

Tobacco Education For Senior Students™ English Exemplar



Stage 1 English Assessment Exemplar

The aims of this unit are for students to:

- (a) critically analyse a number of anti-smoking TV commercials as commercials and then
- (b) create their own anti-smoking text from a suggested range (teacher or student choice).

The unit assumes that students already have some knowledge of commercial advertising, in particular the concepts of target audience/intended market and of image/appeal i.e. that producers do not sell a product that simply quenches your thirst - they sell you something which will mark you as being young, attractive, lively and having lots of friends (Coca-cola). They don't sell you something which transports you from A to B, they sell you a car which will establish you as being successful, standing out from the crowd and sophisticated (Mercedes Benz.)

Text Response

Students begin by analysing some of the Critics Choice ads. It is not necessary for students to analyse all of these - a possible procedure is that students watch all ads, and then groups of students analyse one or more of the ads. They then present their analysis to the class. The focus of their analysis is on the particular audience the ads target and the appeal which is being transmitted e.g. 'If you smoke you are...' or 'If you don't smoke you are...' Because these are TV commercials the students' analysis needs to address all or most of the following aspects: shots (distance and angle), pace, special effects, music soundtrack, colours, spoken (dialogue or voice over) and written language (see Appendix 3).

Model - 'Stressing Out'

'Stressing Out' is an edgy ad directed at the youth market. There is virtually no writing on the screen because this market would not read it. The photography is marked by very brief shots - in fact it is almost impossible to count the actual number of shots - so the ad moves very rapidly. The ad also features unusual angles. It takes several viewings for the audience to fully understand the ad, so it is not one of those ads which viewers understand immediately and turn off. There is a simple electric guitar soundtrack.

The ad presents a number of scenarios, in which different young people complain about something in their lives, and another person tells them that smoking is the root problem. There is a young kid who can't afford to go to a show - he is told he spends too much on tobacco. An older girl is stressed because she has been dropped - her ex- says she stinks. An older boy complains that he has been dropped from the team - his coach says that he is not fit enough. Another teenage girl complains about her complexion - her friend tells her to give up smoking. In each case the person setting the smoker straight is someone their own age - a peer, not an old fogey lecturing them, which would be a turn-off for young viewers. The spoken language is 'real' language, not grammatically correct e.g. 'He only went and dumped me.'

The only writing appears at the end of the ad - 'Smoking - You're smarter than that.' The font varies in size and colour and is more reminiscent of tagging or a chocolate bar than the usual print on a screen.

This ad targets a difficult audience - teenagers - and probably succeeds because it is visually attractive and intriguing, it is real and it doesn't lecture. The appeals are to emotions which are critical for teenagers, relating to fitness, good looks, sex appeal and cash. The single piece of writing is brief and flatters rather than criticising.

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Text Production

Students are now required to produce their own anti-smoking text. Depending on circumstances, they might be given a choice of the formats listed in the next paragraph, or the whole class might select one format to produce. Similarly, students might work individually or in pairs to produce these.

Forms/genres which might reach the youth market in particular include

- posters for the sides of bus shelters
- postcard size texts
 - e.g. the free cards available at various places
- business card or fold-out business card texts (for example, 'What are your R&R's?', a Youth Legal Card which is a production on legal rights and responsibilities for young people.)
- display ads
- radio ads.

Students will need to analyse/research the format they choose and incorporate their research findings in their product.

More able students might produce screens either as stand alone websites or to add to websites which their markets access. (Students can be asked to suggest appropriate formats – no doubt they can add to this list. Students might be invited to bring in the kinds of magazines they read e.g. Cosmopolitan, Motor, and look at the format of the display ads in these magazines – dominant picture, caption, other text, slogan are all constituents.)

Students will need to decide which subgroup their texts will target. Some possible youth audiences include game players, skatiers, Goths, hip hop fans, sport fanatics.

Students will need to analyse/discuss the nature of the people who belong to these groups, especially their values and their language, so they can incorporate these into their texts.

Students will need to access some or all of the following sites for information on the effects of smoking. They can then decide on the basis of their text's appeal.

www.cancersa.org.au
www.ashaust.org.au
www.OxyGen.org.au
www.cyh.com/HealthTopics
www.quitsa.org.au

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Appendix 1

Aspects of TV commercials which can be considered

- the number of shots
- the length of shots
- the pace of the commercial and whether this changes
i.e. does it get faster, with briefer shots?
- general film language e.g.
 - distance of the camera from the scene being filmed
 - and whether this changes during the commercial
- the angles of the shots
- lighting
- special effects
- music
- dominant colours and tone
- atmosphere
- sound effects
- language on the screen, dialogue and voice-overs.

Appendix 2

Appeals - All ads work by making some kind of appeal to us. They persuade us rather than operate through our thought processes. The main appeals (desires/needs) are:

- sexuality, masculinity/femininity
- patriotism
- economy
- status e.g. the soap film stars use
- youth e.g. Coke ads, Reebok
- excitement/novelty/adventure/fun e.g. the Solo ad
- belonging/conformity e.g. 9 out of 10 housewives use ...
- uniqueness/individuality
- environment
- authority e.g. Sustain recommended by the AIS
- up to date/modern
- nutrition e.g. chocolate ads
- relief from suffering
- general emotion e.g. the phone call from overseas
- humour

The texts students create need to incorporate one or more of these appeals.

Appendix 3

Language tricks, which advertisers use to make us buy the product include:

- personal appeals e.g. you
- positive/certain language with a stress on adjectives
e.g. better, fresher, lighter, universal, new, fresher,
more effective - also the, only, every, everyone
- commands e.g. Try it, Make the change
- alliteration e.g. I feel like a Toohey's or two
- rhyme - as in jingles
- puns - alldai everydai Hyundai
- claims/half truths - tests show ..., 25% lighter than
other yoghurts, 8% faster.

These techniques need to be used in the advertisements students create.