Related text worksheet

Title: Adbusters website

Composer: Adbusters Media Foundation       Type of text: website

Source: internet       Date: accessed: July 2008

Purpose: A community-based, non-profit media organisation aimed at presenting alternative ideas and perspectives on the way the media produces meaning.

Audience: The general public and those concerned about the power and influence of the media.

Context: An examination of the perspectives of modern commercial media organisations and alternative advocacy groups and individuals.

Synopsis of text
The Adbusters Media Foundation website is dedicated to providing alternative perspectives on the erosion of the physical and cultural environments by commercial forces. The website offers a range of articles, news items, reports and videos about issues ranging from GM foods to media concentration. It also encourages participation in campaigns through a variety of activist networks and groups. It encourages individuals and groups to be involved in campaigns against corporate misinformation, global exploitation and injustices. The website is designed to allow members to access, use and submit materials about issues and campaigns. The availability of Web 2.0 technologies provides members and visitors with a variety of ways to interact with the site. Adbusters co-ordinates a number of high-profile campaigns such as Buy Nothing Day, Blackspot Shoes, TV Turnoff Week and Mental Detox Week. These campaigns challenge the accepted ways of thinking about the commercial world.

Ideas related to representation
Adbusters represents an alternative perspective to commercial forces. It uses the internet and the Adbusters magazine to challenge the ways of thinking and acting. The big commercial corporations represent the power of industries that control the way meaning is produced. Adbusters use the ideas and techniques of the corporate world to produce campaigns, activities and networks that challenge the dominant and constructed representations in the commercial world. Adbusters represents the marginalised views of many people and communities that have been denied a voice. The Adbusters organisation and the networks of people and their communities are fighting to have their point of view represented in the media.

Techniques used to present relevant ideas:
1 use of Web 2.0 technologies to encourage individual and network participation, eg subscriber-submitted videos, articles, Twitter and blogs
2 use of satire to present alternative views about advertising, corporate misinformation and consumerism, eg spoof advertisements
3 use of expert commentaries, interviews and up-to-the-minute news to encourage participation and put forward different perspectives
4 provocative, non-commercial graphics and photographs demonstrate alternative ways to present information and ideas.

**Links to other texts in terms of ideas and techniques**

1 Prescribed text: *Julius Caesar*

The Adbusters website represents alternative perspectives on a range of topical issues and concerns. The Blackspot Shoes campaign focuses on how to challenge and subvert the dominant commercial interests of companies like Nike. By directly appealing to the public using similar advertising and commercial presentations to the big commercial products, Adbusters is able to promote its product and counter the commercial stranglehold by large-scale corporations. In *Julius Caesar*, Antony uses his cunning and status with the crowd to influence their ideas and gradually turn them against the conspirators. His speech to the crowd begins with a familiar and accepted approach but begins to cast doubt about Caesar’s murder to turn them into a vengeful mob. He is able to condemn and ridicule the moral decision by Brutus and the conspirators by using a cleverly orchestrated speech. Like the Blackspot campaign, Antony uses the techniques of confrontation and innuendo to suggest a different version of Caesar’s death. The Blackspot campaign uses the public to ‘spread the word’ about the shoes and at the same time shows the misinformation and the exploitative methods used to make shoes in developing countries. The members-submitted videos, photographs and blogging indicate a strong and committed group, dedicated to the cause.

2 Other texts of your own choosing: *Thank You for Smoking*

Nick Naylor, in *Thank You for Smoking* uses spin to counter the forces of the government and the public against the tobacco industry. Adbusters presents a different version of commercialism and corporate power to the public. Adbusters also uses the techniques of public manipulation to focus on issues and represent different views to the dominant commercial practices. Adbusters encourages public participation in the questioning of ethical behaviour by the big corporations. Nick uses the constitutional guarantees to defend the right to smoke but it is his moral choice that decides his future. Like Nick’s appearance at the congressional committee hearing and Antony parading the bloody body of Caesar, strong visual iconography is an integral part of representing the way people think and behave.

**How does the text influence your understanding of the Elective?**

Adbuster presents a different version of the way modern society is dominated by commercial interests and the corporate world. The website and the quarterly magazine show that there are ways for the public to explore different versions and representations. It provides an antidote to the excesses of misinformation and dominant practices we encounter in the media. The strong visuals and rhetoric provide a range of different perspectives for a public that has had limited access to alternative viewpoints. Nick Naylor uses the guarantees of citizenship to protect smokers while Adbusters seeks to guarantee the rights of citizens to explore different ways of representing meaning.