

# A Closer Look at Newspaper Advertising

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*Presented By Orlando Sentinel's Newspaper in Education*

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## Newspaper in Education



## Why study about advertising?

Every day we are exposed to an estimated 240 advertising messages, according to industry estimates. That's 10 an hour, about one every six minutes. That's a lot. And that's probably a conservative estimate. The main goal of all of these advertising messages is to effect a sale. The messages provide information to the consumer and serve as the voice of the product, its manufacturer and those selling it.

That's a lot of information to cope with even for the most experienced reader or viewer or listener. And increasingly these advertising messages are being aimed at young people, whose understanding of messages and media are just developing.



"Now a total, integrated marketing mix has developed specifically for informing, persuading, selling and satisfying children as consumers," writes marketing professor James McNeal in *Kids as Customers* (1992). "All of this economic activity ... is really a phenomenon of the 1980s — and it is big."

That's because children have gained clout in the marketplace by having "money of their own, needs and wants, and authority and

willingness to spend the money on those needs and wants." In the United States children have about \$8 billion of their own to spend annually and they influence the spending of \$130 billion more. Globally, according to McNeal's projections in 1992, children in 27 industrialized countries, including Canada and the United States, had spending power on their own of about \$86.5 billion.

THAT CURRENT buying power coupled with their influence power, primarily over parents, and their own future buying power make them an attractive market for sellers to reach with messages about their products, services and ideas. McNeal predicts a growing emphasis globally during the next decade on children as consumers. He also sees a trend toward focusing on children as a segmented audience just as adults are.

Already there are these market segments: young (ages 4-6), school age (7-9) and tweens (10-12).

In the United States, more than a billion dollars is already being spent on marketing communications to children — advertising, promotions, public relations, events and packaging. Not only are these messages growing in number, they are, like many of the advertising messages aimed at adults, seeking to blend in, to be more like the other information messages we get.

Two relatively recent additions to our language help point to this: *infomercials* and *advertorials*. These are broadcast and print advertisements styled to resemble regular programming or editorial content. As one leafs through the pages of many women's magazines, for instance, it gets harder and harder to distinguish the editorial matter (articles, features and columns) from the advertising. Layouts, copy approaches and graphics selected for ads are purposely imitating the regular content and style of the publication.

Ads also are finding their way onto newspaper front pages and section fronts that were formerly reserved for top news items. Advertisers have gotten their products prominent placement in movies. (Remember *E.T.*?) Even bathroom facilities are prime locations for postings, now known as *wall media*. Sales messages are seemingly everywhere and getting tougher to spot as advertising.

AS EDUCATORS, it is important to recognize these trends and to help the young people we work with become aware of them and learn to recognize and to understand the advertising messages they encounter each day along with thousands of other messages. There is a proliferation of information from print, broadcast and online sources and more is on the horizon. Young people need and want to cope well in this message-saturated environment. A renewed media literacy movement is under way. Its goal is to develop aware, critical consumers and producers of information and entertainment. It offers tools and strategies to youngsters to enhance their ability to access, analyze, evaluate and communicate messages in a variety of forms, through a variety of media.

Advertising is a central part of that information environment. It is everywhere — in newspapers and magazines, on TV and radio, computer screens, posters, catalogs, school walls, even T-shirts. Yet, taking on this responsibility of teaching young people about advertising has been done reluctantly if at all.

"Although being a consumer is as fundamental in our society as being a worker, faith worshipper, or student, it is not something that is carefully and deliberately



taught — by anyone,” writes McNeal, who has studied the consumer behavior of children for more than 25 years.

He says that everyone involved with young people teaches a little but that no one claims primary responsibility. Parental efforts are often hit and miss, he says, or worse, teaching one thing while modeling less desirable consumer behavior like impulse buying. Schools, too, often dabble in the instruction but only a few jurisdictions have mandated consumer education, including study of advertising.

**GIVEN THAT** advertising messages are becoming more and more frequently directed at young people and harder and harder to distinguish from other messages even by the most savvy consumers, it is imperative that someone take on the job of teaching young people about those messages — who makes them, what their goals are, how to decode them and how to produce their own effectively.

Certainly this is not the first call for such instruction. In the last few years an intense debate has gone on over advertising aimed at young people and especially its place in schools. This debate was sparked in the spring of 1989 when Whittle Communications piloted *Channel One* in classrooms. This 12-minute newscast included two minutes of advertising. Besides the discussions of schools’ policies about commercialism, *Channel One* spawned a number of research studies looking at the effect of the programming on student attitude, behavior and knowledge. The first one, popularly titled *Tuning In On Current Events* and conducted by Southeastern Educational Improvement Lab, pointed out the lack of critical assessments of advertising as part of the school curriculum. At least three subsequent studies have echoed the point, concluding in part that use of the program offers excellent opportunity for instruction about advertising.

**CHILDREN**, though, aren’t helpless, clueless consumers, and they should not be viewed as such. McNeal has found in the United States and three other countries he studied that by age 2, children are making connections between TV advertising and store content and certain stores and certain products. By 3 or 4 they have developed brand recognition skills and between ages 5 and 7 they have soloed as a consumer, going to a store and making an independent purchase.

In studies, third- and fourth-graders demonstrated that they were able consumers. They could quite accurately provide store layouts, product and brand information, even names and characteristics of some people who work in stores they frequent.

Researchers also have found, though, that young

people do not consistently differentiate messages with commercial intent from other messages and until they are about 8 do not realize the selling intent of advertising messages.

**THE NEED**, it would seem then, is to continue to add systematically to young people’s knowledge. This publication is designed to help educators do just that, leading to and including a Newspaper in Education project that seems made to order, *Design an Ad*.

While the concentration will be on newspaper advertising, the activities seek to raise general knowledge as well, enhancing young people’s ability to understand those 240 advertising messages they encounter each day, whatever the form.

## The goals of this study unit

*A Closer Look at Newspaper Advertising* is designed to be a 10- to 20-week progressive unit of study. The activities can be adapted for use with students in grades 4 through 12. They can also be used a few at a time, out of sequence if you want. Or, if you just want to sample newspaper-related activities to see how your students respond, there are 10 of varying difficulty on page 34 of the guide. In advertising terms, think of them as product samples.

Taken together, the activities and instruction you provide based on the background in this guide and your own research will help students on their way to making meaning of advertising messages.

In this unit, the student will:

- Learn to recognize advertising messages and readily distinguish them from other messages they receive daily.
- Become familiar with the function of advertising in society generally and in newspapers specifically.
- Analyze advertising messages to see how they are constructed.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of a variety of advertising messages in a variety of media (forms).
- Examine and practice effective argumentative and persuasive writing.
- Work cooperatively on a creative project.
- Construct his or her own advertising messages.

(To help with vocabulary development, advertising-related words are bold-faced and defined in context. There are background essays provided for educators. These differ in format from student activity sheets. The background information can be shared with students during discussions and in readying them to attempt the activities.)



## Who is bringing you this message?

**A MOVEMENT CALLED NIE.** The newspaper has been viewed as an effective educational tool as far back as 1795. It is viewed as an up-to-date, motivating resource that can help improve reading, writing and thinking skills while it promotes active, responsible citizenship and an interest in current events. Around the world, more and more newspaper companies are joining an organized movement to promote learning *with* and learning *about* the newspaper.

Currently, in the United States about 700 newspapers participate in Newspaper in Education and literacy efforts. There are NIE programs in more than 30 other countries as well, including Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Argentina, England, France, India, Japan and

Sweden, which is to host the first international conference on NIE in fall 1995.

Among NIE services are reduced-rate newspapers, instructional materials, teacher workshops, student contests and training, tours, speakers' bureaus, in-paper education features or columns, and education partnerships. To find out about NIE programs in your area, call your local newspaper's circulation, educational services or promotions department, your state or provincial press association, or your national newspaper publishing association. Or, write or call *NIE Information Service*, c/o RCAnderson Associates Inc., P.O. Box 300, Pittsford, New York 14534 USA; 716-248-5385.

**A PUBLICATION CALLED NIEIS.** *Newspaper in Education Information Service*, founded in March 1980, is a monthly subscriber publication that serves more than 500 educational services specialists at newspapers around the world.



Its main goal is to promote and enhance the Newspaper in Education concept.

It works toward that goal by providing background about new NIE-related projects, programs and services, as well as a forum for varying views on education and newspaper issues and topics. It also provides camera-ready art, ads, lesson plans and student activities, and sponsors various contests among newspapers.

In 1992 it began publishing direct-sale NIE materials such as this one. Other titles available are *Newspaper Adventures with ERNIE*, *NIE Idea Corner*, *The Rainbow Collection* and *The Best of Learning Through the News*.

**A FEW EXPERIENCED NIE FOLKS.** *A Closer Look at Newspaper Advertising* was written and developed by *NIE Information Service* editor Norma Wilson, a veteran educator and journalist. Wilson, who has a doctorate in education and a master's in journalism, has taught journalism at the high school and college levels and worked on a daily newspaper for five years. She has edited *NIE Information Service* since 1987, while continuing as a college educator.

The illustrations for the guide are by Diane Juravich, a free-lance artist from Imperial, Pennsylvania. She has been a regular contributor to *NIE Information Service*

since 1988, illustrating the monthly activity calendar, *NIE News Notes*, as well as projects such as *Summer Discoveries by the Dozen*. Her husband, Dan, created AdMAN for this guide. He is a professional cartoonist. Both have extensive commercial art experience.

Publisher Ronald C. Anderson is a management consultant, focusing his attention on the other big revenue-producer for newspapers — circulation. He was a circulation director for 27 years before starting his own firm in 1986. He views NIE as an essential contributor to the future of newspapers as well as to the current bottom line.

**AND THE STAFF OF YOUR LOCAL NEWSPAPER.**





# What is advertising?

Advertising has been defined variously as mass persuasion, teaching, informing and mass manipulation. It's always good to go back to the origin of a word to gain perspective. The word *advertising* dates to the 1500s, according to the *Oxford English Dictionary*. Its root, or origin, means "to turn to." Early on in its usage a distinction in the word's ending differentiated "turning one's own attention to" and "directing the attention of others." OED also shows that the original pronunciation was ad-vertiz-ment which explains why the British call them adverts, while in typical, breezy, U.S. style they are ads.

