

In one way or another, all of us are influenced the media that surrounds us. Whether we realize it or not we are surrounded by it constantly on TV, the internet, even on clothes we wear. In this essay, you will analyze an advertisement, and you will get an introduction to documenting sources in APA style.

Today we are faced with so much exposure to media and information, that it's important we learn to discriminate between those things that have grounds and baseless claims. While a big part of that relies on our doing research and study, another level of it is grounded on understanding how arguments are made and how the media uses its tools.

As with the analysis of literature, this essay requires you to read between the lines. Instead of the traditional elements of literature like plot, character, and setting, this essay requires you to look at common elements of media storytelling. Some of these things like the adage "sex sells," may be very familiar, others like the idea of emotional transfer may be new, but no doubt you will recognize them as things you've seen in your encounters with not just advertising, but also with media in general.

For this essay, you will write a formal essay in which you analyze and an (or ads) you choose and explain the advertising techniques used, as well as the myths, values, ideas, or cultural stereotypes it is/they are selling and explain the comment that makes on society, consumers, or the various groups it's targeting or portraying.

In addition, you will be required to use quotes from two of the sources we read about advertising and analysis in your essay to not only support your points, but also give you experience integrating sources in an APA style paper.

Beginning Considerations

The following outlines some of the introductory ideas you should keep in mind.

- **Style:** A formal essay should be written in your voice and from your perspective, but will use a higher level of diction and language. However, it should not be forced.
- **Formal essays** are written in the objective tone and do not use personal pronouns.
 - Instead, you should use the specific noun or group you're referring to.
 - I.e.: audiences, readers, advertisers, consumers, teens, adults, men, women, children, etc.
- **Purpose:** The purpose of this essay is to look carefully at an advertisement and explain what this ad reveals about contemporary culture: values, goals, acceptable roles in society, etc. What is it saying between the lines?
- Do not try to convince or preach to your readers. Simply explain your analysis and what it says of society or the specific group it's pointed at, etc.

- Audience: The audience for this essay is a college-educated audience. They are familiar with the terms of analysis and advertising, so you do not need to explain those general ideas.
- Limitations: You may choose a print or video ad. You can choose multiple ads by the same company for the same product, or you may choose multiple ads on a similar theme. (E.g.: how children are portrayed in advertising.)
- You must use quotes from at least two of the readings we do over the course of this essay, and you must document them correctly. You may **not** use the student samples as your sources. Visit the [Media Analysis page](#) on kelli•ninja for other sources you can use as well.
- We will do formal documentation for this essay. That means you need in-text citations where required, and must have a References page.
 - For this essay, we will use APA format. We will also look at a sample essays in that format.

Finally, remember we begin with the prewriting assignments, so take it one-step at a time. We will read articles, essays, and samples and discuss the details more as we move through the essay.

Through this assignment, we will do a lot of reading, but you can access all of the New Mexico Media Literacy Project readings in one packet [here](#). Think of it as a basic textbook for this.

Prewriting Assignments

Prewritings should be turned in where directed. See your schedule for more details.

E3: Prewriting 1

1. Describe the ad and make a list of things that stand out about it. This should be a paragraph or two.
2. Then list things that stand out that you might analyze. Include the things you can find based on the "[Language of Persuasion](#)" reading as well as other things that occur to you.

Basically, this is a version of the sample shown in the [Text & Subtext](#) reading.

E3: Prewriting 2

1. Now that you've described your text and noted some things that stand out, go back and look at your subtext list again. What do those things imply?
2. Make a list of the ones that seem most significant to you and for each one write out the implication, myths, values, ideas, or cultural stereotypes that are implicit. (You should have at least three.) This is where you're choosing the subtexts you want to focus on

and doing some writing about them, their meaning or message and place in our culture, the group, etc.

3. Think about what your text is saying between the lines. What comment does that make on society, consumers, or the various groups it's targeting or portraying. Write that down in one clear statement. That's a *draft* of your thesis.
4. Write out the works cited citation for your ad(s). Make sure to read and follow the instructions in your *Writer's Reference* APA chapter.

E3: Prewriting 3

For this prewriting, you'll use a [form](#) that I provide to outline a basic draft. Remember, the more you can develop it at this stage, the more you'll have for your final essay.

Make sure you have citations for each of the ads you analyze and the two sources from your readings that you're using in your paper.

Final Essay

Begin work on putting this essay together by reviewing the grade sheet at the end of this handout. I grade looking for those things, so you need to make sure you keep those things in mind as you write. Once you've done that, look over your prewritings, and use those as a starting point to organize. Below are some important tips to remember. Since this is a formal paper, it should follow a fairly strict structure.

Remember, this is your goal:

Write a formal essay in which you analyze an advertisement and explain the advertising techniques used, as well as the myths, values, ideas, or cultural stereotypes it is selling and explain the comment that makes on society, consumers, or the various groups it's targeting or portraying.

General Requirements

The essay should:

- Be correctly formatted: typed in Times New Roman 12 point font, double spaced, correct heading and running header
- Be at least 3 pages long, exclusive of your References page
- Utilize and correctly cite at least 2 of the readings for the essay as well as the advertisement(s) you are analyzing. Remember, you may not use the student samples for your sources.

Tips

- [illegible]

Turning Your Essay In

See your schedule for specific instructions.

Media Analysis Grading Criteria

Your essay will be evaluated based on the following standards. Please review them and take them into consideration when finalizing your essay.

Format/Professionalism

- Is the essay correctly formatted?
- Does it meet length requirements?
- Is it turned in on time?
- Is there a references page?

Thesis

- Does it explain what this ad reveals about contemporary culture: values, goals, acceptable roles in society, etc?
- Is the thesis clearly crafted and followed up throughout the work?
- Does it name the ad and the company/sponsor?

Content

- Does the essay include a description of the ad?
- Does the essay use the critical and analytical techniques studied? (Myth, advertising techniques, persuasion techniques, etc.)
- Does the final essay use at least two appropriate sources from the webpage?
- Are sources smoothly integrated?
- Is research cited with correct parenthetical citations as needed?

Development

- Does the description provide enough detail to help the reader see the ad and understand the writer's points?
- Does the writer support the thesis with logical, clearly discussed points, using specific details from the ad as support?
- Does the writing explain how the examples used illustrate or build the myth, cultural value, or technique being discussed?

Style

- Does the style—voice, tone, sentence style, and word choice—reflect the type of writing expected in this essay? (No I/me/my; formal tone and word choice.)

Clarity

- Does the writing reflect grammatical and mechanical correctness expected at this level?
- Are all sources correctly cited on the References page?
- Are all sources used cited, and all sources cited used?