely all chance—all hazard.

Thus, from personal experience and from what other women told them, 80% or more better-class women have discarded ordinary ways for Kotex. Once a woman tries Kotex, she rarely again invites the hazards of less scientific ways.

*Only Kotex is "like" Kotex*

Look for the name "Kotex" on the box of any sanitary pad you are asked to buy. If that name isn't there, you are not being given genuine Kotex. No other product is "like" Kotex. No product not plainly marked "Kotex" is Kotex.

Obtain Kotex at any drug, dry goods, or department store. 12 pads to the box. Two sizes of pads: Kotex Regular and Kotex-Super.

Kotex Company, 180 North Michigan Ave., Chicago, Ill.

"Ask for them by name"

# KOTEX

PROTECTS—DEODORIZES

No laundry—discards as easily as a piece of tissue

Easy Disposal  
and 2 other  
important factors

- 1 Disposed of as easily as tissue. No laundry.
- 2 True protection—5 times as absorbent as cotton.
- 3 Obtain without embarrassment, at any drug or dry goods store\* simply by saying "Kotex."

\*Supplied also through vending cabinets in rest-rooms by West Disinfecting Co.

The Safe Solution of Women's  
Greatest Hygienic Problem

1928; KOTEX COMPANY

Ad\* Access, Duke University:

<https://idn.duke.edu/ark:/87924/r4dj59295>



## LESSON 4: EXAMPLE ADVERTS - PRINT

# 3 delicate situations saved!

The life of the modern girl is carefree, successful . . . where it once was difficult and humiliating. How Wondersoft Kotex is changing women's lives!

*She wins at tennis!*

- Vigorous, active, yet not the slightest discomfort. Pads don't pull or twist as they used to, because Wondersoft conforms to the body, re-adjusts itself to fit, no matter how active you are.

*A stunning, close-fitting silhouette*

- Smooth fitting, snug—but no tell-tale lines showing. That's because of those flat, specially shaped ends on the Wondersoft pad. And no fear of soiling lingerie or frock. The center is different from any other pad, gives greater safety.

What a glorious day—yet many lose such freedom, because they think all sanitary pads are alike.

*Business hours aren't hard...*

- On those days, she used to suffer all during business hours. But Wondersoft pads stay dry at the edges—and wonderfully comfortable, too. No chafing or rubbing, because of that exclusive Kotex patent, softest cotton sides where pad touches, but top and bottom left free to take up moisture.

Why, even the package of Wondersoft is different. Not like a sanitary napkin box, at all. Try it and see why it is changing women's lives. And Super Kotex is now priced the same as regular size, at all dealers. In emergency, find Kotex in West cabinets in ladies' rest rooms.



Illustrations and text copyright 1934, Kotex Co.

3 delicate situations saved!

1934; KOTEX COMPANY

Ad\* Access, Duke University:

<https://idn.duke.edu/ark:/87924/r4736mn5x>

## LESSON 4: EXAMPLE ADVERTS - PRINT

**Which Tampon**  
can you trust — and when?



**YOU CAN TRUST FIBS**, the Kotex Tampon... With Fibs you can change to shorts, play suit or even a bathing suit with nobody the wiser! Worn internally, Fibs provide *invisible* sanitary protection... no pins, pads or belts... no chafing, no disposal problem.



**A DOZEN FIBS ONLY 20¢.** Not 8—not 10—but 12 for 20¢. And only FIBS are quilted for greater comfort and safety... easy to insert without artificial means. (When you buy Fibs, you pay for no mechanical gadget to aid insertion... for none is needed.) You can trust Fibs... the Kotex Tampon... and Fibs save you money, too. Get a package today!

**FIBS**—the Kotex\* Tampon



NOT 8—NOT 10—BUT  
12 FOR 20¢

(\*Trade Marks Reg. U. S. Pat. Off.)

Which Tampon can you trust - and when?

1942; KOTEX COMPANY

Ad\* Access, Duke University:

<https://idn.duke.edu/ark:/87924/r4d21s462>



## LESSON 4: EXAMPLE ADVERTS - PRINT



**Why was I born a Woman?**

**E**VER get mad at the world... at the unfairness of your lot? Ever hear a voice inside you whisper: "Better not go out... you won't have any fun"?

And do you ever wonder why some girls always seem to keep smiling, no matter what time of the month it is? If only you could learn their secret!

Well, you're not too old to learn! What you need is a lesson on how to grow a crop of confidence! How to be gay! How to be carefree!

**Stop feeling sorry for yourself**

Remember... an ounce of confidence is worth a pound of make-up. And to be sure of yourself on "difficult days," you need the kind of confidence Kotex sanitary napkins give.

First of all, Kotex ends are flat and tapered. They never give away your secret... never make you self-conscious. And you know better than anyone, how important comfort is. So do as most girls do and choose Kotex. You see, Kotex is made in soft folds... so naturally it's less bulky... less apt to rub and chafe!

