



Ads as Primary Text

Persuasion & Influence · Tier 1: How Persuasion Works · Component 3

Grades: 6–8 **Time:** 35–45 min (standard) **Format:** individual or pairs

Students learn to read an advertisement the way they'd read a paragraph — closely — separating what it *shows*, what it *claims*, what it *asks*, and what it quietly *leaves out*.

WHY THIS MATTERS

Ads are the most designed messages a young person meets, and the most practiced at hiding the design. Treating an ad as a "text" to be analyzed — not just felt — makes every technique in the rest of the tier concrete and visible.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- One copy of the **Student pages** (Student pp. 1–3) per student or pair.
- Optional: a real print or screenshot ad to dissect together as a warm-up.

HOW TO RUN IT

1. **Read the explainer together (8–10 min).** Student p. 1 gives the four-part read.
2. **Work the activity (18–22 min).** Students dissect a described ad (Student p. 2) and hunt the missing piece (Student p. 3).
3. **Debrief (10–15 min).** Run the Discussion Guide (Instructor p. 3).

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR

- Separating the *image* (a feeling) from the *claim* (a testable statement).
- Finding the **call to action** — the specific thing the ad wants you to do.
- Naming the **omission** — the price, the catch, the "results not typical."

STANDARDS ALIGNMENT (COMMON CORE)

Codes reflect the grade 6 band; grade 7–8 equivalents apply equally.

- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.6.7** — Integrate information presented in different media or formats as well as in words to develop a coherent understanding.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.6.2** — Interpret information presented in diverse media and formats and explain how it contributes to a topic.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.6.8** — Trace and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text.

Printing: Hand students the 3 Student pages. The 3 Instructor pages are for you.



Ads as Primary Text

In depth: image, claim, ask, and omission

An ad is a compressed argument. Reading it well means slowing down the two seconds it was designed to take, and pulling apart four layers that arrive as one impression.

THE IMAGE

The feeling that arrives first

Before a word is read, the picture sets a mood and lends the product a borrowed glow — happy people, a sunrise, a celebrity. A good impression in one place bleeds onto the product itself (halo effect bleed), and a face you've simply seen before feels more trustworthy (mere exposure).

THE CLAIM & THE ASK

What it states, what it wants

CLAIM. The testable part — "lasts longer," "dermatologist recommended," "50% off." Prices and numbers are often set high first so the real price feels like a deal (anchoring); a middle option can be planted to make another look smart (decoy effect).

CALL TO ACTION. Every ad wants one specific move — buy, click, sign up, ask a parent. Name it and the ad's purpose is exposed.

THE OMISSION

What isn't on the page

The most revealing part of an ad is often what's missing: the price in tiny type, "results not typical," the subscription that auto-renews, the comparison they didn't run. Teach students to ask "what would I need to know that isn't here?"

ONE THING TO KEEP REPEATING

Feeling isn't a claim. An ad can make you feel great without stating anything you could check. Separate the glow from the testable words, and read the small print like it's the main text.



Ads as Primary Text

Debrief prompts & a sample answer key

DISCUSSION ANCHOR

- Which arrives first — the **feeling** or the **facts**? Why is that the order?
- What's the difference between a **claim** you could check and an **image** you just feel?
- What was **left out** of the ad, and why would they leave it out?
- Find a real ad. What is its **one** call to action?

ONE-LINE TAKEAWAY

Read the small print like it's the main text, and the feeling like it's an ad.

SAMPLE READ FOR PART A (THE FRESHBITE AD)

LAYER	WHAT'S THERE
Image	<i>Smiling family at a bright table — borrowed warmth, not evidence.</i>
Claim	<i>"9 out of 10 families prefer FreshBite" — testable, but prefer to what, and who asked?</i>
Call to action	<i>"Grab yours this week" — buy now.</i>
Omission	<i>Price, sample size, and what it was compared against.</i>



Ads as Primary Text

How to read an ad on purpose

An ad is built to work in about two seconds. Reading it well means slowing those seconds down and pulling apart four things that hit you as one.

1 · THE IMAGE

The feeling

The picture or music sets a mood before you read a word — happy, cool, calm, left-out. The feeling gets attached to the product, even though a photo proves nothing.

2 · THE CLAIM

The testable part

The words you could actually check: "lasts longer," "#1 brand," "50% off." Ask: longer than what? off from what price?

3 · THE ASK

The call to action

Every ad wants *one* move: buy, click, sign up, ask a parent. Find it, and you've found the point of the whole ad.

4 · THE OMISSION

What's missing

Often the most important part isn't on the page: the real price, the catch, "results not typical." Ask: what would I need to know that they didn't show me?

Feeling isn't a claim. An ad can make you feel amazing without saying one thing you could check. Split the glow from the testable words.



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Name: _____ Date: _____

Quick recap: Image (feeling) · Claim (testable) · Ask (do this) · Omission (what's missing)

PART A — DISSECT THE AD

Here is an ad in words. Fill in each layer.

FreshBite Snacks. A photo of a smiling family at a sunny table. Big text: *"9 out of 10 families prefer FreshBite!"*
Smaller text: *"Grab yours this week."* Tiny text at the bottom: *"Based on a survey of 40 people."*

LAYER	WHAT'S THERE — AND YOUR READ
Image (feeling)	
Claim (testable)	
Ask (do this)	
Omission (missing)	

**PART B — HUNT THE MISSING PIECE**

Each line is a real-sounding ad claim. Write the **one question** you'd need answered before believing it.

AD CLAIM	YOUR QUESTION
1. "Now 50% off!"	
2. "Clinically shown to work."	
3. "The #1 choice of athletes."	
4. "Free trial — just pay shipping."	

PART C — MAKE ONE

Invent an ad for a water bottle. Write one **image** idea (a feeling), one **claim** (testable), and one **call to action**.