So to advertise is to turn attention to, warn, admonish, inform or notify. And by 1769 references are made that tie cash exchanges to the notification process.

**WHEN ASKED** to define advertising, professionals in the industry most commonly use the word *inform*.

"We find an awful lot of advertisers seem to be afraid to tell people about their products," polling and advertising research expert George Gallup said in an interview reprinted in *Which Ad Pulled Best?* (1993). "But the public is very interested in products . . . . Actually people read ads because they want to know what's for sale."

Other professionals define advertising as a persuasive communication and note the need in a "message rich, product rich" environment to capture attention and capitalize on subtle differences between products.

"The first job of advertising is to get seen or read and then to change people's attitude," Gallup said.

So, advertising is a specific kind of message aimed at informing an audience about a product, service or idea in a way that will give them reason to want to buy or to buy into that particular product, service or idea.

**WHY HAVE** advertising? Perhaps, the most compelling reason from a consumer's view is the fact that thousands of new products come into existence every year. Add to that, new or reorganized businesses and organizations, and the choices become overwhelming. Being confronted with 250,000 brands or businesses in varying categories is like going into a library and having no clue about the Dewey Decimal or Library of Congress systems. You could wander for weeks with no luck in finding what you want or need.

Advertising is a lot like that system. It serves to tell us about the thousands of products, services and ideas out there and to differentiate among them once we have selected a category.

The big difference is that advertising doesn't stay quietly there in the library like Dewey and LC. It

comes right to us via TV, radio, computer, phone, mailbox, posters, billboards, magazine and newspaper. "All good advertising has to be intrusive, it has to be noticed," said advertising executive Jay Schulberg of Bozell, Jacobs, Kenyon & Eckhardt.

**FOR ADVERTISERS**, the goal is to stay in business and make money by selling products, services or ideas. They view the functions of advertising as "increasing the number of customers, increasing the rate of use and encouraging new usage occasions and types of use."

Because they have a high financial stake in our decision about what we buy and use and where we buy it and about what we give our attention and thoughts to, advertisers want and need to tell us their stories. The story may be about a bottle of ketchup, a shoe store or a life and death health choice.

Otherwise, it's as if they opened a store without a sign. Soon, though, a plain-lettered sign isn't enough because the competitor down the street has one with red letters, and the one around the corner has one with lights, and the one across town has one with lights that blink on and off . . . you get the idea.

So, as with any message it is up to the receiver to separate substance and style, to get at what is of importance or of interest at this time, and then select or decide. Advertising is a specific kind of communication, or message. It is one that seeks to sell and identifies the seller by name.

And since consumers and advertisers are often far removed from each other geographically and face time restrictions as well, various media, like your daily newspaper, become the meeting place.



## How do I get my students involved?

### A PRODUCT RECALL ALWAYS GETS ATTENTION

Get students thinking about advertising with a lively, fun discussion called **Product Recall**.

■ Start by asking students to think about all of the advertising and commercial messages they can think of seeing, hearing or reading. Then ask them where these messages came to them from. Brainstorm a list of sources of advertising, having someone record them on the chalkboard or a flip chart. Students will likely start with TV, signs, catalogs, salespeople in a store, maybe magazines, newspapers. Ask them where the most unexpected place was that they ever saw an ad. How about the bottom inside of a coffee mug once you've finished drinking? This should call to mind some more "non-traditional" advertising sources like matchbook covers, clothing, computer disks, telephone answering machines. It should also get students asking themselves and each other, "Is *that* an advertising message?"

■ Then ask them to start thinking about specific advertising messages they've seen, heard or read. Ask everyone to jot down a few of these on a signed and dated sheet of paper. Then focus their lists on ad messages they especially liked and ones they especially disliked. Because this usually captures everyone's enthusiasm it is better to have students jot down their choices, mark them L (like) and D (dislike) and then call on people to share. Allow some "Oh, yeah, I loved that one. That \_\_\_\_\_ was so neat." Or, "Don't you just hate it the way that guy on that commercial says \_\_\_\_\_." Again, this helps heighten awareness and participation.

■ Likely students' examples will focus mainly on television ads and visual images. This may open discussion about the influence of television ads, the use of celebrities in commercials, the gender roles depicted, the inclusiveness of ads (whether they see people like themselves in the ads) and whether they know that they as young people are a targeted market and how they feel about that fact. Or you may want to save this discussion and relate it to the activity on page 11 which focuses on differences between TV and newspaper ads.

■ Finally ask students to think about yesterday. Give them a few minutes and then have them jot down as many specific advertising messages as they remember seeing, reading or hearing. Tell them to include as much detail as they can. "Remember," tell them, "this is a specific ad from a specific time — yesterday." Then ask whether any of them actually purchased something this week because they found out about it

in an ad. How many did?

This activity gives you, the educator, an idea of how well your students understand the idea of advertising messages and a look at their collective recall vs. their specific recall. It also provides examples that you can use later when you address specifics of advertising techniques and motivators. It's important to use examples that young people know and identify with.

■ Finally, ask each student to write down a guess of how many advertising messages he or she encounters in one day.

Collect the students' papers and then give them the **ADlog** activity (page 8) to do. Tell them to start the log the next morning right when they wake up and to keep adding to it until bedtime. The completed log is due the next morning.

■ Compare the actual logs with the number they entered as a guess on their Product Recall responses. In keeping with the spirit of commercialism and advertising you perhaps will want to award a small prize (premium) to the student(s) whose guess was closest to what he or she actually encountered as recorded on the ADlog. An appropriate award might be a keychain or marker with an ad on it, a Stay in School sticker or a T-shirt (human billboard) with a logo or slogan.

# ADlog

Each day the average person is exposed to an estimated 240 advertising messages. These may be on television or radio, in magazines and newspapers, on billboards and wall posters, even on T-shirts or telephone answering machines.

See how many advertising messages you are exposed to in one day. Starting the first thing when you wake up, keep a record of all of the advertising messages

you see, hear or read. Fill in the requested information on the chart below as completely as possible. Make extra copies if you need to. It's more important to get down all of the messages than to write a lot about each. Keep the record all day until bedtime.

How many ad messages did you encounter? How do you compare to the average? What was the source of most of those messages?

**ADlog by**

Date:

[illegible]



## Journals, Clips & Glossaries

Compare your ADlog with those of classmates or family members who maintained one at the same time. How do they compare? How much time did everyone spend noting all of those advertising messages?

While it would be too time-consuming to maintain an ADlog every day, as you take a closer look at advertising, it is important to keep some records about the messages you see, hear and read and what you think about them.

During the next few weeks, keep a Consumer's Response Journal and a Clips File — a collection of the print, audio or video clips of ads you find of interest or note. You may keep these in any way you like. Be creative. Also begin and maintain a glossary of advertising-related terms.

A **CONSUMER'S RESPONSE JOURNAL** is meant to be your reactions and thoughts about various advertising messages; the products, services and ideas you see promoted; and your own views of what you and others want and need.

Vary your entries as much as possible, and be sure to date each one. You may want to include a slogan you found amusing, a fact about how much people spend on food, questions you thought of while reading an ad. You can sketch an idea you would use for an ad if you were writing or designing it. Or keep a running list of nominees for the best and the worst ads. Note your observations about advertising in general or about those ads in a particular magazine, time slot, section or day of the week. Include questions you want answered about advertising as you continue to study it.

This journal is a place for your thinking and your creativity to develop. As with any writing journal, it will work best if you write in it every day and if you occasionally reread entries and respond to them. Write lists of words, short point of view essays, poems, whatever. The key is to write and to think.

IN KEEPING YOUR CLIPS FILE, be sure to systematically note the source of the advertisement; the group, company or product it is for; when and where you saw, heard or read it; and personal comments such as why the advertisement appealed to you.

You may also want to note what kind of persuasive technique it utilizes, what element of it caught your attention or what confuses you about the ad.

Develop your own format for a complete notation or follow the example here. You may decide to limit your

Clips File to only ads you consider winners, that is ones that are exemplary in terms of message and presentation. Or you may want to concentrate on the sinners — ones that miss the mark except as spoof show material. Likely, though, you will want to include any you find of interest or relevance to your study of advertising.

If possible, include print, audio and video clips in your collection. Be sure to document the source of each. Share your collection with others and compare their comments about various advertising messages to your own.

A **GLOSSARY** will help you keep track of words that are new to you. Over the next few weeks you will be introduced to new vocabulary related to advertising and the media. On activity sheets you will work on, these are bold-faced and defined in context. Create an ADictionary. List and define all of the advertising- and media-related terms, including ones you come across in your own reading and research and ones your teacher introduces. You may also want to clip examples to illustrate some of the terms. Use the correct terms as you talk about advertising in class.

### AD CLIPS

This is an ad for \_\_\_\_\_

It is from \_\_\_\_\_

and ran on \_\_\_\_\_

Of special note:



## We've Got Buying Power

Advertising works best when it is reaching someone (an audience or market) who 1) has money, 2) is able and willing to spend it, and 3) will buy or buy into something being offered for sale. A big job of advertising, then, is finding who has the money to spend and finding out what will make them perceive a product, service or idea as something wanted or needed, or as something worth buying or buying into.

Since the 1980s, advertising directed at young people like you has increased greatly. More and more programs, publications and products are being developed for children. This youth market is getting the attention of advertisers because children have become important consumers. They have money — collectively in the billions of dollars. And they are able and willing to

spend it. And even more important to those who have products, services and ideas to offer, young people also have tremendous influence over what is bought by adults — mainly parents. Children are also considered a "future market." The thinking is that if you buy one brand of product now, you'll likely buy it in the future, and for young people, the future is usually 50 years or longer. That adds up to a lot of Buying Power.

Research to find out about their potential market is important to advertisers, just as it is important to anyone wanting to make a decision or evaluate what they are doing. A survey is one kind of research. These are done in person, such as in a mall. They are done by phone. They are done in writing through questionnaires.

To get an idea of the Buying Power of children and for practice in planning and carrying out a survey, work with your classmates to carry out this project in your class, grade level or school.

■ Establish the questions for the survey. This is *the most important* step. Be sure the questions ask what you really want to find out. Keep them short and relatively easy to answer. Also consider that the information has to be easy to calculate, summarize and report. Test the questions on each other or with a test (pilot) group. Revise the format and wording of questions as necessary.

