

Course
ENG-5109-1
English in Advertising and Marketing

English Language Arts



Introduction

We live in a consumer-driven society. Daily we are inundated with messages telling us that what we buy defines who we are as individuals. When we do not see ourselves represented in the glittering images that abound in the world of advertising, many of us question our self-worth. In fact, young adults, who are often greatly influenced by these images, are pursued by advertisers and marketers keen on devising clever new ways to part them from their money. Although impressionable youths are the most obvious target of advertisers and marketers, mature adults are targeted as well. That is why it is important for all of us to recognize the language of hype and the racist, sexist and heterosexist stereotypes that are standard fare in many kinds of advertisements. This recognition enables us to resist the allure of these texts and to become more savvy consumers.

In this 25-hour course, the third of three courses in Secondary V (for which adult learners earn credits in elective subjects), adult learners participate in a variety of learning situations and activities to develop their ability to discuss and analyze different types of texts related to advertising and marketing (e.g. commercials, print ads and short films, video/audio clips and articles on advertising and marketing). These texts belong primarily to the Persuasive genre, whose main social function is to promote a product, an idea or an ideology and to influence personal or social behaviour or opinion. However, these texts may contain informative, explanatory, narrative and argumentative elements as well. (See the explanation on social functions and their corresponding genres in Chapter 1, Section 1.2.)

By examining texts that illustrate different aspects of advertising and marketing texts, adult learners become more aware of the impact of the persuasive language that is characteristic of these texts. Specifically, adult learners learn to identify the unique way advertisers and marketers use language devices such as humour, hyperbole, sarcasm, irony, alliteration, innuendo, ambiguity, puns and neologisms to appeal to a targeted audience. Adult learners also develop their critical thinking skills by examining the stereotypes and biased language that are present in a great number of ads.

This course helps adult learners broaden their knowledge of the persuasive language and communication conventions used by advertisers and marketers. By the end of the course, adult learners will apply this knowledge when they produce an advertisement and a commercial for a product or service. They will also apply this knowledge when they produce a marketing survey.

Subject-Specific Competencies

Competencies are developed and demonstrated through the mobilization and effective use of various resources. Among these resources are language processes, strategies and textual and linguistic knowledge. The subject-specific competencies targeted in the course *English in Advertising and Marketing* are shaded in the table below.

Competencies	Key Features		
Uses language/talk to communicate and to learn (C1)	Develops resources for communicating orally and for learning	Interacts with others in different contexts	Interprets how speakers shape an oral message to create a relationship with the audience
Reads and listens to written, spoken and media texts (C2)	Develops resources to make sense of various written, spoken and media texts	Extends understanding of various written, spoken and media texts	Interprets his/her relationship to the text and the context
Produces texts for personal and social purposes (C3)	Develops resources to produce written and media texts	Follows a process to produce written and media texts	Creates a relationship with his/her audience suitable to the text and context

Although only C1 and C3 are targeted in this course, C2 is implicit as reading and listening activities complement many of the learning situations.

For more information on the subject-specific competencies, refer to the following sections:

- *Uses language/talk to communicate and to learn (C1)*, Chapter 3, Section 3.2
- *Reads and listens to written, spoken and media texts (C2)*, Chapter 3, Section 3.3
- *Produces texts for personal and social purposes (C3)*, Chapter 3, Section 3.4

Processes and Strategies

Language processes are series of actions or operations that support competency development. In other words, they are important resources that adult learners may use to become more effective speakers, listeners, readers, viewers, writers or producers of texts. In all, there are four language processes (Research, Reading, Writing and Production). The processes suggested for this course are illustrated in the table below.

Processes	Phases
Research	Planning task at hand Mobilizing resources Reflecting on the resources employed to achieve the task
Writing	
Production	

Communication and learning strategies are actions, behaviours, steps and techniques that enable adult learners to overcome obstacles, attain goals and achieve success. They are additional resources that adult learners may use to become more effective speakers, listeners, readers, viewers, writers or producers of texts. The communication and learning strategies suggested for this course are illustrated in the table below.

Strategies	
Communication	Verbal and nonverbal Rhetorical Organizational Writing Media/production
Learning	Cognitive Activating prior knowledge Meaning-making Listening Reading/viewing Information-gathering Interpretation Note-taking
	Socioaffective Feedback Collaborative
	Metacognitive Procedural Feedback Self-evaluation

Additional information on processes and strategies is provided in the following sections:

- Chapter 3, Section 3.5
- Appendix (Inventory of Strategies)

Cross-Curricular Competencies

The cross-curricular competencies are generic skills that can be developed and applied outside the school setting. They are developed in tandem with subject-specific competencies. Given the nature of the course *English in Advertising and Marketing*, the shaded cross-curricular competencies listed horizontally could easily be developed simultaneously with the shaded subject-specific competencies listed vertically. Since teachers have the option of choosing learning situations other than the ones suggested in this program, they may decide to develop cross-curricular competencies other than those shaded in the table below.

