This source touches upon the origins of advertising ethics and the role that it plays within the advertising community. It also explains what is ethically expected and accepted when it comes to businesses and the methods and content that they use for advertising. Businesses appear to take ethics in advertising seriously; the American Assembly of Collegiate Schools of Business stresses the importance of ethics in its curriculum and has been adamant about business ethics since the late 1980s. The source also notes that despite the apparent forays into ensuring that ethics are incorporated, “there are companies that neglect their ethical responsibility by continually producing and airing unethical advertisements.” The source then goes on to explain the importance of advertising in a company’s business model and how effective advertising is an integral component to success and growth in a highly competitive environment. That being said there is a code of moral and professional ethics that businesses should adhere to, however this code tends to be ignored when a business is targeting a specific demographic with it’s advertisements. The source then outlines the four aspects of ethics in advertising; they are “ethical issues pertaining to the message, the target audience, the product, and the sender of the advertising communication.” (Framarz, Andreas, and Madan) It is argued that children are quite often the targets of unethical advertising, as they have not experienced life enough, thus making them vulnerable to the “stray influences” (Framarz, Andreas, and Madan) and aggressive advertising.

This source focuses on a meta-analysis of 51 studies worldwide, in an attempt to quantify the effect that tobacco advertising has had on children since 1981. Despite the fact that tobacco companies insist that their advertisements target adults who have a history of smoking, the reality is that tobacco ads are so omnipresent that children run into them in the most common of places. The source then uses a the concept of a convenient store plastered in cigarette ads as an example of such advertising stating, “Kids go to convenience stores.” (Perloe) The meta-analysis concluded that children exposed to tobacco advertising in movies or television, are twice as more likely to end up smoking than children who haven’t been exposed. If the advertising has a psychological impact on the child, then they are three times more likely to smoke than other youth. One example of psychological advertising is a child’s favorite movie actor or character consistently smoking some tobacco product. Due to the child’s attachment to the character, the notion of smoking becomes much more appealing. Another medium of advertising that tobacco businesses exploit is Internet video. The source states that a child watching a video on the Internet is more susceptible to the advertisements because it requires interaction on the child’s end, resulting in a more engaging experience. (Perloe)

The final source that I settled on was a speech that was given by a man named Chris Moore of an organization called Ogilvy & Mather. In this speech Moore addresses the difficulty of assessing ethics in advertising, stating that such assessments are never an issue of “black and white” (Moore 1). Moore then defines a universal ethical standard that most advertisements are expected to meet; telling the truth. While most corporations are required by laws and regulations to tell the truth about their product, in reality while most of them tell the truth, the fact is that they don’t tell all of it. He then explains that nondisclosure of the truth in its entirety is what makes judging whether an ad is unethical or not, so difficult. People claim that advertising for products that aren’t necessary or essential tends to be unethical. Moore then goes on to say that if we were to step back and reflect on all the things we’ve purchased over time, 90% of such purchases aren’t essential or necessities. For this very reason, Moore claims that the very realm of advertising exists where “Reason meets Desire.” (Moore 1). As the speech progresses, Moore sheds light on the different types of advertising, from tobacco, alcohol, and pharmaceutical advertising, to cause related and subliminal advertising. As he does this he highlights the ethical dilemmas that are posed by each form of advertising. When speaking about cause related advertising, Moore focuses on an advertising company that spent more money promoting the fact that it donated money to Bosnian refugees, than it did in sending money to the refugees. When wrapping up the speech, Moore states that:

“80% of American companies have a written Code of Ethics. And probably 100% of you do too, if you gave it some thought and wrote it down. Ethics happen, or don't, in our relationships with others. Advertisers are in the business of communicating with thousands, even millions, of "others" all the time. That gives us thousands or millions of chances to practice what we believe every day. And try to get it right” (Moore 1).

His message is important. Consumers must understand, accept, and acknowledge that advertising is grey area when it comes to ethics.