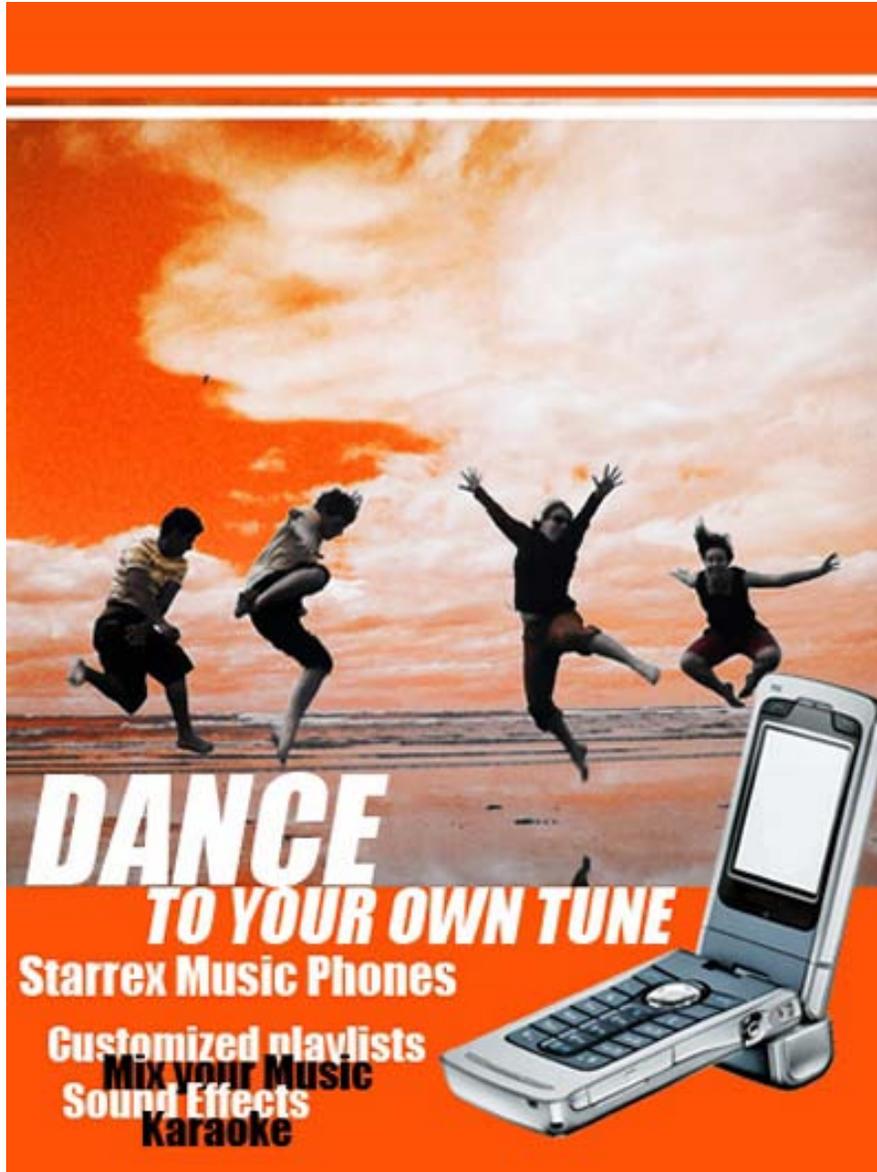


Analysing visual texts

In the following activity you will analyse the way that visual techniques are used in an advertisement.

Text 1 – Advertisement



Use the Image Decoder on the following pages to analyse the way that visual elements in the advertisement above have been used to appeal to a target group of consumers.

Image Decoder

1 Layout

Identifying structural components of visual texts:

- component parts

What is the image composed of?

- tone/lighting

What is the balance of light and dark in the image? Is the lighting natural light (e.g., sunlight or moonlight) or artificial light? Is it side-lit or evenly lit?

- colour

What colours are used in the image? What is the symbolism or effect of the use of colour?

