

Analyzing Production Techniques in Advertising

camera angle: angle at which the camera is positioned during a shot; high-angle shots make a product look small, while low-angle shots make a product appear larger

color: used to convey meanings, associations, or feelings; for example, the color white is often associated with purity, while red is associated with warmth and energy

copy: printed text in advertisements; copy can include catchy phrases, factual information, or persuasive language intended to have an emotional impact

editing: selection and arrangement of camera shots for a TV ad; each shot is selected and arranged to create a persuasive effect

framing: position of a product and objects within the “frame” of a screen or an image; arrangement of objects can convey ideas and relationships

layout: design and arrangement of the text and visual elements in a print ad; advertisers consider the size of visuals; amount of copy; and placement of the product, logo, and slogan

lighting: deliberate use of light and shadow to create mood or suggest certain feelings; for example, ads for greeting cards often use soft lighting and no shadows to match the warmth and happiness that cards bring to recipients

slogan: memorable phrase used in a series of ads; viewers remember the slogan and associate it with the product.

special effects: computer-generated animation, manipulated video images, and fast and slow motion used in TV ads; special effects are often used to capture viewers’ attention or make products look more exciting

jingle: short, catchy tune used in TV and radio ads; usually mention the product name or its benefits; effective jingles remain in people’s memories long after the ad is over, and some become part of popular culture.

music: popular songs or original compositions created specifically for an ad or a product; advertisers select music that will enhance the image of the product or appeal to the target audience; for example, classical music can convey a sophisticated image

sound effects: sounds added to ads during the editing process, such as the sound of crunching potato chips or the bubbling sound of soda being poured; effect is to make viewers thirsty or hungry for the product

voice-over: unseen commentator or narrator of a TV ad or radio spot; sometimes, actors with memorable voices deliver the voice-overs for ads

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Advertisers rely on many visual and sound elements to give each ad a unique style and attract viewers' attention—with the goal of persuading consumers. With only 30 seconds or one page to work with, advertisers must carefully choose each element and craft the elements to create a powerful message. Understanding production techniques used in advertising will help you separate style from substance and determine how you are being persuaded.

HERE'S HOW

Strategy 1: Note the visuals. “A picture is worth a thousand words”—it may be a cliché, but it's true. Advertisers recognize the power of visual elements. They use techniques such as framing, color, editing, special effects, and copy to ensure their message reaches you in the most efficient and effective manner. Ask yourself:

- What is featured prominently? What immediately draws my eye? Recognize that sponsors show you the product the way they want you to see it—not necessarily the way it actually is. Advertisers use **lighting** and **camera angles** to enhance the product.
- Where are the product and other objects positioned on the screen or page? What elements are in the foreground? What elements are in the background? The **framing** of objects in ads can convey important messages. Shots are composed in such a way as to draw your eye to important areas—usually the product—or to make elements seem more imposing or impressive than they actually are in real life.
- Does the advertiser use **special effects** to grab viewers' attention or make the product look exciting? Many of today's TV commercials feature cutting-edge computer-generated animation, manipulated video images, and fast or slow motion.
- How is **color** used? Advertisers choose colors to convey the emotions they want you to equate with the product—for example, excitement, warmth, security, or purity.
- What does the **slogan** say? Slogans have proved so powerful that many have become part of our popular culture. Consider what the slogan says about the product and how the sponsors want you to think about the product.

Strategy 2: Listen closely to the sounds. What you hear is just as important as what you see. Close your eyes during a commercial. If it is an effective commercial, the sound effects and music alone will convey the message and the image the advertiser is trying to relay. Ask yourself:

- What mood does the **music** create? How does it affect me? Advertisers select music that will enhance the image of the product and appeal to viewers—jazz music sends a much different message than the latest pop hit, for example.
- What **sound effects** are used? Sound effects—from sizzling steaks to roaring sirens—in commercials make products more appealing, realistic, and exciting.

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Directions: Print ads must rely solely on visuals to communicate a message. Advertisers must consider framing, lighting, colors, slogans, and copy when creating a print ad. Use the information below to create a rough sketch for a newly released environmentally conscious car. Use text and arrows to describe what the final ad should look like.

- **Product:** Environmentally conscious coupe
- **Price:** \$25,000
- **Target audience:** College students and recent graduates who are environmentally conscious
- **Environmentally friendly features:** Battery recharges while driving, least polluting and most fuel-efficient vehicle on the road, uses 100 percent electricity at low speeds, produces 90 percent fewer smog-forming emissions, and gets 60 miles per gallon
- **Luxury features:** Premium surround-sound stereo; satellite radio; hands-free cell phone system; dual climate control; power locks and windows; alarm system; keyless entry; computerized navigation system; and side, front, and head airbags
- **Image:** Sporty, sleek, and environmentally sound; for the individual who cares about the earth and about style



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Directions: Television commercials rely on both visual and sound elements. Choose two competing products and record a commercial for each of them. Complete the chart to compare the visual and sound elements, as well as the message and image of the product.

	Product 1	Product 2
Summary: What happens in the commercial? What is the ad's message?		
Music: What music is used? What mood or feeling does it create?		
Sound Effects: What sound effects are included? How do they enhance the product?		
Visuals: What colors are used? What draws your eye? What lighting and camera angles are used?		
Target Audience: Who is the target audience? Does the ad reach this audience?		
Comparison: How does this commercial compare to its competitors?		