Remember this too... there's a world of confidence in knowing that the new "safety shield" in every Kotex pad provides added absorption... gives you an extra margin of safety.

All in all, Kotex helps give a girl the comfort and the confidence she needs to put a smile on her lips... and a song in her heart!

**Be confident... comfortable... carefree with Kotex!**

**KOTEX**  
SANITARY  
NAPKINS

How's a girl to learn what to do, what not to do, on "difficult days"? The new book: "As One Girl To Another" tells all... gives answers to intimate questions. To get a copy **FREE**... Write Post Office Box 5434, Dept. FW-9, 919 N. Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois.

\*Trade Mark Reg. U. S. Pat. Off.

Why was I born a Woman?

1941; KOTEX COMPANY

Ad\* Access, Duke University:  
<https://idn.duke.edu/ark:/87924/r48s4k832>



## LESSON 4: EXAMPLE ADVERTS - PRINT



Not a shadow  
of a doubt  
— with Kotex

*Not a shadow* — of a revealing outline  
because only Kotex of all leading napkins gives you  
ends that are flat and pressed.

*Not a doubt* — for confidence and peace-of-mind  
go hand in hand with the extra absorbency and safety  
of Kotex . . . proved superior by actual use!

Best of all, this pad is made to *stay soft* while  
wearing . . . to retain its fit and comfort for hours  
and hours. No wonder Kotex is America's first  
choice in napkins . . . *always, very personally yours.*

*More women choose Kotex®  
than all other sanitary napkins*

MADE IN U.S.A. PAT. 2,600,000

MADE BY  
KOTEX COMPANY

Not a shadow of a doubt with Kotex

1950S; KOTEX

Credit: Image Courtesy of The Advertising Archives

## LESSON 4: EXAMPLE ADVERTS - PRINT



THE WAY YOU FEEL IS FREE

The way you feel is free

Today and every day, you feel free, confident, unhampered. Tampax tampons, worn internally, make this possible. Keep you feeling cool and comfortably confident, in or out of the water. They let you wear what you wish, do what you want, any day. They're the better, easier protection. Aren't you glad you discovered them?

for total freedom, total comfort...

**TAMPAX**  
tampons

TAMPAX TAMPONS ARE MADE ONLY BY TAMPAX INCORPORATED, PALMER, MASS.  
DRESS BY MAGNANI FOR CEZAR

The way you feel is free

1960; TAMPAX

Credit: Image Courtesy of The Advertising Archives



## LESSON 4: EXAMPLE ADVERTS - PRINT



### Sail on—the day is yours

There's a gentle breeze rippling the blue water and there you are, playing tag with the wind. You'll not let anything interfere with the fun even if it is one of "those days."

That's why you use Tampax tampons—so you can be as active and free as you please. They're worn internally, so there is

nothing to show or embarrass you. No chafing, no irritation, no odor to make you uncomfortable or self-conscious. Because you can be sure of the protection Tampax tampons give you, you can wear that sure-of-yourself smile.

Tampax tampons are for you—you, the sailor who doesn't let anything anchor her down.



The internal protection more women trust.

**TAMPAX**  
tampons

Sail on the day is yours

1970S; TAMPAX

Credit: Image Courtesy of The Advertising Archives

## LESSON 4: EXAMPLE ADVERTS - PRINT

**"Are you sure I'll still be a virgin?"**

"I really wanted to use tampons, but I'd heard you had to be, you know, 'experienced.' So I asked my friend Lisa. Her mom is a nurse so I figured she'd know. Lisa told me she'd been using Petal Soft® Plastic Applicator Tampax® tampons since her very first period and she's a virgin. In fact, you can use them at any age and still be a virgin.

I was totally psyched to try Petal Soft Tampax 'cause I really hated pads. And now I can't believe I waited so long. The first thing you notice is the rounded tip on the plastic applicator. That's what makes them so easy to put in! And they're made to be slender so they're really comfortable to wear and easy to take out too.

Petal Soft tampons protect really well because they absorb like crazy and expand to fit the way you're made, so they never plug you up. They're so much better than pads. I love them!"

Tampax tampons. The feminine protection more women choose over any other tampon or pad.

**FOR A FREE SAMPLE** of Petal Soft Tampax, or for more information, send your name and address to: Mrs. Carol Platenik, Registered Nurse, Tambrands, Inc., Box 210, Palmer, MA 01069.

