

SUPPORTING MULTIMODAL LITERACY: SUPPLEMENT 7

Avoiding Weak Thesis Statements When Analyzing Advertisements

The following list includes some of the common mistakes that can occur when creating a thesis statement for an advertising analysis essay along with suggestions for how to avoid these issues. This supplement should be accompanied by the Puma Ad which can be found in Supplement 6: Sample Shoes Ads for Analysis.

A Weak Thesis Statement. . .

...makes no claim

The ad by Puma uses many different advertiing elements, which this paper will explore.

Solution: *Raise specific issues for the essay to explore rather than stating observations. Make sure the thesis couldn't be said about any other subject*

...is obviously true or a statement of fact

The ad campaign by Puma uses cartoon imagery to connect with its audience.

Solution: *Make an assertion that the reader could disagree with.*

...evaluates rather than interprets

The ad campaign by Puma is unsuccessful at convincing consumers to buy their shoes.

Solution: *Create an argument that analyzes, not evaluates. This is an essay, not a review.*

...restates conventional wisdom or a cliché

The narrative elements in the Puma ad shows that love conquers all.

Solution: *Seek to “complicate” your thesis. See more than one point of view on your subject. Offer something new to the “cliché.”*

...offers personal opinion as the basis for the claim

The characters in the Puma ad need to have better morals.

Solution: *Maintain some distance from your subject and avoid generalizing.*

...makes an overly broad claim

Through the use of color, lighting, and text, the Puma ad shows how ads use emotion.

*Solution: **Convert broad, generic categories into more specific, complex assertions***

...Is about the real world instead of the subject

The Puma ad shows that love can be difficult in society today.

*Solution: **Limit your argument to what can be proven by the text alone, rather than presenting ideas that would require outside evidence to avoid generalizations.***

...is not complex enough, doesn't answer the question "so what"

The Puma ad, through its use of various ad elements, represents the idea of rebellion.

*Solution: **Avoid an argument that only requires a list response. Consider the implications of this claim. Ask, what does this ad say about rebellion and youth culture in American society?***