Cross-Curricular Competencies → Subject-Specific Competencies ↓	Uses information	Solves problems	Exercises critical judgment	Uses creativity	Adopts effective work methods	Uses ICT	Cooperates with others	Achieves his/her potential	Communicates appropriately
Uses language/talk to communicate and to learn	■		■	■	■	■			■
Produces texts for personal and social purposes	■		■	■	■	■			■

For more information on the key features and manifestations of the cross-curricular competencies, refer to the Diversified Basic Education Program.

Subject-Specific Content

The subject-specific content includes knowledge and cultural references.

Knowledge

The prescribed textual and linguistic elements, necessary for the development of the competencies targeted in this course, are listed below in alphabetical order.

<p>Textual Elements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ audience and communication context ✓ consistency or logical presentation of ideas ✓ emotional/intellectual/aesthetic appeal of text ✓ facts, statistics, opinions and expert opinions ✓ main and supporting ideas ✓ methods of organization (e.g. analogy, cause/effect, chronological order, comparison/contrast, example, explanation, listing of ideas) ✓ neutrality/objectivity and bias/prejudice ✓ relevant vs. irrelevant details ✓ social function(s) of text ✓ textual features of print ads: images, designs, colour, logos, special lettering ✓ textual features of print surveys: listed survey questions; tables/charts illustrating statistical results, captions, headings, etc. ✓ sufficient vs. insufficient development of ideas
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Linguistic Elements

- ✓ agreement (of person, subject and verb, verb tenses, pronoun and antecedent)
- ✓ body language (gestures/movements/facial expressions)
- ✓ common sentence errors (e.g. fragments, run-on sentences, misplaced modifiers)
- ✓ language (connotative, descriptive, colloquial, aesthetic)
- ✓ language devices (e.g. puns, neologisms, catchy phrases, humour, hyperbole, metaphor, simile, innuendo, sarcasm, irony)
- ✓ language functions (asking questions: open-ended/closed-ended/rhetorical; contextualizing and summarizing)
- ✓ language tone and register (style/level of language suitable to the context)
- ✓ modal auxiliaries
- ✓ oral communication features (voice tone, speed, volume, emphasis, enunciation, pronunciation)
- ✓ relative clauses
- ✓ simple, compound and complex sentences (coordinators, subordinators)
- ✓ syntax
- ✓ transition expressions including time and sequence markers

Cultural References

In this course, teachers may choose to have adult learners explore the sociological aspect of the culture by focusing on how advertising relays powerful messages about success, race, ethnicity, gender, class, sexuality and aging. Adult learners discover that the goal of advertisers is to manipulate their audience into equating the acquisition of a particular product/service with happiness and success. Adult learners examine the way different kinds of advertisements (e.g. clothing, beauty, health, music ads) promote specific values and appeal to the emotions of the audience by using various language and media devices. Examples include graphic, attractive, sexual or wholesome images, and colourful, humorous or seductive language. Importantly, adult learners discover that some of the common persuasive devices used in commercial advertisements are also used in texts such as public service announcements, whose goal is to promote laudable social values and pursuits.

Adult learners explore the idea that advertising and marketing tools are constantly evolving to keep pace with societal changes, and they discuss how consumers and citizens consequently have to be on the lookout for new advertising or marketing ploys. Adult learners discover that the ability to decode messages in different types of advertising texts has a profound influence on how people interact in the world. In other words, they learn that an increased ability to understand the language of persuasion helps them to make important decisions and personal choices in their daily lives.

Alternatively, teachers may decide to focus on the aesthetic or the sociolinguistic aspect of culture. (See Chapter 4 for additional information on the three cultural aspects.)

Families of Learning Situations

The term “families of learning situations” refers to groupings of learning situations that vary in style and complexity but share some common characteristics. The families of learning situations targeted in this course are shaded in the table below.

Families of Learning Situations	
	Exploring and creating literary diversity
▶	Seeking and imparting information
▶	Developing and supporting a stance

Seeking is associated with the communication purposes of gathering and understanding or interpreting information from a variety of texts such as commercials, print advertisements and texts on advertising and marketing. It is also associated with the communication purpose of collecting data through marketing surveys. **Imparting** is associated with the communication purposes of relaying and explaining the information gathered from these and other texts.

Developing is associated with the communication purposes of formulating opinions about the effectiveness of various persuasive texts and formulating ideas when preparing to create persuasive texts. **Supporting** involves providing reasons for one’s opinions of the persuasive texts of others as well as explaining or defending the ideas advanced in persuasive texts of one’s own.