Here's a survey you might use:

### What Is Our Buying Power?

Age \_\_\_\_\_ Boy or Girl \_\_\_\_\_ How much money do you earn each week? \_\_\_\_\_

Where do you get most of your money?

\_\_\_ Allowance \_\_\_ Chores \_\_\_ Job \_\_\_ Gifts \_\_\_ Other (list) \_\_\_\_\_

Which best describes you?

\_\_\_ I spend all of the money I get. \_\_\_ I spend most of the money I get but save some.

\_\_\_ I save my money to buy more expensive items. \_\_\_ I save almost all of my money.

If you save, where do you keep the money you save? \_\_\_ In a bank \_\_\_ At home \_\_\_ Other (list) \_\_\_\_\_

List the items you bought last week, including snacks, by brand name if possible.

List the item you most want to buy if you had enough money. \_\_\_\_\_

How do you usually find out about the items you buy?

\_\_\_ TV \_\_\_ Radio \_\_\_ Newspaper \_\_\_ Magazines \_\_\_ Seeing them in stores \_\_\_ People \_\_\_ Other (list) \_\_\_\_\_

■ Get permission to gather the information.

■ Gather the information, making as many copies as you need of the survey.

■ Compile the information.

■ Summarize the results and share them with your classmates, school or others who would be interested.



## Which Media? Choices, Choices

Advertisers can't afford to put their messages everywhere to reach the audience, or market, that they want to reach. They have to make decisions, and they often use research, experience or logic to help make those decisions. They have to decide whether to put an advertisement in the newspaper, on TV, on a giveaway item that is distributed at a certain store, in a letter sent to people's homes, or whatever — or what the best combination of these would be. They also have to decide when to send that message, how to word it and how often to repeat it.

A big influence is how much the advertiser can afford to spend on getting the message out. A three-line classified ad costs about \$8. A 30-second local TV advertising spot costs about \$200; 30 seconds during the Super Bowl, the most watched televised event, costs about

\$1 million. And that is air time only and doesn't include the production of the ad.

Another big influence is the size and characteristics of the audience each of the media reaches. The media compile standard rate and audience data so businesses or companies can decide whether the market they seek is among the ones a certain medium reaches.

The information available can get rather complicated, so companies often hire specialists — advertising agencies — that focus on research, planning and buying placements for advertising.

Some of the differences among media are apparent from casual observation, however. See what differences you can find between two of the most readily available sources: newspapers and television.

■ Find a television and a newspaper ad for the same product or service. Note when and where each was found. (Example: Sunday newspaper, comics page; 6 p.m. during local newscast on Channel 13.)

■ Study each ad carefully and then complete these questions. Once you are finished, share and discuss your findings with classmates who have also conducted the comparisons.

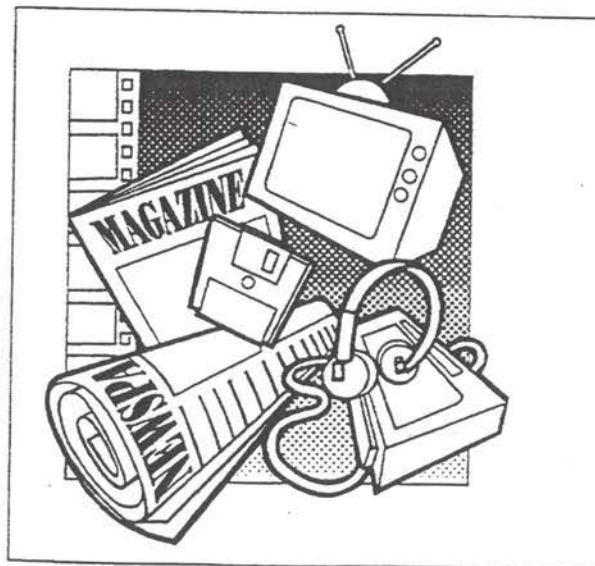
- How are the ads alike?
- What is the main difference?
- What other differences are there?
- What is the main attention-getter of each?
- What audience/market would each most appeal to? (age, gender, interests)
- What audience(s) would each ad not reach?

■ Over several days read the newspaper ads and pay special attention to ads as you watch television. As you read and watch, think about these categories and keep a tally:

- Specific products available for sale at specific prices.
- Brands that would be available for sale almost anywhere.
- Local stores and outlets.
- Chain or franchise stores and outlets.

■ Based on your observations, what is the main difference you see between the messages in television advertisements and the messages in newspaper advertisements? Why do you think advertisers choose TV, newspapers or both to send specific messages? What are the characteristics of the two media that make them powerful or persuasive? Give some examples.

■ Discuss with others what they see as the main differences between television and newspapers as media for advertising messages.





## Why do newspapers have advertising?

Each year in the United States, advertisers spend close to \$140 billion dollars to communicate their messages to consumers. Those dollars go for various advertising forms. While the typical guess is that television must get about 90 percent of that, daily newspapers actually have the largest share, though by a slim lead.

And together, newspapers and television get less than 50 percent of those advertising dollars. Another strong contender for advertising revenue is direct mail, a significant player in advertising that strives to reach individuals and get immediate, direct response through interaction such as mail-in response coupons or dialing 800-numbers.

Of the five mass media — television, radio, magazine, newspaper and out-of-home (billboards, transit ads, in-store vehicles) — newspapers are “one of the more geographically flexible media forms,” according to *Introduction to Advertising Media* (1993). By offering zoned editions, metropolitan newspapers can, like their smaller circulation counterparts, allow advertisers to reach very specific, geographic markets. Also, newspapers have a variety of sections — sports, food, home, travel, business, science. Thus, advertisers can also reach people with specific interests or lifestyles.

As with other media, advertising is of utmost importance to newspapers. It typically accounts for 70 to 75 percent of an individual newspaper's total revenue. Circulation sales account for most of the rest, 25 to 30 percent. Job printing and other revenue-producing projects also contribute, and newspapers are developing new revenue-producers, many tied to voice and computer technology now available. A FAX news service is but one example.

THERE ARE THREE kinds of newspaper advertising: *classified*, *retail* and *national*. National advertising, more often placed on television, accounts for about 2 to 5 percent of newspaper advertising revenues. Classified ad sales usually account for about 30 to 35 percent of ad revenue. Retail advertising, those from specific stores and merchants, brings in the most: 50 to 55 percent. Pre-printed advertising supplements like those full-color tabloids from Sears or Penney's account for about 10 percent of the ad revenue. Interestingly, consumers overwhelmingly prefer the ad inserts to in-paper ads, with 68.3 percent listing that preference in a 1994 industry survey.

So, it is evident how much newspapers depend on the advertising dollars. Those dollars play a large role in keeping newspapers in good financial health, so that they can continue the important functions of informing and entertaining readers and providing a forum for the exchange of ideas and the debate of topics and

issues of concern. Advertising, then, helps contribute to a free press, which is so essential to a democratic society.

### WHO GETS HOW MUCH OF THE AD PIE?

Based on 1993 figures of \$137.8 billion in ad expenditures

newspapers	23.1%
television	22.2%
direct mail	19.9%
radio	6.8%
magazines	5.4%
other (including Yellow Pages, outdoor)	28.0%

— from *Facts About Newspapers 94*,  
updated annually by the Newspaper Association of America.



## Warning: This Newspaper Contains . . .

The newspaper is made up of many kinds of items. There are news stories, photographs, features, opinion pieces, illustrations and display and classified advertising. Browse through today's newspaper. About how much of it is advertising, do you think? Less than half? Half? More than half? Way more than half?

After you have finished reading the newspaper, do a simple content analysis. Mark through with X's all of

the advertising messages, both **display** (the ones of varying sizes with headlines and illustrations) and **classified** (the small ones grouped together).

Then using the following method, calculate how much of the newspaper is advertising. If it is an extremely large edition, you may want to work in groups, have each group do the calculations for a different section of the newspaper and then combine your measurements.



Newspaper space is measured in **column inches**. Typically, newspapers use a six-column format. First, determine how many column inches the newspaper contains totally. A full page is usually six columns wide and 21 inches deep, or 126 column inches. A 24-page edition, then, would be  $24 \times 126$ , or 3,024 total column inches. But page sizes vary, so be sure to measure your local newspaper and then calculate total column inches for your newspaper.

Display ads are also measured in column inches. So, if an ad is one column wide and one inch deep, it measures one column inch. If it is three columns wide and seven inches deep, it is 21 column inches. Determine the column inches for each display ad you X'ed through and label it with the number of column inches it takes up. Add up the totals of the ads on each page and then add together all of the page totals.

Classified ad pages are usually divided into smaller column widths. It is easiest to think of them as if they were full-page ads. Any partially filled classified page can then be measured and calculated separately. Add the classified total to the display ad total to get **total advertising space**.

Then using the total number of column inches in the paper and your calculations for total advertising space, figure the percentage of advertising in the newspaper.

- What did you get? \_\_\_\_\_ percent Compare your calculations with others in your class.

To get a more accurate picture, try this basic content analysis every day for a week and determine an average percentage. (Again, you may want to divide the workload by using groups.)

- What was the **daily average** percentage of advertising content for the week you studied? \_\_\_\_\_ %  
Which day had the **most** advertising? \_\_\_\_\_ Which had the **least**? \_\_\_\_\_

- As you X'ed out display ads and labeled them, did you find there were standard sizes? \_\_\_\_\_  
Which size of ad was most common? \_\_\_\_\_

■ Show your calculations:

$$\frac{\text{Total Display Ad Space} + \text{Total Classified Space}}{\text{Total Column Inches}} = \frac{\text{Total Advertising Space}}{\text{Total Column Inches}} = \frac{\text{Total Advertising Space}}{\text{Total Column Inches}} = \text{_____ \%}$$

Advertising



## Those little things raise *that* much money?

Classified advertising is grouped together in a section of the newspaper. The advertising messages, many of them from individuals, are arranged by category. An index lists the ad categories by number to ease locating them.

For the typical newspaper, classified advertising accounts for 30 to 35 percent of the total advertising revenue and an industry total of about \$11 billion. Classifieds, or notices, are a relatively inexpensive way to reach a wide audience. While most of the ads are a consistent size and style, some differentiation is occurring. Some ads now have illustrations, usually a small, bold graphic like a heart or star. There are also multi-line classifieds with special borders, taking advantage of the Lilliputian principle: You don't have to be very big to be a giant in a land of the six-inch-tall.

