

2006 Media Studies – Sample Answers

(a) This advertisement - for the 1999 National Ploughing Championships - provides the reader with very little written text. Much of what the advertisers want to communicate is conveyed visually. What do you think is communicated about the event by the picture?

Sample Answer:

I think that this advertisement tells us that the event is a **rural, outdoors** one which would appeal to an older audience and which is also **a contest of skill**.

The picture of the elderly man's forehead dominates the advertisement. The colours are earthy browns and yellows, which seems to connect the event to a rural, farming landscape. The furrows in the man's brow resemble the furrows in a ploughed field, which I think is a clever way of telling us that the target audience is farmers.

That the event is an outdoor one is made clear by the man's weather-beaten skin. His eyebrows are bushy and unkempt, once again suggesting that this is a person who does not work in an office environment where a higher level of personal grooming might be expected! This impression is reinforced by the tweed cap which most people would associate with the farming community.

The deep furrows in the man's forehead show that he is quite elderly, and this makes me think that this event would appeal to an older audience. Also, the visuals would appear quite dull to young people as there are no bright, vivid colours and no sense of action or excitement.

Finally, I believe that the advertisement communicates the idea that this is a contest of skill as the man's forehead is wrinkled in concentration. Perhaps he is taking part in the ploughing championships or perhaps he is a spectator focusing intently on the efforts of a competitor.

Even if you don't have time to make a plan, you can use your introductory sentence as a reference point. Here, the four points which will be dealt with in the answer are outlined.

Remember to keep referring back to the question. You were asked what the picture tells us about the event.

(b) Do you think this advertisement is effective in promoting the event? Explain your answer with reference to the advertisement.

Sample Answer:

Yes, I believe the advertisement is effective in promoting the event as it is eye-catching and at the same time gives all the information necessary for those who might wish to attend.

The visuals in this advertisement are most unusual. We are used to bright colours, celebrity endorsement and vivid images. Here, however, we are presented with nothing but the wrinkled forehead of an elderly man. It is far from obvious what is being advertised, which I think would make a viewer take a second look in order to satisfy their curiosity.

The fact that the furrows in the man's brow resemble the furrows in a ploughed field makes this a clever and quite humorous advertisement. I think that a witty touch like this makes the advertisement memorable and might also encourage those who see it to share it or discuss it with friends and family. If this were to happen, it would obviously help to spread the word about the event.

The copy takes up a very small percentage of the advertisement, but it still communicates all the necessary information. We are told what is happening, and when and where it is happening, which is all that is needed. The advertisement is aimed at an older audience of those who most probably attend the event each year, so they do not need a great deal of information on the activities, stalls and so forth.