

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_

## Target Lesson: Analyzing the Author’s Point of View with “Why Good Advertising Works (Even When You Think It Doesn’t)”

### PART 1: Writing Warm-Up

**Directions:** Look at the image and answer the writing warm-up question(s).



Advertisements are everywhere:  
social media, television, billboards.

“Untitled” by Joshua Earle is licensed under the CC0 license.

When was the last time an advertisement made you want to buy something?

Why do you think the advertisement worked?

Take **three minutes** to jot down your ideas.

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### PART 2: Today’s Target - Analyzing the Author’s Point of View

Today, we’ll analyze the author’s point of view about **advertising**.

*Point of view is how someone views something.*



What does the author believe about **advertising**?

How does the author feel about the **purpose of advertising**?

## PART 3: Reading and Questions

Directions: Read the text and answer the questions.

# Why Good Advertising Works (Even When You Think It Doesn't)

by Nigel Hollis

[1] I was having dinner with friends the other evening, and one of the guests made a familiar statement. "I am not influenced by advertising," she said.

[2] For those of us in marketing, this is a familiar thing to hear. I often respond by pointing out that U.S. companies would not invest \$70 billion (yes, that's the size of TV's ad market) in something they thought didn't work. Companies expect advertising to produce returns, just like any other investment. The reason that my friend — and, I'm guessing, many of your friends — think advertising doesn't "work" is that they think advertisements are trying to make them do something immediately.

[3] They're wrong.

[4] Successful advertising rarely succeeds through argument or calls to action. Instead, it creates positive memories and feelings that influence our behavior over time to encourage us to buy something at a later date. No one likes to think that they are easily influenced. In fact, there is plenty of evidence to suggest that we respond negatively to naked attempts at persuasion.

[5] Instead, the best advertisements are ingenious at leaving impressions. Consider my dinner party friend, who, after claiming to be immune to marketing, proceeded to intone cigarette ad slogans ("Cal-l-l for-r-r Phil-lip Mor-ray-ssss") from the early 1950s when Philip Morris sponsored the "I Love Lucy"<sup>1</sup> show.

### ADS WE LOVE

[6] "Could switching to Geico really save you 15 percent or more on car insurance?" a greasy, noirish<sup>2</sup> Mike McGlone asks in one of the company's many self-parodying ads. "Did the little piggy cry wee wee wee all the way home?" he answers, in the form of another rhetorical question. Like most of Geico's many ad variations, this spot combines wacky humor with efficient branding. You know a company has found a successful slogan when they can use it as a set-up line.

[7] In sum, the best advertisements use images, jingles, and stories to focus attention on the brand. They are not just creative for creative's sake.

### FROM CATCHPHRASES TO CASH

[8] Of course, as tickled as advertisers are to know they're writing catchy jingles, they don't make TV commercials for the honor of giving us free new music. They want us to buy something. The crucial challenge for marketers is: What's the best way to translate these memories into actions?

### Paragraphs 1 - 5

1. What is the author's point of view about advertising?

- A. It damages people's lives.
- B. It is difficult to influence people to buy something.
- C. It influences people to act a certain way over time.
- D. It should be more obvious about the way it impacts people.

### Paragraphs 6 - 7

2. What does the author think makes a good advertisement?

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<sup>1</sup> "I Love Lucy" was an American television sitcom from 1951 to 1957.

<sup>2</sup> relating to a genre of crime literature in which the characters are tough or cynical

[9] Some imagine a debate between two groups. The first group believes in raw persuasion. Its focus is on crafting a compelling argument that will encourage you, with the delivery of “new news,” to buy something right away. The second group believes in the power of engagement. Its focus is on creating a positive experience that will influence you over the longer-term. Here, the objective is to seed positive ideas and memories that will attract you to the brand.

[10] But this distinction is largely a myth. Advertisers have little control over how audiences receive their message. New news might appear relevant and credible to some (“Geico can save me 15 percent or more? Let’s call!”), while others consider it unpersuasive (“Allstate’s cheap enough”). Similarly, a TV commercial designed to engage the viewer might cause you to buy the brand immediately, simply because it reminds you of how much you enjoy the product (“Cute Coke spot. You know, I am kinda thirsty...”).

[11] Once in a blue moon an advert might leave you thinking, “Just what I need!” and send you running out the door to buy something. More often, however, you barely attend to the commercials you see. You do not reflect on the scenes and messages unless triggered by something else at a later date: seeing the advertised brand on the street, when you need to buy the product or, in the case of my friend, talking about it at the dinner table. Even then, it is not the ad that matters. It is the ideas, impressions and positive feelings about the brand that matter. Any memory that will predispose you to view the brand in a more positive light than its alternatives is a plus.

#### ALL ABOUT GOOD VIBRATIONS

[12] As demonstrated by my friend, advertising memories can last decades. But my friend’s discourse on advertising also touched one of the biggest pitfalls to creating successful TV advertising. Crafting a compelling message or creating an engaging impression is not easy (particularly when trying to reach an increasingly digitally distracted and time poor audience). It is equally difficult to make sure that the intended memories stick to the right brand.

[13] Contrary to many people’s beliefs, advertising does influence them. But advertising’s influence is subtle. Strident<sup>3</sup> calls to action are easily discounted and rejected because they are obvious. But engaging and memorable ads slip ideas past our defenses and seed memories that influence our behavior. You may not think advertising influences you. But marketers do. And in addition to millions of dollars, they have something else most people don’t have: Access to data that proves their point.

“Why Good Advertising Works (Even When You Think It Doesn’t)” by Nigel Hollis From the Atlantic. ©2011 The Atlantic Monthly Group, LLC. All rights reserved. Used under license.

<sup>3</sup> **Strident** (*adjective*): loud and harsh; grating

#### Paragraphs 8 - 11

3. In the author’s opinion, how does advertising work differently than most people think?

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#### Paragraphs 12 - 13

4. “Subtle” describes something that is small and not obvious.

In the author’s opinion, how is advertising’s influence subtle?

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## PART 4: Assessment

**Directions:** Answer the questions.

\_\_\_\_\_ 1. What is the author's **overall purpose** for writing this article?

- A. to persuade people to ignore advertising
- B. to prove that advertising influences people
- C. to encourage people to have marketing careers
- D. to examine if advertisements should be banned

2. In the article, the author claims, "Contrary to many people's beliefs, advertising does influence them."

Do you agree or disagree? Consider the author's reasoning and use evidence from the text and your own life to support your response.

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