

READING ADVERTS

FOCUS ON IDEAS [CRITICAL LITERACY]

LOOK AT THE ADVERT PUBLISHED IN VARIOUS MAGAZINES IN THE UK AND DISCUSS THE QUESTIONS BELOW WITH A PARTNER IN ENGLISH OR IN YOUR OWN LANGUAGE:

Level:
INTERMEDIATE
Language focus:
TEXTUAL
ANALYSIS
Educational
focus: MEDIA
INFLUENCE

MY CARD

MY LIFE

AMERICAN EXPRESS
3759 8945 21001
1234 5678 9010 1112
12/08 12/10

This card is designed to help eliminate AIDS in AFRICA.
Shop with AMERICAN EXPRESS[®] RED and we will give 1% of your total spend to the Global Fund to help fight AIDS in Africa.

IMAGE COPYRIGHT: PRODUCT RED WWW.JOINRED.COM

WHAT DOES THE ADVERT SAY TO YOU?

FROM YOUR PERSPECTIVE...

- WHAT IDEAS DOES IT PASS ABOUT PEOPLE FROM POOR AND FROM RICH COUNTRIES?
- WHAT KIND OF RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE TWO PEOPLES DOES IT IMPLY?
- WHAT IS THE BALANCE OF POWER/RESOURCES AND WHERE DOES IT COME FROM?
- WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE IMPLICATIONS OF THE PROMOTION OF THESE IDEAS?
- HOW COULD THE ADVERT BE INTERPRETED IN DIFFERENT CONTEXTS (E.G. FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF A RICH PERSON IN THE UK OR IN AFRICA, OR A POOR PERSON IN THE UK OR IN AFRICA OR FROM OTHER POOR/RICH COUNTRIES)?

READING ADVERTS

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING OF THE PHRASES BELOW. CAN YOU PREDICT HOW THEY WERE USED IN RELATION TO THE ADVERT?

step forward - feel good - distribution of resources - increase profits - keen to help - carry the burden - be grateful for - reinforce stereotypes

READ THE PERSPECTIVES BELOW AND ANSWER THE QUESTIONS?

"I THINK THE ADVERT MAKES SHOPPERS FEEL GOOD ABOUT BUYING THE PRODUCTS THAT WILL SAVE A PERSON'S LIFE. THIS IS A **STEP FORWARD** AS IT CAN GET PEOPLE TO THINK ABOUT OTHERS WHEN THEY ARE SHOPPING, RATHER THAN ONLY THINK ABOUT THEMSELVES."

"IN THIS ADVERT, THE MOST IMPORTANT THING IS TO LOOK COOL AND TO **FEEL GOOD** ABOUT SAVING THE WORLD. IT DOES NOT REALLY ADDRESS THE ISSUES AROUND AIDS IN AFRICA, LIKE IMPOSED POVERTY, EXPLOITATION AND UNFAIR **DISTRIBUTION OF RESOURCES**, WHICH PEOPLE IN THE WEST ALSO HELP TO MANTAIN."

"DOES AMERICAN EXPRESS REALLY CARE ABOUT AIDS OR AFRICA OR ARE THEY JUST USING THIS TOPIC TO **INCREASE THEIR PROFITS** BY INCREASING CONSUMPTION? AND AREN'T PEOPLE CONSUMING WAY TOO MUCH ALREADY?"

"LOTS OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE USA AND IN EUROPE ARE **KEEN TO HELP** OTHER PEOPLE IN POORER COUNTRIES. AND IF THEY HAVE THE MONEY AND THE WILLINGNESS TO DO IT - WHY SHOULDN'T THEY?"

"THE IDEA THAT A POOR AFRICAN'S LIFE IS BEING SAVED BY A RICH WHITE PERSON IS DEGRADING, INSULTING AND MISLEADING. IT SENDS THE IDEA THAT WHITE PEOPLE SHOULD '**CARRY THE BURDEN**' OF THE NON-WHITES AND THAT NON-WHITE PEOPLE SHOULD BE GRATEFUL FOR THAT, WHEN, IN REALITY WE COULD SAY THE OPPOSITE."

