



### MLP'S Guide to a Great Bad Ad Essay

- Good grammar, sentence structure, punctuation, and spelling are essential.
- Make sure you give clear examples of *text* and *subtext*. The *text* is simply what is seen and read in an ad, not an interpretation of it. *Subtext* is the underlying or hidden message in a piece of media and your interpretation of those messages.
- Be certain that the persuasion techniques that you choose to write about are *really in the ad*, and make sure you understand their usage completely. (See [The Language of Persuasion](#) on our website.)
- Really consider who the target audience for the ad is, and state it clearly. Make sure you keep this target audience in mind throughout your whole essay. For example, if the ad is targeting young women, do not include a whole analysis regarding how people in their 50s or 60s would feel about the ad.
- Uncovering the “untold story” behind an ad should involve research about the company, product, and/or what is seen and stated in the ad. Simply stating “they left out the price,” while correct, is not delving deep enough to make your essay really stand out. Most ads leave out the price.
- When writing about how an ad reinforces a stereotype, first consider what the stereotype *is*, and explain it *and* the connection to the ad in detail. The stereotype is usually easy to spot, but take it one step further and consider how the advertisers are using these pre-existing associations to sell their products.
- Don't use words in your essays that come across as judgmental or shaming. For example, “The woman in the ad is positioned in a *scandalous* way and is *promiscuous*.” Instead, why not simply state “The woman in the ad has been positioned in a sexually suggestive manner.” Choose your words carefully and thoughtfully, don't reinforce stereotypes yourself!