Broad Areas of Learning

The table below illustrates the broad areas of learning. These five areas are selected on the basis of their importance to society. Each comprises an educational aim and focuses of development that help teachers delineate the knowledge that can be explored in specific learning situations.

Broad Areas of Learning →	Health and Well-Being	Career Planning and Entrepreneurship	Environmental Awareness and Consumer Rights and Responsibilities	Media Literacy	Citizenship and Community Life
Subject-Specific Competencies ↓					
Uses language/talk to communicate and to learn			■		
Produces texts for personal and social purposes			■		

As demonstrated in the previous chart and the examples of learning situations below, Environmental Awareness and Consumer Rights and Responsibilities is a broad area of learning well suited to this course.

When adult learners focus on Environmental Awareness and Consumer Rights and Responsibilities, they may develop:

- a critical stance towards advertising and other forms of propaganda or manipulation

For more information on the broad areas of learning, their educational aim and focuses of development, refer to the Diversified Basic Education Program.

Examples of Learning Situations

Advertising Campaign for a National Car Company

In this learning situation, adult learners are presented with the following scenario:

Online you read about an upcoming contest organized by a national car company asking students to develop a pre-launch advertising campaign for their inaugural electric vehicle. The winning participant will drive away with a new car and a lot of recognition. The possibility of winning a new car and the opportunity to combine your talents in marketing with your desire to contribute to a cleaner environment sets your creative wheels in motion. You have some great ideas about reaching the youth market using non-traditional marketing tools such as social media and viral, guerrilla and mobile tactics. You outline your ideas and register for the contest. You later receive an answer from a company executive who is enthusiastic about your approach and asks for a personal meeting where you will have four minutes to sell your ideas. You create a marketing plan and prepare a sales pitch to be delivered at the local office of the company.

Lion's Lair

In this learning situation, adult learners are presented with the following scenario:

You have an entrepreneurial spirit and have been designing things since you were very young. Your latest product has received an enthusiastic response from friends and family who are now encouraging you to contact the television show ***Lion's Lair*** to pitch your product and get the financing you need. You decide to contact the show's producers and receive a positive response requesting a preliminary marketing plan. You immediately start formulating questions for a survey to test the market you want to target. You send the questionnaire out online and are encouraged by the interest in your product. Armed with this information, you create a plan and once again contact the show's producers. Luckily, they will be taping in Montréal in the coming month and ask you to be on the show! You define your product's unique selling points and decide how to present it. Buoyed by the positive feedback and market survey results, you book your four-minute presentation with confidence.

City Logo

In this learning situation, adult learners are presented with the following scenario:

You are online when you notice that the city of Montréal wants to revive its image by creating a new logo that is more in keeping with the spirit of this dynamic metropolis. The logo is an essential part of the municipal government's mandate to bring people from all over the world to the city in order to boost the city's tourist economy and raise the morale of local businesses. The city is appealing to youth, in particular, to create a logo that has a hip, memorable, catchy phrase and image to market this unique corner of North America. As you love the city almost as much as you love putting your design ideas on paper, you are inspired to create a logo that is vivid, powerful and original. You send it off to the city with a sense of accomplishment and purpose.

End-of-Course Outcomes

By the end of the course, adult learners will be able to:

Discuss and analyze

- **short films, video and audio clips about advertising and marketing**
- **different types of advertisements**
- **articles about recent trends in advertising and marketing**

When adult learners discuss and analyze some short films and video or audio clips on advertising and marketing, they focus on the social function(s), target audiences and communication conventions of these productions. They identify the main ideas and the effectiveness or completeness of the supporting evidence in the various media texts.

They note any expert opinions that may be included and assess the relevance of these opinions. They also discuss and evaluate what they have learned from these texts about the specific language or media devices that advertisers and marketers use to persuade target audiences.

When adult learners examine different types of advertisements created for billboards, kiosks, tradeshows, special events, TV commercials and public service announcements, they focus on the ads' social function(s), target audiences and communication conventions. They identify the featured product/service in each ad and the persuasive techniques used (e.g. the bandwagon effect, celebrity endorsement, plain-folk image, loaded words and glittering generalities). They also identify examples of connotative language and evaluate its impact. They determine whether or not selective omission or bias is used in the ad. They analyze the use of facts and opinions. They discuss and analyze the use of various language and media devices such as slogans, jingles, attractive or shocking images/poses/colours/designs/logos, symbolic objects, analogies, humour, irony, and special visual or sound effects. They analyze how these devices add to the emotional, aesthetic or intellectual appeal of the ads.

