

Sample Essay

To help you better understand that prepare for this section of your examination, I want to provide you with a sample essay, based on a previous assignment question. I would like you to look at this essay and see how it differs from what we have discussed previously with regards to Fiction in Study Unit 02. I will go into a discussion of how Persuasive prose differs from Fiction, in terms of a structured analysis, during my Friday Tutorial session. In the meantime, feel free to comment on the sample essay and let me know what differences you can figure out.

Essay Question

1. Advertisements

Read Chapter 4, 5 and 7 of the prescribed book before you attempt this assignment. In addition, you are advised to do all the activities in these chapters.

Analyse the “Dulcia Vitality” advertisement on page 74 of the prescribed textbook Critical Reading and Writing by Andrew Goatly.

Write an essay of no more than 2 pages (approximately 1000 words) in which you critically analyse the advertisement provided. Your analysis should focus on both the visual and written features of the text. Make sure that you provide evidence from the advertisement to support your answer.

Consider the following questions in your analysis:

- What kind of target reader does the advertiser have in mind? How do you know?
- What does the advert set out to achieve and how does it do that?
- How do the visual and the written features of the text reinforce the meaning?

- What is the role of linguistic strategies in this advertisement; and how do these strategies influence the message of the text?
- How does this advertisement position the reader and why? What presuppositions are made about the product?
- To what aspects of human psychology does this advertisement appeal?

Response to question

(Please note that I am intentionally excluding referencing, as I am using this as an example that you could use to prepare for your examinations, where you will not be expected to provide references or a bibliography.)

Dulcia Vitality is a hair perm product from L'Oréal aimed at women with straight hair who would like to have curly hair. The advertisement image or photograph shows a woman touching her newly Dulcia Vitality permed hair. The touching of her hair reinforces the copy writing in the advertisement: that upon using this product hair will have a 'superb feel and a new vitality'. Further in the copy this is reinforced through the conditioning agent Ionene G. The photograph also reflects the truth of the claim that Dulcia Vitality gives 'lasting body, bounce and curl, but also shines with a soft, natural silkiness that feels as good as it looks'. A woman's hair is said to be her crowning glory and every woman wants her hair to be soft and shiny. Soft and shiny hair is attractive to men who tend to look at how a woman looks after herself.

This advert seeks to convince women that this product will help them have lasting, well-conditioned curly hair if they use Dulcia Vitality to perm their hair. This product is not an at-home use product but rather a salon treatment. This salon treatment is a

professional product, used by hairdressers. The advertisement tells the woman to ask her hairdresser for this product and it reinforces that her hairdresser will add the 'finishing touch' to her hairstyle. This emphasizes the product quality and professional skill required to apply it; making Dulcia Vitality sought after and a product found in salons of high-calibre. This is achieved through the language used that speaks to the woman as though she has already used it with action verbs or verb phrases such as: 'has vitality', 'lasting body, bounce and curl', 'shines with a soft, natural silkiness' and 'feels as good as it looks'. This advert copy creates other mental processes that allows the women to imagine the impact of each hair strand being conditioned and strengthened as this product gives each strand 'a thorough beauty treatment'. The material process of naming the gender of the hairdresser as male "...ask your hairdresser...only he can add..." adds to the illusion of this being a preferentially selected salon hair product; in the late 1980's it was very fashionable to go to a male hairdresser to have the best haircut and treatment.

The material processes are represented by two actors the women who want to have curly hair and their hairdresser. The women get to experience silky soft permed hair that gives them a sense of the good life (Dolce Vita). Dulcia Vitality plays and echoes the message of the encompassing term Dolce Vita; Dulcia meaning sweet cakes. The mental processes are noted in the use of the verbs: enjoy, feel, imagine, shines, and feels. These verbs create an experience for the women as they read this advertisement and allow for them to compare how their hair currently makes them feel as a woman. It also creates relationship between them, the product and their hairdresser through using the phrases 'as your L'Oréal hairdresser perms' and 'only he can add that finishing touch of brilliance'. This relationship is the success of the product and the ultimate experience which L'Oréal seeks to give each woman; a good haircut

and a conditioned soft curly perm which she will enjoy. The slogan or tag line which supports the product name L'Oréal is Hair Technology; which talks to the science behind creating a product that allows women to feel vitality and its difference. The hairdresser referred to is not just any hairdresser, it is a L'Oréal hairdresser (a high-calibre professional) but also not any L'Oréal hairdresser but your personal hairdresser; a good relationship is implied. A woman's hairdresser is seldom changed and he gets to know her joys and sorrows; here is relationship. A strong bond is created between the hair product and the hair professional. This strong bond is then transferred and shared with the woman through her hairdresser.

The voice speaking to the women in this advert is possibly another woman who has experienced this vitality that makes a difference and which she has enjoyed; she is recommending and endorsing this product to other women. It is as if she is having a cup of tea with her friends and sharing her new discovery.

The product name is positioned at a 45 degree angle at the top towards the right of the photograph as though it has been placed there by a stamp denoting approval and acceptance of the Dulcia Vitality perm. The word Dulcia is feminine and plural. The photograph does not show the woman's face only her hair allowing every woman to 'imagine the difference' as it was their hair.

There is a subtle call to action for each woman reading this advert as she is requested to 'ask' her L'Oréal hairdresser for this product as 'only he can add that finishing touch'. There is a promise given that the L'Oréal hair professional is skilled, knowledgeable and keen to help each woman experience the difference this vitality makes.

The material, mental and verbal process strategies employed create the promise of silky curls and vitality through the use of this professional hair product at a L'Oréal Salon. In the 1980's this would have added to the new sense of empowerment women were

experiencing in the workplace. It was a time of big hair and padded power jackets. Women could have men cut their hair and help them feel good about themselves.

This is a prestige product employed at an established salon that allows for a woman to feel alive and good about herself if she uses it. This is also an advertisement with good copy that gives women sufficient information to decide that this product will not only protect their hair and give them lasting curls but also give them a sense of well-being.