

## **Genre in Action: Reading Closely (Genres Outside School) (LE III)**

Writing strategies we will be working on for this assignment:

Rhetorical analysis: analyzing audience expectations; making conscious choices in writing that takes those expectations into consideration; critical thinking, reading and writing; analyzing written texts; using evidence from texts to develop/support analysis.

Processes: Working through a process to develop your ideas; developing flexible strategies through writing; reflecting on writing processes, examining writing as in a constant state of revision. Use of Conventions: Learning citation practices, editing.

Possible readings:

John Berger, "Ways of Seeing"

Deborah Tannen, "There Is No Unmarked Woman"

June Jordan, "Don't Nobody Mean More To Me..."

Darcy Frey, "The Last Shot"

Langston Hughes, "Theme for English B"

In this assignment, we will be analyzing magazine advertisements to discover how multiple conventions might be used, both visually and in the text, to convey messages, both obvious and subtle, to different audiences in different ways.

Find ads for the same product in different magazines - what are the conventions used for the ads? Consider things like: What colors are used? What kind of subjects? How are the subjects placed in the space of the ad? What is the central focus of the ad? Is the central focus an obvious choice? Why or why not? Why might the advertiser have chosen to use that as his/her central focus? What are the similarities/differences between the conventions used for these two different ads? Why are they similar/different? What does the audience have to do with the conventions the advertiser chose to use? Does this product seem an appropriate choice for the audiences targeted by both magazines? Why or why not? If the product does not seem a natural choice for the magazine's audience, what does the advertiser do to make the ad more appealing for that audience? Do all the messages sent within the ad seem like they were intended? Does it seem as if the messages will be received consciously/unconsciously by the intended audience?

You will also be choosing a reading to use in your analysis. We are constantly sending and receiving messages, but are not always conscious of what those messages are and how they might impact our lives. Between the magazine ads and the reading you choose, you will analyze the ways in which these messages are expressed, and how different genres, or different conventions within the same genre might affect audiences in different ways. You will need to find at least one piece of evidence from the reading to support your ideas within your LE (using MLA format). Be sure that your quotation adds meaning to your analysis, and is not just "plopped down" like a turn on the table in the midst of your essay.

Writing Exploration Five:

Choose one magazine advertisement that catches your eye. Analyze every convention used within that ad, from the color of the text, to the central subject of the ad, to the intended audience of the magazine. What messages are being sent, and why? Use evidence from articles used within the magazine, the magazine's title, etc... to support your theory on the intended audience of the magazine. Discuss the messages sent by the advertiser, the conventions used to send those messages, and how those messages and conventions were, or were not, adapted to fit the specific audience of that magazine.

#### Writing Exploration Six:

Choose one of the readings you'd like to include in your LE. What types of conventions are used within this reading to express messages to different audiences? Is there more than one genre included within this essay? Why? Are there multiple messages being sent, both to the characters within the text, as well as outside readers? What conventions are used to send these messages? In what ways are these conventions, or genres, adapted to fit these specific audiences? Are these adaptations in conventions made and received consciously or unconsciously? Though you do not have to cite evidence in this essay, this would be the time to begin exploring how your reading supports the analysis you are making of your advertisements.

#### Possible Activities:

Make color overheads, or tape advertisements to poster boards and analyze the ads together as a group, focusing on color, subject placement, text, and messages being sent and received, both conscious and unconscious. This is a great activity to do at the very beginning before students do the first WE.

Put the students in groups of 2-3 and give each group a magazine. Have each group choose one advertisement, or you could choose advertisements ahead of time. Let the students analyze the messages within the ad and recreate those messages in a new genre of their own choosing, whether through song, poetry, rap, menu, DVD cover, billboard, etc.... Or you might have the students recreate the ad with a different audience in mind. Have the groups present their finished products to the rest of the class, then give a brief analysis of what conventions they chose to use and why.