It's fairly easy to collect testimonials that the classified ads work as a marketplace meeting ground. Almost everyone has had a "classified success." *Tested Advertising Methods* (1974) includes the example of a New York man who in two days found a partner to contribute \$10,000 in a business venture, all with 30 words.

CLASSIFIEDS serve other purposes as well. The section often contains legal notices about zoning requests, compliance to equal opportunity employment requirements, etc. helping carry out a civic need. They open the press to individuals. Some newspapers offer special rates to young people, especially ones looking for part-time jobs. They provide entertainment as well as a service. There are sometimes special rates to increase advertisement placement at times like Valentine's Day or Mother's Day.

Classifieds are a good place to introduce students to advertising. For one thing, even the youngest student may have had direct or family experience with them. Someone they know has advertised a garage sale, bought a used car or refrigerator, or looked for a job or a place to live, using the classifieds. Also, because they are grouped together, it's easier to focus attention. And there is variety so while fourth-graders may be more interested in pets and bikes, older students can find interest in cars, stereos and part-time employment opportunities. The ad messages also use the tightened form of the headline, omitting all but essential words, and they use abbreviations, so students must concentrate on and practice essential decoding skills.

THE CLASSIFIED ADS can be a *mini-lesson* in learning to apply the newspaper to subject-area content. Want to talk about science and technology? Look at the computers category to see which models are becoming "out-dated" and have students research what the replacement technology is. Students can practice math skills by calculating the cost of the ads or of one they write themselves. They can also graph various subcategories within the ad categories, such as jobs requiring college degrees, high school degrees, or no degree specification, or foreign vs. domestic cars for sale. Students can also set assumptions about the economy based on the number of help wanted ads or the kinds of jobs listed.

They can role-play phoning about an ad they are interested in, thinking of questions they want to ask. Some teachers have even recycled the classifieds as handwriting practice tablets, by having students turn the page horizontally and using the rules marking the columns as lines to practice printing letters or words.

So those little things do pack a lot of power — for newspaper, advertiser and educator.



CLASSIFIED  
advertising



## Classified Search

If you outgrow your bicycle or decide you don't like riding it, you can store it away somewhere or try to sell it and make back some of the money spent on it. But how do you find someone who wants or needs a bike like yours? You could put up posters around your area or tell your friends you want to sell it to see whether they know anyone who wants to buy it. Or,

you could place an ad in the newspaper. The classified advertisements, arranged by specific categories, allow individuals to reach one another.

Here's a chance to become more familiar with these person-to-person sales messages as well as a favorite newspaper education activity, *The Scavenger Hunt*.

Look through today's classified ads and clip or somehow mark the following:

1. a classified ad with an **illustration**.
2. the number to call to place an ad.
3. the **index** to the classified section.
4. a legal notice (what's it about?).
5. something alive that's for sale.
6. something some people would object to.
7. a seasonal item.
8. the **ad category** number of *part-time employment*.
9. something really old.
10. a collectible.
11. a job for someone who is good at math.
12. an exotic pet.
13. something hot.
14. something a child would like.
15. the cost to place a classified ad.
16. a high-tech item.
17. the shortest classified message.
18. the longest classified message.
19. an item being sold that might have an interesting history.
20. an ad with an interesting **lead-in**, or **heading**.





## Classified Fun

**WANTED: A FUZZY BARAFLOO.** Conduct a "classified" search for your perfect pet. While dogs and cats are by far the most popular pets, some people have horses, hamsters, hermit crabs, ferrets, boa constrictors and even hedgehogs. Some people can't have pets because of allergies, daily schedules or restrictions where they live. Think about the pet you would most like to have, either real or imaginary or a little of each. What qualities, or features, would it have? What would it look like? What would you name it? What special needs would it have?

1. List at least five qualities, or features, you think are important for a perfect pet to have. (Don't confuse features with benefits — that is what you, the owner, get out of or gain from having the pet. *Fierce* would be a feature; *security from burglars* would be a resulting benefit. See the difference?)

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— Cat Bowman Smith

**NEWSPAPER EXTRA:** When Clarissa, above, dreamed up her fuzzy barafloo pet, she confused features and benefits. Label the benefits B and the features F.

2. Prepare a classified want ad describing your perfect pet. You may want to use some of the descriptive words from your list above.

**WANTED:** \_\_\_\_\_

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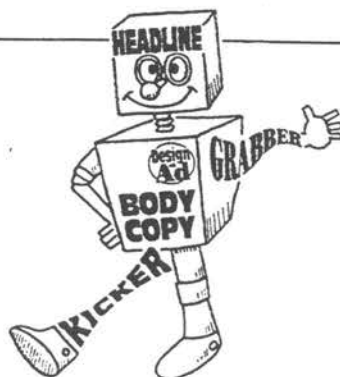


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Hi! I'm AdMAN.

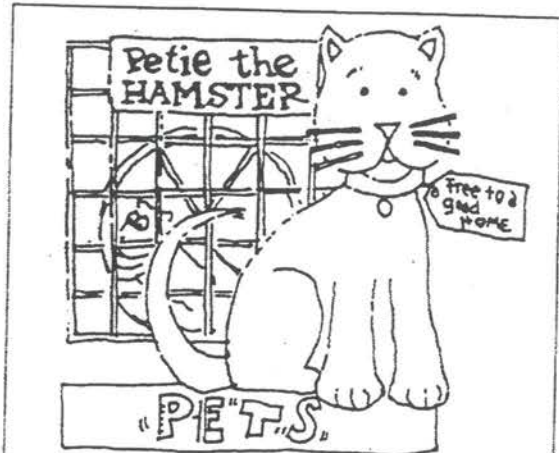


"I guess my perfect pet would be a Cyber-ian husky named Chip."

**NEWSPAPER EXTRA:** How many words are in your ad? \_\_\_\_\_ Compare your ad to classified ads in the newspaper. Are there words you can omit from your ad and still be clear? \_\_\_\_\_ If yes, how many? \_\_\_\_\_ How much would it cost you to run your ad for a week? \_\_\_\_\_

**THIS STORY IS CLASSIFIED.** As you read through the classified ads, you will likely find a listing or two for something a little strange. You may see the listing and ask yourself, "Why would anyone possibly think someone would want to buy THAT?" Or, "I wonder why that item is for sale."

Here's a chance to let your imagination run wild. Clip a classified ad and write a creative story about the life of the item and how it came to be for sale, or wanted, or lost, or whatever. Show the ad you found to someone else and ask them to make up a story about it, too. Share your stories with others.



**FREE TO GOOD HOME:** 6-month-old, gray kitten, shots, fun-loving, friendly, likes children, should be an only pet. Call 555-1118.

Here's the story behind this ad: Hi, I'm Griswold, and I'm in big trouble with my family. It all started one day when they left me home alone and I started exploring. I heard a squeak, squeak noise and found a tiny thing with black eyes running around and around on a wheel thing. It looked like fun so I tried to get on it, too. Just then my family came home and accused me of trying to eat the creature, who turned out to be Petie the hamster, and he has been with the family a whole lot more time than I have. I wasn't going to eat Petie. I just wanted to play, but I can't make anyone understand. I guess they don't speak kitten!

**TIGHT BUT NOT SO MUCH IT HURTS.** Think of something you own that you would like to sell or give away. Then write a paragraph telling about it.

Now, revise that paragraph into the form of a newspaper classified ad. How thrifty can you be? Rewrite the ad being a good self editor to see how many words you can cut out and how much money you can save.

Don't be like the owner of a fish market who put up a sign *Fresh Fish For Sale*, though. He decided, "Well, everyone knows I'm selling them, not putting them on display, so I don't need *For Sale*, and obviously I wouldn't sell spoiled fish so I don't need *Fresh*, and they can smell the fish a block away, so I don't need *Fish* either." So he just tore up his sign, and later replaced it with one that said, *Out of Business*.

My Thrifty Classified Ad



## What about those big ads in the newspaper?

One of the earliest forms of merchandising was the display, the laying out of wares for potential buyers to examine. New items or ones the merchant especially wanted to sell were put front and center. In the open-air markets this was the front of the display mat. Later, storekeepers used the front porch, store windows or the glassed case where the cash register sat as prime display areas.

As the number of merchants and the number of buyers grew and as the population spread out, merchants had to come up with new ways to assure that potential buyers would see their wares. Display advertising, through illustration and type, brings the product or service an advertiser wants to sell right to the consumer. Instead of having to go see items in the store's actual display cases or shelves, they are set out on the newspaper's pages. Often photographs or illustra-

tions of actual merchandise are included as are the prices. It is a way to reach the consumer with a sampling of the store's wares without the consumer even leaving home. This ad form makes life more efficient for the consumer, saving time and travel expense, and it boosts economic activity in the expanding, scattered marketplace.

**FOR NEWSPAPERS**, most of their advertising revenue is from display advertising, mainly from area retailers. Display advertising accounts for 70 to 75 percent of the newspaper's total advertising revenue, so it makes a big difference to the bottom line. In 1993, daily newspapers in the United States attracted about \$21 billion in display advertising altogether.

To get these advertisements, the newspaper employs ad sales representatives who make personal contact with businesses and store owners. Often the ad rep will have a mockup of an ad or will suggest a particular "selling point" to the advertiser such as spring spuce up time or Mother's Day or National Fire Prevention Week. These ad reps work with the advertiser and the newspaper's creative services department to produce ads. In the case of larger stores or franchises or national brands the messages usually are produced by advertising agencies who then schedule local newspaper space as part of an entire media plan. The media plan takes advantage of a particular media mix in an effort to reach a designated market, a group of potential buyers sharing particular characteristics.

**FOR EDUCATORS**, newspaper display advertising can be used to teach a variety of subject matter. The ads provide excellent data for consumer education activities like comparison shopping and for math calculations of percentages. The ads themselves are also good examples for art teachers to use in presenting the elements and principles of design.

Elementary teachers have used the display ad illustrations to reinforce the concepts of number pairs, sets, and greater than > less than. Teachers have sent students "shopping" in the ads to complete budgeted, comparative shopping tasks. The large type size of display ad headlines makes them easy for preschoolers and other emerging readers to manipulate and to use in letter recognition and word skill activities.