When adult learners read texts about advertising and marketing trends, they focus on the social function(s), target audiences and communication conventions of these texts. They identify the main ideas and supporting details and decide whether each text is primarily informative or persuasive in nature. If they decide the text is essentially persuasive, they evaluate the persuasiveness of the arguments advanced by the author(s). They identify any informative elements such as facts, statistics and expert opinions and assess the importance and reliability of these elements. They evaluate the new information they have gathered on marketing practices and trends and what it means to them.

Produce

- **a print advertisement**
- **a 30-second commercial (audio/visual)**

When adult learners produce a print advertisement, they highlight a product or service and target a specific audience. In addition, to enhance the impact of their ad, they incorporate at least two persuasive language or media devices. (See the previous page for some examples.) They select a suitable page layout (e.g. they create a balance between images and words; place some white space between them; use consistent margins), and use attractive colours/designs/lettering to capture the interest and attention of the audience. They employ a tone (e.g. chic, funny, ironic, playful) to give the text personal style and flare. They include all relevant information (e.g. coupons, URLs, special offers and telephone numbers).

When adult learners produce a commercial, they first decide on the type of product/service they want to feature and the message they want to communicate. They note the audio/visual equipment required; the time, date and location of the taping; the producer and actors; and the availability of props, costume and sound effects needed for the taping.

They produce a text with roles/lines for the actors and include relevant information and details (e.g. product/service name, description, quality, value and/or special features). They use language suitable to the product/service they are selling or promoting; specifically, they use at least three persuasive language or media devices and tailor their choices to the medium chosen (audio/visual) and the desired effect (e.g. to persuade or inform).

Adult learners participate in a dress rehearsal, practice the taping of the commercial, and make any necessary adjustments to the text's language or audio/visual devices (e.g. lighting, sound quality). They discuss how they can make their text more effective, and if possible, they make some adjustments. After another run through, adult learners produce a final shooting of the commercial.

Text length: one page for print ads; 30 seconds for audio/visual ads

Communication context: familiar or unfamiliar audience; formal or informal tone or register, depending on the context and subject matter

Produce

- **a marketing research survey**

When adult learners design a survey for their pre-determined target audience, they define the goal of their research (i.e. the main topic and subtopics they want to explore in their survey and the results they wish to compile). They refine their language skills by writing a series of detailed and thought-provoking questions that vary in type and complexity. Their survey questions are clear and presented in an appropriate fashion (e.g. the survey includes closed- rather than open-ended questions, Likert-type scales, semantic differentials, paired comparisons, dichotomous and free responses). Adult learners determine the length of time the survey requires. After conducting the survey, they submit the survey questions.

Text length: twenty survey questions

Communication context: familiar or unfamiliar audience; formal or fairly formal tone and register suitable to the context

Present orally

- **a sales pitch**

When adult learners pitch a product or service to a panel of potential investors, they use a combination of information and persuasion to convince their investors that the product/service in question is worthy of financing. They provide an introduction and state their name and their company's name. They create a "hook," a short story or a rhetorical question in order to generate interest in the product or service they are selling. They clearly state the product/service's unique selling proposition or USP—i.e. the most important benefit of the product/service.

They continue to sell the product or service by mentioning some relevant supporting details (e.g. what the product/service is, how it works, how it saves time/reduces labor costs). They use oral communication features such as expressive voice tone and stylistic pauses to create a strong, positive impression on the audience.

In addition, adult learners use nonverbal language such as appropriate eye contact and expressive facial expressions and gestures. They communicate in a confident and convincing manner. They conclude their sales pitch by summarizing the main points and thanking the audience members for their time and participation. Finally, they offer to answer any questions.

Text length: 3-5 minutes, if presented by one person; **6-8 minutes**, if presented by groups of two to three

Communication context: unfamiliar or familiar audience; informal or formal tone and register suitable to the text type and audience

Teachers need to ensure that adult learners use planning tools such as brainstorming, lists, outlines, discussions and rehearsing as they begin creating their texts. Teachers also need to ensure that adult learners actively reflect on what they learned and how well they communicated in the texts they created. For example, adult learners may use self-evaluation checklists or participate in feedback discussions to appraise how clearly they conveyed their ideas in their advertising and marketing texts, as well as to appraise the effectiveness of the learning and communication strategies they used. Learners may use the same type of evaluation tools to reflect on what they learned as a result of discussing and creating these texts.

Evaluation Criteria for the Competencies Targeted by the Course

Competencies	Evaluation Criteria
<p>Uses language/talk to communicate and to learn (C1)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective communication of ideas • Effective communication for learning • Appropriate use of language conventions
<p>Produces texts for personal and social purposes (C3)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective organization of texts to communicate • Appropriate adaptation of language for audience and purpose • Appropriate use of structures, features, codes and conventions of texts • Correct application of language conventions (usage and mechanics)