

## A content-based English course on television commercials

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To teach analytical discourse in English to Japanese college students, I organize activities around four objectives: vocabulary, analysis, group projects, and writing.

### **1. Vocabulary : Learn and use key terms for describing and analyzing television commercials.**

For students to function in this course, they must master a specific set of vocabulary, including key terms such as product, sponsor, target audience, images, sounds, verbal message and nonverbal message.

### **2. Analysis : Describe and analyze TV commercials viewed in class.**

After watching the commercial several times in a row, students are asked to describe the commercial in groups of three to four. Students identify the sponsor and product and list all of the visual images and all of the sounds. Once students have finished this description process, they are

asked to define the gender, age and class of the target audience. Here, it is important that students understand the difference between a general television audience and a specific target audience. Finally, students are asked to paraphrase in writing the central message of this commercial. This is a good time to encourage differences of opinions. To do this, students need to be liberated as far as possible from trying to guess the one "right" answer.

Once this first commercial is methodically analyzed in class, it serves as a prototype for future discussions. Students start describing and analyzing commercials with the form "Describing a TV commercial". They are now accustomed to generating opinions about target audience and unspoken message from an analysis of the details of the commercial.

### **3. Group Projects : Plan, create and defend original TV commercials.**

#### **1). First group project : Plan a TV commercial**

Students work in small groups and plan a TV commercial for a new product. From the product information, students must decide on a target audience, choose an appropriate message and then work together to assemble the best sounds and images to convey this message. Before they begin these plans, students are learned that their commercials should fit the audience and product, and they should be clear, convincing and memorable.

## 2). Second group project : Create a TV commercial

Students are allowed to select a product by themselves. They submit a detailed plan to the teacher and then present their finished commercial to the class. Students can use skits, story boards, or videos to present their commercials. The question of how well the message fits the audience, and how clear, convincing and memorable the finished commercial is, determines their final grades. Students and teacher analyze and evaluate other students commercials.

## 4. Writing : Analyze and evaluate TV commercials in writing.

A few basic guidelines for writing paragraph with a topic-sentence and supporting details are introduced. Sample paragraphs and a list of vocabulary are

provided to students. Students are expected to use the analysis from discussion and planning to support an argument.

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## Work Consulted

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