The display ads can also be central in a study of persuasive writing. Because the ads are easily obtainable and relatively short, students can easily locate and analyze many of them as they explore writing styles and come to understand the communication techniques at work. Students can also produce ads on their own, and in some areas participate in contests, giving them authentic outlets to display what they have learned about writing and designing.



DISPLAY  
advertising





## Close Encounters of the Persuasive Kind

Every advertising message is a persuasive communication. Sometimes the advertiser is trying to get you to buy a certain, specific product right now. Sometimes the goal is to create a positive image of a certain company or idea over time. Other ads aim to build long-term loyalty to a certain brand, or type of product, getting consumers to think of it in a favorable way. Whether it is product advertising or image advertising, the goal is to win you over.

Winning you over as a customer or supporter is important for the livelihood of the producer of the goods and services as well as for their distributors. Advertising has become basic to the economy. Economist John Kenneth Galbraith once estimated that if television commercials vanished, the U.S. economy's gross national product would shrink by half. So a lot is at stake. And those stakes increase as more and more competitors seek out buyers. The influencing messages, too, become more competitive. Sellers become inventive in the ways they reach potential customers.

Each advertising medium — way of getting a message to a consumer — is weighed for its strengths and

weaknesses. Advertisers and the various media conduct research to determine who the message is reaching. They also conduct research about how to craft the message and when to place it and how often. The goal is to make the ad as effective as possible. And in advertising terms, effectiveness is determined by whether it persuades the consumer to buy or buy into what the advertiser is selling.

The best of these messages are effective and have some flair, be it a humorous concept or a catchy slogan or jingle. Advertising messages have crept into our popular culture and our minds.

Here's a chance to look in more detail at the ad messages in newspapers.

Newspapers are considered a mass medium with the strength of reaching a large percentage of people in a specific geographic area and, less precisely, those with specific lifestyle interests. About two-thirds of the advertising messages in newspapers are display advertising. These ads use type and illustration to communicate the advertising message. Take a closer look at some of them.

■ Add some detail to the content analysis you undertook earlier. For this step, list all of the display ads in the newspaper and categorize them by kind (auto, food, clothing, appliances, travel, building supplies, lawn and garden, etc.) Create a poster that provides information about where the ads appear. Use these headings:

Advertisement	Kind of Product/Service/Idea	Company Providing It	Section of the Newspaper
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Create a summary of your findings. Compare yours with what others find. What kind of store runs the most display advertising in the newspaper?

■ Choose at least five display advertisements from the newspaper. Label their components, or elements: grabber (attention-getter), headline, body copy, illustration, kicker (call to action), logo.

Do these elements always appear in the same location in each ad? Sketch the variations you see.

■ Select one of the advertisements and study its message even more carefully. Answer these questions:



- Who created the message?
- Who is the message intended for?
- What is the message telling the consumer?
- Why is it telling the consumer this? And why now?
- How can the consumer respond?

■ In the ad's message, find at least three facts and three opinions. List them here, labeling them F or O.



## Who Is Out There Receiving?

We are each different and we are all alike. Advertisers count on that as they tailor their messages for us, or rather at groups of us, known as a **target market**. Being in a certain target market means you share similar characteristics. Targeting the message's placement and its content to specific markets, using specific appeals, is the science of advertising. The art is making the message memorable so that it stands out from the hundreds of other advertising messages and thousands of other general messages we receive each day.

Media and advertisers must know who views, listens to or reads what medium and when. Newspapers conduct or commission readership studies to obtain data

so they can assure advertisers, for instance, that Wednesday's food section reaches X percent of the women ages 24-50 in the XXX metropolitan area and that it has an X percent better reach than the nearest competitive medium.

Placing an advertisement in a specific place in the newspaper costs more than placing an ROP ad. ROP means **run of press** or **run of paper**, which means that the newspaper can place it anywhere in the publication it chooses. Advertisers often think the premium is worth it to reach the members of the market determined to be most likely to buy a product or service or to be swayed by a specific appeal.

■ Select five advertisements that you think are targeted at different markets. For each ad, name the targeted market and explain why you think so.

■ In today's newspaper find ads you think are targeted at these markets and record information about the ad.

Target market	Product/service/idea	Store/business name	Location of ad (Page, Section)
Men			
Women			
Teenagers			
Children (ages 6-12)			
Environmentally Aware			

■ Select one section of the newspaper and for a week list and study the display advertising it contains. From your observations, state an assumption about who mainly reads this section. If possible, check with the newspaper to see whether it has information and reader research data available to confirm your assumption. Select a television program which you think might appeal to a certain market. Watch the program, recording the kinds of advertising messages. What kinds of products were most prevalent in the ads? Does that help confirm your guess about the program's target market?

## And What Makes Them Tick?

Once advertisers know who is reading, viewing or listening to which media and when, they are ready to shape their ad messages to appeal to those target markets they especially want to reach.

In the early days of advertising, tricks, gimmicks, badgering and exaggeration were sometimes used. As consumers and advertisers got more sophisticated, those methods were out, sometimes by order of a regulation or law.

Advertisers more and more came to rely on information to persuade. That information isn't always complete, of course, but neither is almost any persuasive or argumentative communication. The communicator selects the strongest evidence to make the case he or she wants to make.

Advertisers also use one other tactic to give their messages an edge with the consumer. The advertisers rely on information psychologists have detected in their research and study. This information about what motivates people, especially people who fall into certain categories, has become important to the modern advertiser's message.

Consumers are divided into certain groups, often determined by age, gender and geography. These are called **demographics**. However, they are also divided into psychological profiles. *The Image Makers* (1984) describes target markets in these terms: *belonger, emulator, emulator/achiever, societally conscious achievers and need-directed*. Called **psychographics**, these categorize people by habits, values and lifestyle choices. Emulators, for instance, are usually young, impressionable and searching for an identity and where they fit in. An ad message for them: "Join the Pepsi generation."

Although there aren't set categories like this for children and teens, advertisers do know that children have these needs: play, sensory stimulation, variety, affiliation and achievement. Kids want to have fun, use all of their senses to explore things and try many activities, yet they want to feel as if they belong somewhere (friends, family, groups, place) and are capable of accomplishing things. Are you like that?

See whether you can find evidence that people who advertise to children know about these motivators and are using them somehow in their messages.

■ Gather several print ads from the newspaper sections targeted at young people. Usually this is the comics section or a special kids page or section once a week. Gather print ads from magazines published especially for children like *Sports Illustrated for Kids* and *Ranger Rick*. You can find others at your library or newsstand. Perhaps you get them or some kind of kids club newsletter at home.

Read the ads in these publications carefully to see whether you can discover the appeal and any consistencies in the ads aimed at young people. What did you find?

■ Compare the appeals to the list of motivators: **play, sensory stimulation, variety, affiliation and achievement**. Find examples from the ad content, illustrations and general "feel" or concept of the ads that make you think these motivators are playing a part in the message being sent.

■ Find and invite to your class someone from your community who markets to children. Ask them about what they do special to get young people to use their product, come into their store or feel good about their company or cause. Do they know about the motivational appeals you have learned about?

■ Look at ad campaigns for youth groups such as Boys Club, Girl Scouts, etc. Are any of the motivational appeals at work in those messages as well? If so, which ones?

■ What do you think this statement means? "Successful products of the '90s are those that meet parents' approval while being planned, developed, tested and marketed with the child in mind." Can you find an ad or slogan or ad campaign concept that illustrates the truth of the statement?



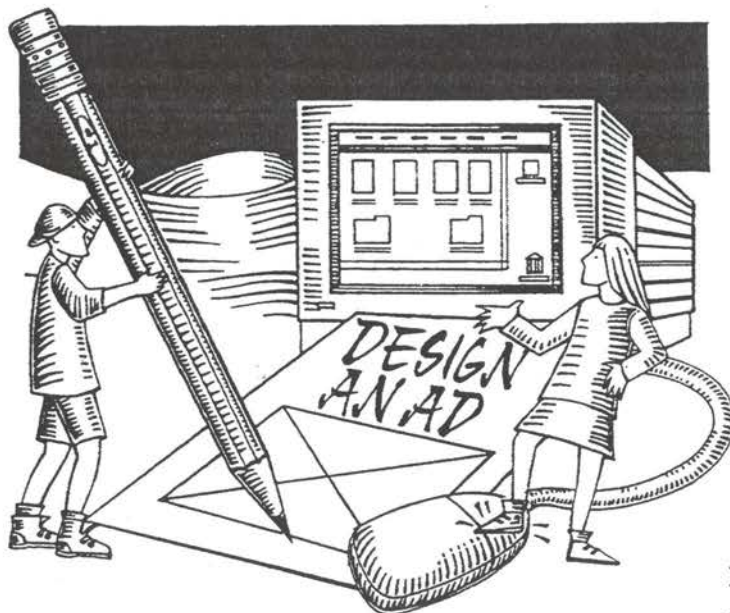
## How can students apply all of this?

In the late '60s a Georgia retail advertising manager saw a tearsheet from a small West Coast newspaper with a couple of hand-drawn ads by students. That gave him the idea for a student project and competition that has flourished throughout the newspaper industry over the last 26 years.

The project is *Design an Ad*. Basically, it calls for students to create display advertisements for local businesses that reserve newspaper ad space. In most areas now, the contest is held in conjunction with writing, illustrating and cartooning competitions and the result is often a 24- to 48-page tabloid supplement that showcases student effort and creativity.

When he started it, A. Mark Smith, then at the Athens Newspapers Inc., decided it would be a great way to involve students in understanding the business side of the newspaper. "Up to that point so much of the impression was that the newspaper is just about writers," he said.

SO SMITH set out to enlist the cooperation of the board of education, art teachers and area businesses to produce a product that was sound educationally and financially.



It is a revenue-producer and "the best public relations tool a newspaper can use with the local school system," said Smith, who went on to be ad director and publisher at Athens Newspapers and is now corporate marketing manager for Morris Communications Corp., which owns Athens Newspapers and several others.

Smith counts the project among two in his career that he is most proud of and worked hard to get others to

"steal." Participation pays off all around, he said. He personally knows 10 student winners who went on to become commercial artists based on experiences with *Design an Ad*. A few advertisers have adapted students' ad concepts to entire campaigns.