**TAMPAX** tampons **TAMPAX** tampons

**Tampax tampons.**  
**The better way to deal with your period.**

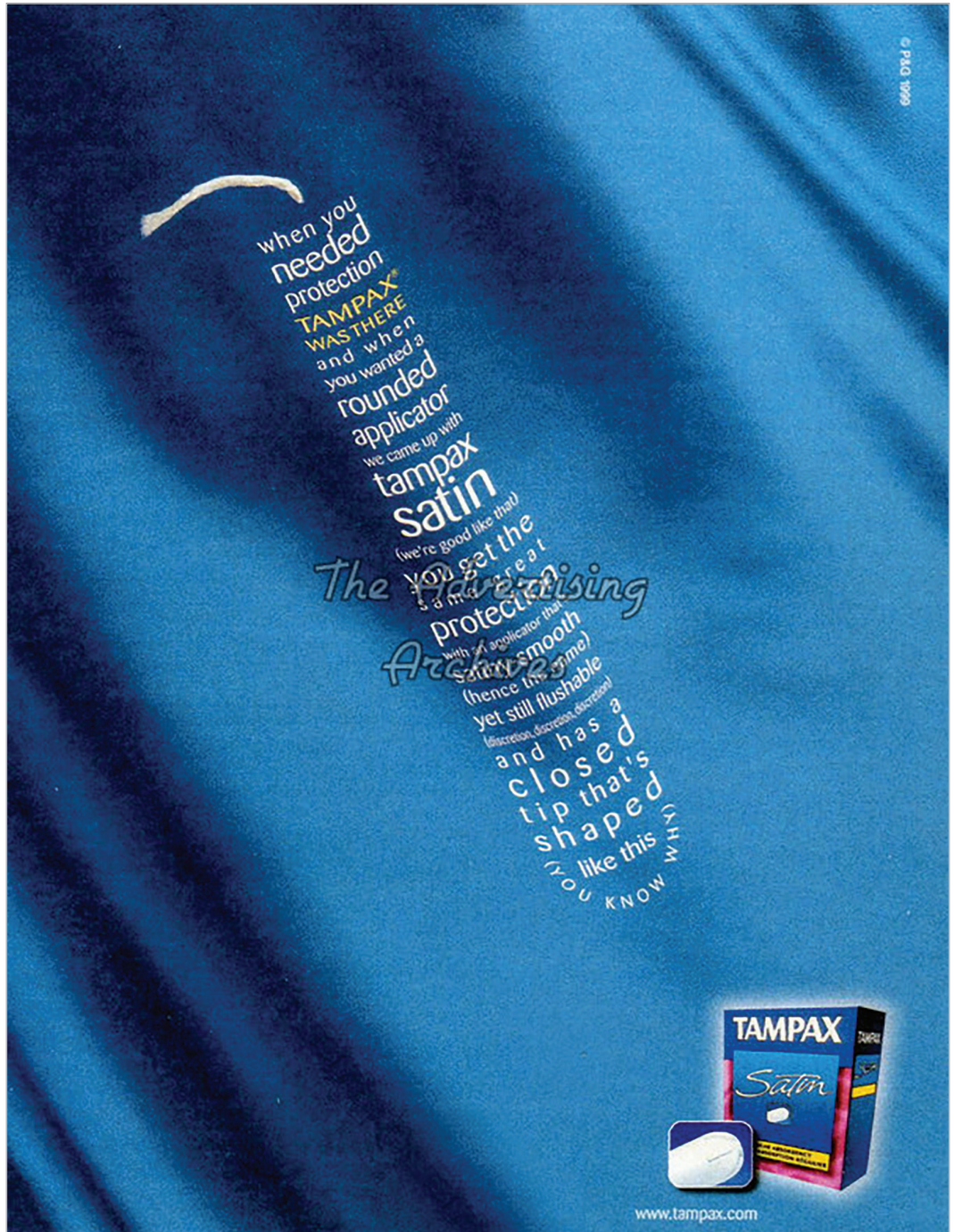
Are you sure I'll still be a virgin?

1988; TAMPAX

Credit: Image Courtesy of The Advertising Archives



## LESSON 4: EXAMPLE ADVERTS - PRINT




Tampax Satin

1991; TAMPAX

Credit: Image Courtesy of The Advertising Archives



## LESSON 4: EXAMPLE ADVERTS - PRINT


A print advertisement for Tampax Pearl tampons. The background shows two women in a shower, with water spraying around them. One woman is in the foreground, smiling and holding a tampon applicator. The other woman is behind her, also smiling and holding a tampon applicator. The text 'DON'T LET YOUR TIME OF THE MONTH KEEP YOU FROM HAVING THE TIME OF YOUR LIFE' is overlaid in large, white, bold letters. A small image of a Tampax Pearl product box is in the bottom right corner. The Tampax Pearl logo is in the bottom center. A small watermark 'The Advertising Archives' is visible in the center of the image.

*The Advertising Archives*

**DON'T LET  
YOUR TIME OF THE MONTH  
KEEP YOU FROM HAVING  
THE TIME OF YOUR LIFE**

You take on the world. Tampax will take on your period. With our best protection and smoothest applicator, you will never have to slow down.

**TAMPAX  
PEARL**



Don't let your time of the month  
keep you from having the time of  
your life

2015; TAMPAX

Credit: Image Courtesy of The Advertising Archives