

Written Task 2 - Essay Help & Structure

Written Task 2 for Part 2: Language & Mass Communication - Advertising

Question: *How and why is a social group represented in a particular way?*

The first thing I do before I start writing is, unpack the question. I therefore need to think about what the question is actually asking me to do. When I look at this question I can see that there are essentially three main areas that I need to address. They are the following:

- 1. I must explain the representation of the social group in my text.** To cover this point I must clearly discuss the representation present in the advertisement. I should use some clear examples from the text to justify my reading of it. For example if I claim that women are being represented as submissive or eager to please men then I would need to justify this reading of the text pulling specific examples from the ad to justify my point of view.
- 2. Discuss why the social group is represented in this way.** To cover this part of the essay I should discuss reasons as to why I think the gender has been represented in a particular way in the ad that I chose. This could be something to do with societal norms and attitudes, values and beliefs. Here would be my opportunity to discuss social conditioning if I wanted to – how we are brought up to believe certain stereotypes about gender through the media and family, friends, culture etc. Basically I could argue that society expects to see this representation of gender and therefore would balk at anything different. I also should add the idea that the men or women are being presented in this way because it helps to sell the product.
- 3. Discuss how the social group is represented in this way.** Remember that I have told you a few times if a question contains 'how' it always should indicate to you that you need to discuss techniques that relate to the text you are analyzing. In this situation it would be the visual techniques and the advertising techniques. You would not only need to identify and discuss the techniques in isolation you would need to use them to justify your analysis (reading) of the representation of the social group.

Therefore your discussion in this essay will look something like this...

The representation of the social group is _____ (describe and explain). This representation is created because _____ (discuss society and the beliefs and values held). The visual techniques and advertising techniques have been used in this way _____ (explain) to create this representation of this social group in order to sell the product or service.

Introduction:

- Interesting opening – related to the text and topic (quote, observation etc.).
- Quick description of the ad you are analyzing (a sentence or two).
- Thesis statement – Your thesis statement should be a very succinct answer to the essay question.

Example thesis statement:

Weiden and Kennedy's Old Spice advertisement *There's a Man in There* perpetuates the age old belief that men are purely masculine, physical beings, and does not allow for men, as a collective, to deviate from this stereotypical representation. Weiden and Kennedy have expertly used symbolism, costume and emotive language to construct this deleterious representation of men in order to sell their product Old Spice.

Notice that I have incorporated the following things in my thesis statement:

- I have addressed ALL aspects of the question
- I have used the name of the text and the creator
- I have explained the representation of men being displayed in the ad
- I have offered an answer as to why the man is being displayed in this way
- I have included some examples of what I will discuss in my essay.

Body Paragraphs: (You must have 3)

You must use a Topic Sentence and the **S-E-E-L** structure so that you are always answering the question and providing enough detail and depth to your response.

Topic Sentence: Give a topic sentence at the start of your paragraph. These are like mini thesis statements, they clearly explain what you are discussing in your paragraph and should explain how you are answering the question.

S -tatement: Bring in the first point that you want to make

E-xample: Give a quote or direct example from the film to prove your point.

E-xplanation: Explain how the quote/example helps to illustrate your point.

L-ink: Link back to the question. This is like a mini conclusion, explain how your paragraph just proved your point and answered the question.

***Note** – you are able to repeat the E's as often as necessary for you to prove your point. However, be careful of making your paragraphs too large and the emphasis on only one of your points.

Example structure for a topic sentence:

Weiden and Kennedy have presented the idea that _____ (statement about representation of men in the ad) because _____ (statement about why this representation is shown) through the use of _____ (refer to visual and ad technique(s)). (I would then go on to elaborate on these points in my paragraph – notice that this selects a smaller focal point from my thesis statement.)

Example structure for a linking sentence:

This is how Weiden and Kennedy presented males as... because ... through the use of
....

Conclusion:

- Summary of your main arguments.
- Re-state your thesis and tie your essay together – how have you answered the question?
- An interesting closing remark that is on topic/related to the text.

Language:

- Stay formal at all times – don't lose this tone.
- Stay away from colloquialisms – they are not fitting for academic writing.
- Where possible stay away from stating ideas with 'I'. You can still write effectively with personal voice without using 'I'. Try to write using phrases like 'the viewer therefore sees the disparity shown towards women.' You can also use 'the reader' or 'one may therefore make the assumption that...'.
• 'In conclusion' and 'In this essay I will...' are sentences that always strike derision in the hearts of examiners (and me...). If you haven't figured out how to avoid this yet – make sure you do. Using this structure will help you.

Outline:

- You should produce an outline for your essay. The purpose of the outline is to clearly display how you will tackle the question. Your dot points should be direct and explicit. Don't simply say 'I will discuss how women are presented in the advertisement' because this doesn't indicate any subject matter that you will discuss.
- For this question I would have dot points about the following (use these points to help you make decisive points in your own outline):
 1. Explain the representation present in the ad. (How are women or men being represented in the ad? (Or other social group)).
 2. Explain why you feel the men or women are being presented in this way. (You could make a brief statement linking societal norms (attitudes and values) to the representation and how these ideas sell the product or service).
 3. Explain how this representation has been achieved (through the visual techniques and ad techniques – you could list a few you will discuss).

Outline must also include:

- Part of the course you're relating to, and sub-topic
- Your chosen question
- A narrowed down focus question
- A THESIS statement with reference to your text, question, and ARGUMENT
- Points of analysis
- Links to parts of your question (how? = evidence, why? = purpose/so what?)

WRITTEN TASK 2 – ESSAY QUESTION UNPACKING

READER, CULTURE AND TEXT
1. How could the text be read and interpreted differently by two different readers?
2. If the text had been written in a different time or place or language or for a different audience, how and why might it differ?
POWER AND PRIVILEGE
3. How and why is a social group represented in a particular way?
4. Which social groups are marginalized, excluded or silenced within the text?
TEXT AND GENRE
5. How does the text conform to, or deviate from, the conventions of a particular genre, and for what purpose?
6. How has the text borrowed from other texts, and with what effects?

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How and why is a social group represented in a particular way?

How does the text conform to, or deviate from, the conventions of a particular genre, and for what purpose?