BECAUSE OF its popularity among students, the real deadline pressures and the many details to attend to, *Design an Ad* is a big undertaking for newspapers. "The first year I'll never forget," he said. "We were so overwhelmed with entries and it was my wife and myself and our kids at one o'clock in the morning doing the judging."

Once they got the logistics down, his wife, Jo Ann, who is a teacher, helped find judges and get wider school district support. The project became so well established that participation in it was made mandatory for art classes in the Clark County school district. Fall 1994 was the first time in 25 years the newspaper did not kick off the school year with the project. It was to be re-evaluated and perhaps reorganized.

At least 55 other newspapers have adapted the *Design an Ad* project to their schools and communities. At *The Sacramento Bee*, it dates to 1978 and attracts as many as 25,000 student entries. Since the early '80s *Design an Ad* is part of several newspapers' Newspaper in Education Week celebrations.

"It has become the single most popular activity among all the various events and activities associated with NIE Week or NIE Month," said Betty Sullivan, director/educational programs at the Newspaper Association of America Foundation.

DESIGN AN AD is becoming an even more popular and appropriate project because it fits so well with school reforms that call for cooperative learning, authentic assessment, effective communication and community participation. To measure the effects of *Design an Ad* on student attitudes toward and understanding of advertising and the newspaper in general, Thomson Newspapers Inc. has undertaken research in connection with Pennsylvania State University-Altoona.

If there is no *Design an Ad* competition in your area, you can create a similar project by enlisting a business, organization or your own school district to be an advertiser, allowing students to create product, image or public service ads for real "clients."

In 1995, *NIE Information Service* plans to begin a national competition patterned after one begun in 1986 for college students studying advertising. The new competition will involve high school and elementary students in designing relevant public service ads.



## Two Heads Are Better Than One

Coming up with a well-done, effective display advertisement takes thought, time and effort. It is a creative process just like writing a short story or completing a research project or doing a painting. Creating — bringing something new into existence — is a process that takes time and revision. It can't be rushed. It also benefits from collaborating with others.

Most advertising is developed by creative teams. "A writer and art director usually sit together, and together they come up with the concept, the idea, the headline, the picture," an advertising agency executive explains in *Which Ad Pulled Best?* (1993). For ads for television spots, the team expands to include production people and on-air talent. While the "creation of a print ad is much more of a solitary and individual process," it is still done cooperatively.

A newspaper advertising executive with more than 25 years' experience described the usual process as one in which an advertising sales representative and the

advertiser work with someone in the newspaper's creative services department to produce an ad. They brainstorm ideas, create drafts called roughs and revise. If an ad agency is used, as is the case with advertisers who place many ads in many media, a creative team — a copywriter and art director — develops the copy, illustration and layout of a print ad.

Copywriter Erica Levy Klein calls the process "adver-doodling" (*Write Great Ads*, 1990).

The team approach to ad design is credited to Bill Bernbach, who in 1949 founded and was for 30 years head of Doyle Dane Bernbach, one of the top 10 advertising agencies in the United States. "Every ad was done essentially by two people," an agency executive said. Bernbach, who died in 1982, also spearheaded use of "softsell," credible advertising approaches.

Here's a chance to be part of a creative team, working with a partner to create a newspaper display ad.

■ Form an advertising creative team. Talk about the talents each of you brings to the team and your preferred method of work, that is, how you tackle and complete a long-term task or project.

■ Brainstorm and come up with your own "ad agency" name, a logo, a goal and a slogan.

- A logo is the name or symbol of the company set in specifically designed type.
- The slogan is a motto or saying associated with a group. It originated as a cry used by clans in battle as a signal to group together.

- Give your team an interesting name. A common way to get a new name for an enterprise is to blend parts of everyone's first or last names. You can also give your team a name that describes the kind of work you do or your outlook toward it. Make a business card:

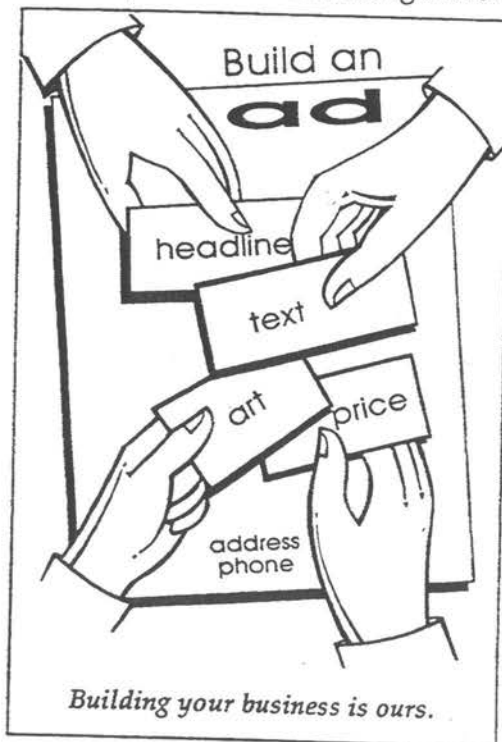
INTRODUCING the Design an Ad team of:

Our team is named:

Our logo looks like this:

Our goal is:

Our slogan is:





## Assignment Design an Ad

Your team should select or will be assigned a newspaper display advertisement to design through the publication stage. The ad may be for a product, service or idea. You will need to come up with a unified, cleanly presented ad that meets the specifications of size and information provided by the advertiser and your supervisor (teacher, newspaper coordinator). You will follow these steps: brainstorming/predesigning, drafting, revising and presenting.

Once you get the ad assignment, become familiar with the specifications and the advertiser. Phone or visit the advertiser with any questions you have. Look at other ads he or she has run or is currently running in the newspaper or in other media. If possible, try the product or service or talk to people who have and ask their impressions of it. This background will help your team be better able to **identify the benefits** of the product, service, idea and to promote them in the ad.

**FEATURE VS. BENEFIT** A *feature* is a quality or characteristic. A *benefit* is the resulting gain to the consumer. For instance, being a non-flammable aerosol is a feature a popular spray lubricant is promoting to set itself apart from its main competitor. It does that by focusing its advertising message on the benefit — the user will be safer from risk of explosions or fires while using the lubricant.

Our product/service/idea is	
Research/background notes:	
Features	Benefits
	<p>* Mark the benefit(s) you consider most important.</p>

■ Remember: Good ads — ones that sell — emphasize how the product, service or idea benefits the consumer.

## The Tie That Binds — Concept

Keeping in mind the benefits and your rating of them, you are ready to come up with a concept or main idea you want to convey about the product, service or idea being advertised.

A concept should relate to the most important benefit or benefits. It is what unites the **advertising elements**: headline, body copy and illustration. **Unity** is a lot like the theme of a party or event or the thesis statement in a writing assignment. The concept ties everything together to help make a stronger, more convincing statement. Jell-O ads, for instance, convey fun and family. Even spinoff uses like Jigglers and spinoff products like the alphabet-shaped cutters for Jigglers carry that concept through.

Getting the right advertising concept can mean success or failure for an ad, or for a product or company, for that matter. Finding the right concept results

from knowing the product and its benefits and from knowing the target market, who they are, what their wants and needs are and what motivates them.

For instance, a disposable diaper company first emphasized the benefit that adults would no longer have to be embarrassed by leak spots from baby. They found, though, that mothers — their main target — were more motivated by appeals that emphasized baby's good care and comfort instead of their own. With a switch in concept, the creative team then came up with a more effective advertising message.

The advertising concept will determine the sales strategy, the tone of the ad message and the overall design of the ad. It is the idea that does the selling. Remember, most people buy things for what they think those things can do for them, not just to accumulate things.

Here are a couple of activities to try as you work on developing a concept for the product, service or idea your ad is to focus on. You will probably come up with several variations and then choose from among them.

■ Your assigned ad may be for a specific product or service or it may be an image ad. In either case, think of the advertising product or service or the store that sells it as a person. Write a paragraph about what the person would be like, what it would like to do, the image it provides.

■ Talk to the advertiser and arrange to carry out a role-play with one member of your team as customer/consumer and one as observer/recorder. Have the advertiser talk to you, answering your "customer" questions, telling you what is most important or interesting about the product, service, business or idea. Does a theme become apparent? What is it? Service, convenience, friendly? (Example: We strive to be an active, family fun place where there are no hassles about kids being a little noisy or running around or something getting spilled.)

■ The concept for our ad is \_\_\_\_\_



## Working Double Time

The headline works two jobs in display advertising, so you should give it special emphasis in your ad design and writing process. Research has indicated that between 50 and 75 percent of a print advertisement's success depends on the headline.

Researcher George Gallup said that "the first job of advertising is to get seen and read." It won't matter how great the product, service, offer or idea is if you can't get anyone's attention to tell them about it.

So a good print headline is first an intruder, flagging down the reader. Often it gets a little help from the illustration, but in many ads it is the type style, size and wording that capture the reader's glance. And that glance is often highly distracted by the array of

other items in the newspaper including other headlines. In *Tested Advertising Methods*, author and advertising executive John Caples estimated that, on average, a single advertising headline in a mid-size daily newspaper competes with 350 news stories, 21 feature stories and 84 other ads.

The headline's second job is to arouse interest and get the reader (potential buyer) to read on to find out more, instead of turning attention to one of those other messages vying for attention, time and interest.

A lot is known about how a headline can do its two jobs well. Here are some activities to help you develop a good, hard-working headline for your ad.

■ **THE COMPETITION IS FIERCE.** Look through the newspaper and find a display advertisement. Then count its competitors for attention just on that page — news stories and headlines, photos, illustrations, other advertisements. Now, consider the other distractions going on while you are reading. Is it easy to scan right by the ad and not see it? Compare this to the situation with a TV commercial. Does a TV ad have to vie for attention? How does a TV ad capture attention? What can it use that a print ad can't? What devices do print ad headlines use to be grabbers — attention-getters?

■ **HEADLINE HUNT.** Advertising copywriting and research books often contain lists of words that have been found to be effective in getting reader attention. These are high on most of the lists:

Announcing

New

Free

Wanted

At last

How to

This, These

Sale

Save

Limited Time, Limited Offer

You

Quick, Easy

What these power words have in common is that they emphasize news and benefits.