- perspective

From what direction is the image viewed? For example, are you viewing the scene from above or from below?

- balance

What is the weight of visual placement of objects? Visual texts are based on a horizontal (left/right) and vertical (top/bottom) axis. Being in the middle is the most balanced place to be.

- border

Is there a boundary shown around the image or does it bleed (go to the edge)? Are there divisions or sections in the image?

- texture

How do the surfaces look: smooth or rough?

- contrast or harmony

Are differences or similarities in the visual elements emphasised? For example, advertisements sometimes show 'before' and 'after' shots to emphasise changes in the appearance of an object or person.

- rhythm

Is there any pattern in the visual elements such as repetition?

- symbols or writing

Are there any present? In what ways are they connected with the visual elements?

2 The subject

Identifying characteristics for people or animals in an image:

- pose

How is the body held?

- hand or arm gestures

Where are the hands placed and are they moving or still?

- facial expression

What expressions or looks are on people's faces?

- costume

What are people wearing?

- identity

Are the people individualised or not?

- props

What objects are shown in the image?

- surroundings

Where is the subject located?

continued overleaf

Image decoder (cont.)

<p>3 Interaction with viewer</p> <p>Positioning devices used:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <u>focus and framing</u> Is it a long shot, medium shot or close-up? What is the viewing angle? For instance, is the viewer looking up at or down on the subject?• <u>orientation</u> Is the subject face on, side on, or facing away from the viewer?• <u>vectors</u> Vectors are imaginary lines created by the visual composition. For example, a person's gaze or a staircase may lead your eyes in a certain direction, or the image might be divided into different sections. Where are your eyes drawn?• <u>eye contact</u> Does the viewer have direct, indirect or no eye contact with the subject?	<p>4 The function of the image</p> <p>The image represents a point of view. Consider factors such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <u>purpose and context</u> What is the purpose and context of the image? How and why was the image produced? Who is the target audience for the image?• <u>the composer's style</u> What is it similar to? For instance, is it like a family portrait or a news photograph? Does it remind you of anything? Does it tell the viewer a story? Is it serious or is it satirical?• <u>issues</u> Is the composer making a point or trying to influence the viewer? For example, does the image comment on power, prestige, wealth, fame, age, class, culture, etc?• <u>omissions</u> Has the composer deliberately left anything out of the image? Are the people in the image representative of society? For example, fashion photographs are often 'airbrushed' or 'photoshopped' to remove imperfections from a model's appearance.
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Using the proforma

As you are analysing the advertisement, make notes on the blank proforma on the following pages.

Consider the following questions:

Who are the people in the image? Where are they? What are they doing? Consider the way they are dressed, their connections with one another and the setting, etc.

How are they feeling about this experience? Consider their body posture, the expressions on their faces, etc.

What product is being advertised? How has the composer conveyed ideas and emotions associated with the product? Consider the structural arrangement of the image, the relationship between the foreground and background images, the use of written text, etc.

Analysing an advertisement

1 Layout

Identifying structural components of visual texts:

- component parts
- tone/lighting
- colour
- perspective
- balance
- border
- texture
- contrast or harmony
- rhythm
- symbols or writing

2 The subject

Identifying characteristics for people or animals in an image:

- pose
- hand or arm gestures
- facial expression
- identity
- costume
- props
- surroundings

continued overleaf

Analysing an advertisement (cont.)

<p>3 Interaction with viewer</p> <p>Positioning devices used:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <u>focus and framing</u> • <u>orientation</u> • <u>vectors</u> • <u>eye contact</u>	<p>4 The function of the image</p> <p>The image represents a point of view. Consider factors like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <u>purpose and context</u> • <u>the composer's style</u> • <u>issues</u> • <u>omissions</u>
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Writing an analysis

Use your notes to write a brief analysis of the advertisement in your learning journal in good sentences and paragraphs. Comment on the subject matter of the advertisement (*what* it depicts) and the use of visual techniques (*how* it conveys ideas and attitudes about the product). How *effective* is the advertisement in achieving its purpose?

Write 150 words or less.