"THE ADVERT TRIES TO **MANIPULATE WOMEN**. IT MAKES THEM WANT TO LOOK LIKE THE WHITE MODEL, WHO LOOKS HEALTHY AND SEXY. THE CONTRAST WITH THE BLACK PERSON CAN **REINFORCE STEREOTYPES** ABOUT AFRICA."

FROM YOUR PERSPECTIVE:

WHAT IS THE FOCUS OF EACH POINT OF VIEW?

WHERE IS THE SPEAKER 'COMING FROM' (WHY IS HE/SHE SAYING THIS IN THIS WAY)?

WHAT ARE THE IMPLICATIONS OF HIS/HER PERSPECTIVE?

READING ADVERTS

FOCUS ON THE CONTEXT [CRITICAL READING]

WHY DO YOU THINK THE ADVERT WAS DESIGNED IN THIS WAY? WHAT IDEA DID THE DESIGNERS WANT TO COMMUNICATE? CAN YOU PUT YOURSELF IN THEIR SHOES AND TRACE THE PROCESS OF SELECTING THE MODELS, THE IMAGES AND THE TEXT? LOOK AT THE ADVERTISING STRATEGIES BELOW AND DISCUSS WITH A PARTNER HOW YOU COULD CLASSIFY THIS ADVERT.

AVANT GARDE: THE SUGGESTION THAT USING THIS PRODUCT PUTS THE USER AHEAD OF THE TIMES

BANDWAGON: THE SUGGESTION THAT EVERYBODY IS USING THE PRODUCT AND THAT YOU SHOULD TOO IN ORDER TO BE PART OF THE GROUP

FACTS AND FIGURES: STATISTICS AND OBJECTIVE FACTUAL INFORMATION IS USED TO PROVE THE SUPERIORITY OF THE PRODUCT

GLITTERING GENERALITIES: "WEASEL WORDS" ARE USED TO SUGGEST A POSITIVE MEANING WITHOUT ACTUALLY REALLY MAKING ANY GUARANTEE

HIDDEN FEARS: THE SUGGESTION THAT THIS PRODUCT WILL PROTECT THE USER FROM SOME DANGER

MAGIC INGREDIENTS: THE SUGGESTION THAT SOME ALMOST MIRACULOUS DISCOVERY MAKES THE PRODUCT EXCEPTIONALLY EFFECTIVE

ORDINARY PEOPLE: THE SUGGESTION THAT THE PRODUCT IS A PRACTICAL PRODUCT OF GOOD VALUE FOR ORDINARY PEOPLE

SNOB APPEAL: THE SUGGESTION THAT THE USE OF THE PRODUCT MAKES THE CUSTOMER PART OF AN ELITE GROUP WITH A LUXURIOUS AND GLAMOROUS LIFE STYLE

TRANSFER: WORDS AND IDEAS WITH POSITIVE CONNOTATIONS ARE USED TO SUGGEST THAT THE POSITIVE QUALITIES SHOULD BE ASSOCIATED WITH THE PRODUCT AND THE USER

TESTIMONIAL: A FAMOUS PERSONALITY IS USED TO ENDORSE THE PRODUCT

WIT AND HUMOUR: CUSTOMERS ARE ATTRACTED TO PRODUCTS THAT DIVERT THE AUDIENCE BY GIVING VIEWERS A REASON TO LAUGH OR TO BE ENTERTAINED BY CLEVER USE OF VISUALS OR LANGUAGE

(BASED ON TRESSLER AND LEWIS, MASTERING EFFECTIVE ENGLISH (THIRD EDITION), PP.470-472)

HANDS ON:

SELECT ADVERTS FROM A MAGAZINE TO ILLUSTRATE THE STRATEGIES. CREATE A COUNTER-ADVERT SHOWING A POTENTIAL NEGATIVE IMPACT OF THE STRATEGY OR THE PRODUCT IN TERMS OF SOCIAL, ETHICAL, HEALTH OR ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES.

YOU CAN USE THE DEVELOPMENT COMPASS* TO PERFORM YOUR ANALYSES.

*THE DEVELOPMENT COMPASS ROSE WAS DESIGNED BY TIDE-BIRMINGHAM. FOR MORE INFORMATION, CHECK WWW.E4S.ORG.UK/BIFFA/GHANA/ROSE.HTML

