

Lesson Skill: Determining audience and purpose

Strand Media Literacy and reading—fiction

SOL 9.2, 9.5
10.2, 10.5
11.2, 11.5
12.2, 12.5

Materials

- Spring 2002 and 2004 Released Tests for End of Course English/Reading or other texts
- Magazines (collected by the teacher or brought in by students)
- Copies of the attached Understanding Advertisements handout

Lesson

Module 1

1. Give pairs of students various sections from “Riding Is an Exercise of the Mind” from the Spring 2002 Released Test or “The Year I Drove through the Car Wash...” from the Spring 2004 Released Test.
2. Have student pairs construct a visual for their section of the narrative. For example, for the following section from “The Year I Drove through the Car Wash...,” students could draw a picture of a car with bandages all over it.

The past year, which is fast becoming just a memory, is the year I drove through the car wash at fifty miles an hour. At least, it felt like fifty miles an hour. The car catapulted through the wash cycle, the wax cycle, and the dry cycle at a ridiculous rate of speed, and then aimed for the street at the end of the tunnel as if shot out of a cannon. The water and the wax had not yet dried – the car looked as if it had caught some terrible disease.

For the following section from “Riding Is an Exercise of the Mind,” students could draw a combined man-horse.

I had a horse named Pecos, a fleet-footed roan gelding, which was my great glory for a time. Pecos could outrun all the other horses in the village, and he wanted always to prove it. We two came to a good understanding of each other, I believe. I did a lot of riding in those days, and I got to be very good at it. My Kiowa ancestors, who were centaurs, should have been proud of me.

3. Have each pair present their visual to the class, explaining
 - why their image best conveys the key idea in the passage
 - why the passage best relates to either “Riding” or “The Year”
 - how the passage helps develop the author’s purpose

Module 2

1. Give each pair of students a copy of the Understanding Advertisements handout, and provide students with access to numerous magazines.
2. Have student pairs search in the magazines for an advertisement that effectively presents a product or idea. In choosing the ad and developing a presentation, they should consider primary purpose or function, textual information, visual appeal, audience, and rhetorical appeal.
3. Have each pair of students present their ad to class, explaining the reasons they chose it.

Understanding Advertisements

Work with your partner to find an advertisement from a magazine that you think is effective in presenting a product. Consider the following in making your choice:

- In what kind of magazine is the product advertised? Is this a news magazine? Is this magazine focused on home and family? Is this magazine geared to sports? To entertainment? To fashion?
- Does the advertisement emphasize the visual, or is text more important? How are words and images used to attract a reader?
- Why do you and your partner find this advertisement effective?

Discuss each of the following questions with your partner, and choose one more of the given answers. Write a well-developed paragraph to explain your reason(s) for choosing each answer. Be prepared to present your paragraphs to the rest of the class.

1. To what group of people (audience) is this magazine designed to appeal?
 - a. People who are interested in fashion and/or sports
 - b. People who are concerned about world and national events
 - c. People who are concerned with raising children and/or creating an attractive home
 - d. People who like to travel
 - e. People who like to cook
 - f. None of the above
2. What is the purpose of this ad?
 - a. To appeal to the audience's interest in good health
 - b. To appeal to the audience's interest in appearance
 - c. To appeal to the audience's interest in facts and statistics to support an idea
 - d. To appeal to the audience's interest in celebrities
 - e. To appeal to the audience's interest in good bargains
 - f. None of the above
3. How does the visual image in the ad reinforce the message?
 - a. It shows a celebrity using the product.
 - b. It has a stark contrast between image and background.
 - c. It conveys humor through juxtaposition of images.
 - d. It uses charts and/or graphs.
 - e. It uses small print to deemphasize the negatives of the product.
 - f. None of the above
4. How does the text in the ad reinforce the message?
 - a. It uses statistics and/or facts to support claims.
 - b. It uses puns, allusions, and/or suggestive language.
 - c. It repeats the name of the product.
 - d. It compares the product to an inferior product.
 - e. It presents the positive effects of using the product.
 - f. None of the above.

5. The following three rhetorical appeals are commonly used to attract audiences: (1) pathos—appeal to feelings and emotions, (2) ethos—appeal to ethics, integrity, and morality; and (3) logos—appeal to logic and reason. Which of these appeals are used in the ad?
- a. pathos
 - b. ethos
 - c. logos
 - d. pathos and ethos
 - e. pathos and logos
 - f. ethos and logos