

HMH ELECTION CONNECTION

2016



The Impact of Campaign Ads

Introduction

Since the 1952 election, television has played a major role in presidential campaigns. The campaign television ad, in particular, has become a critical tool in influencing voters. Of course, politicians produce ads that cast their candidacy in a favorable light, but frequently they also use the ads to criticize and even ridicule their opponents.

One such negative commercial was the so-called “Daisy Girl” ad used by the Lyndon Johnson presidential campaign in 1964. Showing powerful images of a little girl picking daisies just before a nuclear explosion, the ad strongly implied that Johnson’s opponent, Barry Goldwater, would lead the nation into nuclear war.

Today voters are bombarded with campaign ads on television, on the radio, and on the Internet. However, politicians try not to exhaust people’s patience with too many ads. They are aware that relentlessly negative ads sometimes create a backlash among voters. A successful campaign ad inspires confidence in the candidate, casts doubt on the opponent, and conveys a strong but simple message.

Task

Your task is to work with a group of classmates to create a campaign ad storyboard for a fictitious presidential candidate. You should determine your ad’s message and use contemporary language and symbolic images to convey it. The ad may be serious or humorous. However, it should be brief, easy to understand, and to the point.

Process & Resources

Step 1

Use the link below to learn about the history and development of presidential campaign ads.

“The Living Room Candidate: Presidential Campaign Commercials”

<http://livingroomcandidate.movingimage.us>

This site presents an overview and examples of campaign ads from 1952 to 2004.

Step 2

Get together with your group and discuss your candidate. Decide what issues are important to your candidate and where he or she stands on them. Agree on the issue your ad will deal with and the message it will convey.

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Step 3

Divide tasks within your group and brainstorm ideas for your storyboard ad. The links below will give you some guidance on organizing your ad.

“Election 2004: Campaigns and the Media”

http://www.aacps.org/AACPS/boe/INSTR/CURR/COMED/HSWebQuest/Marie_Livingston/index.html

This site provides a sample Webquest campaign ad activity.

Stanford University: Political Communication Lab

<http://pcl.stanford.edu/campaigns/2008/>

This site offers an overview of ads in the 2008 presidential election.

Step 4

Create your storyboard. The images in the storyboard should present a clear, cohesive message. Keep your text simple and brief. If possible, come up with a memorable slogan or catchphrase.

Conclusion

As you have learned from creating a storyboard for a presidential campaign ad, “selling” a candidate is not an easy task. With only a few images and words, an ad should tell a cohesive, memorable story. It should capture its audience’s imagination and create a positive impression of the candidate. At the same time, the ad should contrast the candidate with his or her opponent without, however, being too negative.

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Evaluation

The rubric, or chart, below is how you and your group will be evaluated on your storyboard. Ask your teacher to explain anything on the rubric that is not clear.

	5	4	3	2	1	Points
Text and Images	The text is succinct and conveys a strong message. The images are powerful and support the text.	The text is relatively clear and conveys a recognizable message. The images are suitable with the text.	The text is acceptable and conveys a discernable message. The images mostly suit the text.	The text is not entirely clear. For the most part, the images do not suit the text.	The text is unclear, and the images do not have much or anything to do with the text.	
Organization	The storyboard is very well organized. Each frame builds on the next one and forms a solid, cohesive ad.	The storyboard is well organized. The frames in the storyboard mostly form a cohesive whole.	The storyboard's organization is uneven but forms an identifiable whole.	The organization of the storyboard is minimal; but attempts to create a viable ad are evident.	The organization of the storyboard is confusing.	
Style and Voice	The style of the storyboard is professional and convincing. The voice conveyed is confident and authoritative.	The style of the storyboard is somewhat professional and convincing. The voice conveyed is not entirely confident and authoritative.	The style of the storyboard is slightly professional and convincing. The voice conveyed is acceptably confident.	Some attempt has been made to mimic the style and voice of a campaign ad but without much success.	The style and voice are not suitable for a campaign ad.	
Message	The message is clear and memorable.	The message is mostly clear and slightly memorable.	The message is fairly clear but not very memorable.	Attempts have been made to present a clear message but are not very successful.	Little or no attempt has been made to present a clear message.	
						Score

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Teacher Notes

Synopsis

In the Webquest *The Impact of Campaign Ads*, a group of students will create a storyboard for a presidential campaign ad. Each student will be assigned a task, and the group will work together to create an ad for a fictitious presidential candidate. The ad should convey a simple but effective message.

Objectives

Students who do exemplary work on this WebQuest will learn about

- presidential campaign ads from the past
- the development of presidential campaign ads since 1952
- the characteristics of campaign ads
- the challenge of creating a successful ad

Suggestions

When to use this WebQuest *The Impact of Campaign Ads* works well after students have read Section 1 of Chapter 12, “Understanding Elections,” in *Holt McDougal United States Government: Principles in Practice*. The Webquest provides an opportunity for students to review the chapter content in a fun and creative way.

Further classroom activity You might have student groups present their storyboard ads to the class. Then hold an election and have students vote for the candidate they like best based on the ads.