Read all of the advertising headlines in one issue or section of the newspaper. Start a list of words you see and keep a tally. Which words appear most often? How many of the headline power words are on the list?



**NOTEWORTHY:** Researchers also have found that readers view the company's logo or trademark as part of the headline message. They read the headline and glance to the bottom, or signature position, to see who the message is coming from. Consideration for the wording of the headline and the placement of the logo, then, should be given together.

■ **HTK.** HTK is an editing instruction, "Headline To Come." It was used when the story was sent to the composing department before the size and placement for the headline had been decided. In this case, it will be while we ponder the advice from research on headline effectiveness.

A good deal of what we know about what kinds of headlines communicate best comes from direct response advertising which is tested and coded to know exactly what its results were in terms of orders, inquiries and actual purchases. A direct response ad is like the mail order ones that come to your home.

So, what does work best? The headline that appeals to the reader's self interest, that emphasizes the benefit of the product, service or idea. Appealing to the "what's in it for me" attitude gets highest reader response.

The advertising headlines that do next best in attracting readers give news.

Gallup says, "People read ads because they want to know what's for sale," yet he has found in his research that "an awful lot of advertisers seem to be afraid to tell people about their products."

Emphasizing newsy things — a price, new ingredient, new use, new location — is very effective.

In fact, advertising research has found that headlines that emphasize benefits or news are four times more effective than indirect headlines in terms of responses (*Which Ad Pulled Best?*, 1993).

The third best kind of headline is one that arouses curiosity but without being gimmicky or so cutesy or obscure that it just puzzles or annoys the reader. A very simple way to arouse curiosity is to ask a question: "Are you making your computer work as hard as it can?" It will give readers who have computers a reason to pause and wonder whether they are. Then the ad, of course, must tell them what to do if they aren't.

Headlines that begin with "Here are" and "How to" are also in this category and are big attention-getters.

When forming the question, spend time considering whether it is truly a question anyone cares about. It should appeal to those basic human motivations you studied about earlier. Are you writing headlines that will sell? Success is one of those things that matter to people.

The big sloughs among headline workers are those that use empty words or ones that simply befuddle the reader — TOP IT OFF or HEAD HUNTERS. The likely reader response: "Head hunters? Wh—what's that? Oh, there are the movie listings. What's playing?"

Okay, now, which of these headlines should you put on this section? 1) Which headline works best? 2) New research shows you can make your headlines 4 times more effective. 3) Here's how to put research power into your headlines. 4) Head Hunters. Discuss your choice with others. But if you picked 4, reread HTK, now!

■ **PRACTICE IT YOURSELF.** Choose a newspaper ad and carefully study its headline message and the other copy that accompanies it. Revise the headline so it emphasizes a benefit. Revise it so it emphasizes news. Revise it so it is a question. Carry out a reader response test of the original headline on the ad and your three revisions. Write all four ads on a piece of paper. Label them A, B, C and D. Show the ads to at least five people and ask them which headline they find more interesting and why. Record the responses and discuss them with others.

■ **ANNOUNCING OUR LATEST DESIGN AN AD HEADLINE.** After re-examining our benefits profile and our concept, we propose these as headlines for our ad:

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## We've Caught 'Em. Now What?

Tell them, and tell them fast. Presenters are often told that they have 30 seconds or less to give information before people judge whether they want that information or not and whether they want it from this communicator. In a display ad, your 30-second message is presented in the body copy. You want to get right at your main selling points and the other information that you want a potential buyer to know. This should be a simple, direct message just like any other good communication.

You must know your audience, your purpose and have substantial information to make your point. Again, you want to elaborate on and mention additional benefits that you identified earlier.

Advertising writing is a special kind of persuasive or argumentative writing. It should, however, have the characteristics of all good writing — clear, concise, correct, complete, and, at its best, colorful or creative — that is, fun to read, with an identifiable style that lets a reader know that the message is from a real

person.

The body copy should have a beginning, middle and ending, again just like any other good writing. The ending in advertising copy is the kicker — the part that kicks the reader out the door and on the way to the store to buy what you're selling. That's because at the end you present a call to action: "Call 555-1118 today to order. Hurry, time is limited."

And how limited is it? To 30 seconds or less.

There is one other conflicting consideration to be aware of. Once interested by your message, a reader who has an immediate need or desire for what you are offering is inclined to want as much information as possible to help in decision-making. Longer copy will, then, be read and even expected. One of the selling points of print advertising long has been that, unlike TV, it has longer than 30 seconds. Infomercials, those half hour or longer ads on television, are testimony that there is also an acceptance of long copy.

- From newspapers and magazines, collect at least five examples of display ads. Get a stopwatch and read aloud the body copy in each ad using your regular speaking pace. How long was each message? What was the average?
- Study the writing in the ads you collected above. Can you find a beginning, middle and ending? Label the parts B, M and E. Does the copy have a kicker, or call to action? What is it?
- Brainstorm about ideas for your ad's body copy. Look at the benefits list you generated earlier. Use webbing or another favorite prewriting activity. Then draft the body copy for your ad in the space below. Read it aloud and time it. Complete it through the revision and presentation stage. You may want to come up with two or three versions of the body copy and seek reader response for each.

## More Than Just A Pretty Picture

What did you look at first on this page? The AdMAN cartoon, right? A cartoon is one type of illustration and illustrations in an advertisement often help with the job of gaining a reader's attention. Illustrations can be photographs, bold graphic designs, realistic drawings or cartoons. They should be well drawn with bold lines to stand up to the production process. The illustrations also should serve a purpose toward carrying your message forward. Never use an illustration just for the sake of having one.

AdMAN, for instance, reinforces the elements of a display ad. The character also promotes an image. The intended one was that advertising messages can be fun and must be built on a solid information, or data, base. If you read the caption, the copy near the illustration that explains it, you also find out more about AdMAN. The information in the caption reinforces some of the basic principles of advertising. Captions have very high readership, advertising testing has found, so that

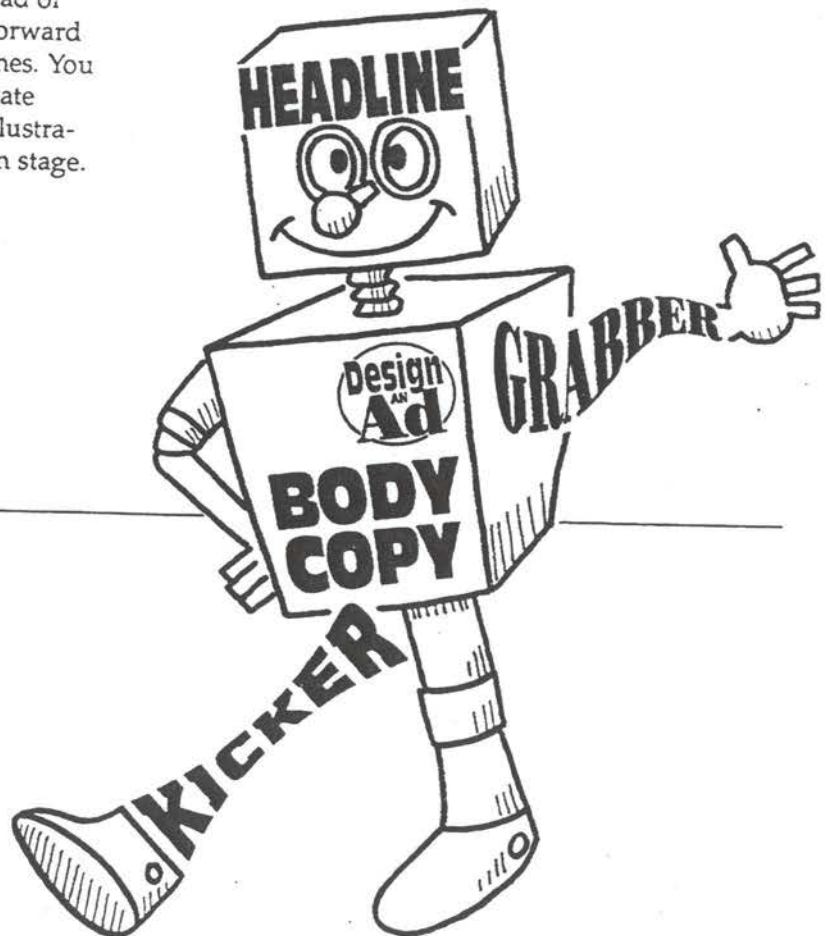
makes them a good place to put important points.

A good illustration has an identifiable style, just as good writing does. Finding a good artist and an illustration idea that matches the concept of the advertising message is important.

Illustrations are available from clip art services. The problem with using clip art is that anyone else buying the service can use it too. So, advertisers run the risk of having the artwork being identified with several products or businesses. This was the problem in four ads in a weekly shopper one fall. All four chose a line drawing of a cute squirrel with cheeks bulging with nuts. This certainly didn't help set those businesses apart, which is what advertising seeks to do.

Well designed ads pull all of the elements together in a strong, unique message. Those done really well bear the signature, or style, of the creative teams who designed them. Those done effectively sell.

■ Develop the illustration idea that you plan to use with the ad your team is designing. Decide ahead of time what the illustration's role is in carrying forward the total advertising message. Do several sketches. You may want to test a couple of versions. Incorporate these in the testing of your ads and refine the illustrations as your ad progresses toward presentation stage.



Greetings, ad teams. I'm AdMAN here with some reminders about good advertising copy. My name helps: Get readers' **A**ttention, create a **D**esire to read on, provide **M**otivating information, suggest an immediate and appropriate **A**ction or response by capitalizing on real and psychological **N**eeds. And you thought I was just a cute cartoon. Not me. I am a concept and I'm loaded with information. Watch for my upcoming **AD**ventures.



## Testing, Testing, 1 - 2 - 3, Testing

As with any other communication, it is important to make sure that the ad you designed is saying and doing what you, its sender, intended it to say and do. Just as you ask for reader response to a short story or essay you write, you can ask for feedback about your advertising message.

Once your team has developed the ad concept and several variations of headlines, body copy and illustrations, it is a good idea to test them by producing roughs, or proportionate sketches or drafts of the ad designs.

Show the roughs to several other people, if possible, to members of the target market you hope to sway with the message. Advertising research firms do this on a much more elaborate scale, using scientific methodology and drawing random sampling. This provides for a higher confidence in the significance of any differences that are determined. Although your testing will be far from scientific, it can help you decide among the design choices you have created and it can help you revise and refine your work, so that your finished ad is good, thoughtful, creative work.

- Create roughs of several versions of your ad, incorporating differences in elements that you want to test. For instance, perhaps your team has two illustrations that you want to decide between. Use one illustration on one design rough and the other on the others. Number or label your roughs A, B, C, etc. These need to be complete enough to give those looking at them a good idea of what the ads will be like. Vary only one element in each ad.
- Make copies of the roughs.
- Seek individuals whose opinion you value or individuals who represent the target market (example: women ages 25-54). One on one, show them the ad roughs one at a time. For each design, ask these and other questions that you would like to get feedback on:
  - What did you look at first? Then where did you look?
  - What, if anything, aroused your interest?
  - Do you find the ad's idea to be convincing?
  - Would this ad prompt you to buy the product (visit the store, think about the idea)?
  - Does anything seem out of place or bother you about the ad or its message? What?
  - What did you like best about the ad?
- After the person has looked at each ad design individually, lay out the ads side by side and ask for comments about what is liked or appealing in each. (The person may, for instance, like the headline on Design A but the illustration on Design D.) Listen carefully to the comments and take notes.
- After you have gotten response, or feedback, from several people, discuss their comments and look over the notes you took. Remember, you do not have to incorporate all of the changes suggested, or any of them, for that matter. What you are trying to determine is the appeal and whether the concept and all of the ad elements are working together as you had designed them to. Testing may make you aware of something important that you had overlooked. Take a little time to think about the responses your ad designs got.
- Select one of the choices or a combination of several and begin the next revision.

## Are We There Yet?

Your ad design is almost complete. You're ready to make a working version, or mockup, of your finished design. You will want to make this the actual size of the ad ordered so that your illustration placement, amount of space, etc. will be realistic and to proper specifications. Put the headline, body copy, illustration and logo in their exact places. They need to be close to finished quality but without all the fine-line detail on the illustration and lettering. Show your work to your supervisor (teacher, newspaper coordinator) for his or her sign-off. Note and carry out any changes requested and correct any errors noted.

Obtain from your supervisor gridded layout paper, fine-tip black markers or black ink, ruler and other finishing supplies needed to prepare the finished presentation version of your ad. Or if you are using computer-assisted design, prepare a finalized, laser quality printout. Your ad must be actual size and be camera-ready, that is ready to go into the newspaper as is. In this version, be sure alignment and spacing are correct, copy size is even, illustration is evenly spaced, etc. Do a careful, accurate job. Remember, an advertiser will be charged several hundred or several thousand dollars for this work if it is selected.

Notes from the evaluation of the mockup of the ad:



## If Anything Can Go Wrong . . .

Take out some final insurance against the journalist's version of Murphy's Law — "If anything goes wrong, it will be in something that's set in 72-point type so everyone will see it immediately on publication." The insurance policy is **The Rule of One Last Check**.

Even though you think you can't possibly stand to look at your work one more time, do it. If possible, wait a day or two or a few hours at least before you give it a last look. If deadline is coming on you fast,

however, move to a different setting from where you usually work, take a deep breath and try to imagine that you are looking at the ad for the very first time. This, too, sometimes takes creative effort and teamwork!

Then go through the checklist on the next page and answer honestly and objectively, not like someone who has spent hours and hours and days and days on this project.

Attach the camera-ready ad to this page along with the specifications sheet and the checklist. Be especially careful with your camera-ready version because any smudge or flaw will show up in final production.

## Check, Please!

Look at your camera-ready ad design and answer these:

- ☐ "Are you saying something people care about and are you saying it in an engaging way?"  
— John Ferrell, Hill, Holliday, Connors, Cosmopolos
- ☐ Are all words spelled correctly?
- ☐ Did you include the store name, hours, address, logo and slogan? Are they correct?
- ☐ Does your ad have a **grabber** to get readers' attention?
- ☐ Does the headline emphasize a **benefit** or something newsy?
- ☐ Does the body copy support the headline and provide complete information?
- ☐ Are the claims believable — strong but not exaggerating?
- ☐ Do you give the reader a **kicker** — a reason to act now and information about how to do that?
- ☐ If there's a deadline, is it correct? And if it says, Thursday, March 15, is March 15 really a Thursday and if not, which is right, March 15 or Thursday?
- ☐ Does the ad look unified — as if all the parts go together?
- ☐ Is the illustration neat, clear and as large as appropriate without making the ad seem imbalanced?
- ☐ Are all lines and letters crisp and clear? (Photocopy the ad. If the photocopy shows broken lines, ragged letters, etc. the ad, when printed in the newspaper, will too.)
- ☐ Does the ad carry out the concept you developed and does the concept match the image of the product, the company or the cause?
- ☐ Does the ad look too cluttered or too empty?
- ☐ Do the elements of the ad guide the reader's eye from one part to the next?
- ☐ Did readers you tested it on like the ad and find that it spoke to them and their needs?
- ☐ Did they find it told them everything they wanted or needed to know?
- ☐ Is some creativity evident?
- ☐ Does the ad reflect effort worthy of the \$\_\_\_\_\_ the advertiser is paying for it?
- ☐ Is it truly representative of your very best effort?

**DID YOUR AD PASS THE TEST?** Congratulations! The design process is now complete. This ending, though, is just the beginning. Your ad must face two more critical tests: That of the advertiser and that of the consumer. A lot of work. Yes, billions of dollars of work each year.





## A sampling of newspaper-related activities

- Select a category in the classified ads, count the ads by subcategories and create a graph to illustrate your findings. For instance, under pets, tally the kinds of dogs for sale by breed and graph that information. You can do the same with foreign and domestic automobiles, jobs that require a science background, houses for sale for less than or more than \$50,000, etc.
- Cut apart individual classified ads from a variety of categories. Put them all in an envelope and then reclassify them, creating your own categories.
- Look through the classified ads for abbreviations such as EOE, BO, PS, PB, etc. Make a list of as many as you can find. Find out what they stand for. Create a matching game or guessing game and challenge a friend.
- Suppose your family moves into a new place and you are given permission and a \$500 budget to furnish one room. Select a room and make a shopping list. See how many of the items you can find in the classified ads. Compare those prices to the prices for similar new items featured in the display ads.
- Collect pairs of logos from display ads. Mount them on small squares of cardboard all the same size, creating a match game to play with a younger child.
- Set up two teams to research, prepare for and carry out a debate about whether celebrities should endorse products and services. As part of the research, collect newspaper items that mention and quote the celebrity. Do the messages in the ads seem to match the ones in the story in tone, point of view, philosophy? Why do advertisers feature celebrities in their ads? Why do celebrities agree to be in ads? Must the celebrity really use the product or service?
- Work in groups to create a product or service and then create a TV ad for it, which you present in class and have videotaped. Then create a print ad for the same product or service. After all groups have presented their ads, discuss the content and the differences between visual and verbal messages.
- Collect newspaper ads that model each of these design principles: *dominance, unity, movement* and *balance*. Ask an art teacher or graphic artist to talk about the effectiveness of the ads in terms of design. Try a rough sketch of your own ad or cut out components from ads in the newspaper and rearrange them in a variety of ways to see how it affects the way the ad message is conveyed.
- Invite a newspaper advertising specialist or other advertising professional to your class. Interview the person about his or her job. Then write a feature story for the class or school newspaper about the person.
- (Advanced or requires teacher preparation) Do a media/message matchup. Collect an assortment of advertising messages from various sources —newspaper, TV, radio, posters, billboards, magazines — and transcribe the scripts. Write the scripts on large sheets of paper and mount them on the classroom wall. Create icons for each medium represented (TV, radio, newspaper, etc.). Make several copies of each icon and color code them to represent five different groups. Assign students to groups, give them a color-matched set of icons and challenge them to read the messages and agree as a group which message came from which medium. Then allow the groups to share their thoughts, attaching their icon to individual messages posted. Lead a discussion focusing especially on any messages for which there was disagreement on where groups thought it came from. Discuss how visuals enhance or change an advertising message.
- More ideas on pages 14 and 18.

## My own activity ideas



## Works consulted, additional resources

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### Additional resources

- Canadian Daily Newspaper Association, 890 Yonge Street, Suite 1100, Toronto, Ontario M4W 3P4, 416-923-3567.
- The Power of Newsprint* (formerly *Creative Newspaper*), Lynne Meena & Company. Contains 85 innovative and creative newspaper ads. Tabloid or videotape. 800-818-1181.
- Newspaper Association of America Foundation, 11600 Sunrise Valley Drive, Reston, Virginia 22091-1412. 703-648-1000.
- Newspaper in Education Information Service*, P.O. Box 300, Pittsford, New York 14534. 716-248-5385.

In addition, consult your phone book or local directory of associations or the *National Directory of Associations* for contact people in your area for these professional organizations:

The Advertising Council

American Advertising Federation

American Association of Advertising Agencies

American Marketing Association

Cable Television Advertising Bureau

Direct Mail Association

Magazine Publishers Association

Radio Advertising Bureau

Television Advertising Bureau

Or your state's newspaper press association



and your local newspaper.

Two advertising industry publications are also good: *Advertising Age* and *Adweek*.



### ADquest

Look at ads using a media literacy inquiry approach:

- Who created this ad?
  - What product, service or idea is it selling or promoting?
  - What main benefit is it emphasizing?
  - How does it call attention to that benefit?
  - What image or feeling is it evoking?
  - Do you like the ad? Why or why not?
  - Who is the ad mainly intended for?
  - How does it appeal specifically to that targeted market?
  - What did the ad creator assume about that market?
  - Why is this ad running now?
  - What "bonus" is offered to the consumer for acting now?
  - Is anything left out about the product, service or idea?
- Why?
- What are some questions a consumer might still have about it?
  - How would you get those answers?
  - Is there anything annoying or bothersome about the ad?
- Is the ad creator aware of that, do you think?





*A Closer Look at Newspaper Advertising*  
by Norma Wilson, NIE Information Service editor

A Newspaper in Education teacher's guide  
published and distributed by RCAnderson Associates, Inc.,  
Pittsford, New York 14534 USA

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