

If you are one of the 100 million Americans who watch the Super Bowl annually, you may have enjoyed this year's commercials as much as the Chief's win.

Whether your favorite was "[Groundhog Day](#)" with Bill Murray reprising his role as "Phil Connors" promoting the Jeep Gladiator, or Hyundai Sonata's spot, "[Smaht Pahk](#)," starring Boston natives John Krasinski, Rachel Dratch and Chris Evans, or perhaps Google's nostalgic "[Loretta](#)" -- **good advertising moves -- or manipulates viewers and readers.**

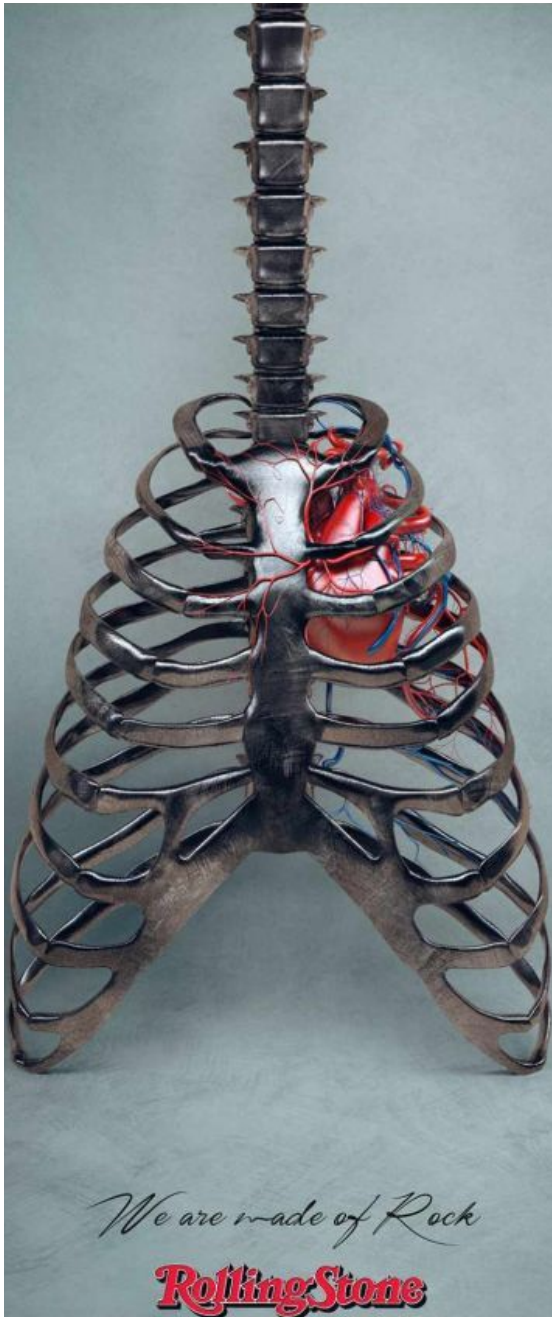


Since advertising is as American and ubiquitous as capitalism, Wego students analyze ads as part of the English curriculum. Freshmen are introduced to ethos, pathos, and logos through print ads, while sophomores deconstruct multimedia commercials. Juniors in English 3 Enriched and AP Language invest a significant amount of time engaging in

rhetorical analysis, so ads and images serve as one component of their skill development. Seniors in Media Literacy and Composition analyze advertising as propaganda. **An understanding of rhetoric prepares students to become educated consumers, voters, and citizens.**

Wego freshmen are introduced to the concept of "appeals," - the means or method to persuade through ethos or character, pathos -- emotion and values, or logos, logic, through print ads. An ethical appeal requires the speaker to establish credibility through his or her reputation, good intentions, or character. This is often achieved through authority, common ground, reliability, or expertise. According to author and media studies professor Jib Fowles, advertising fulfills a pseudo-need: "by giving form to people's deep-lying desires, and picturing states of being that individuals privately yearn for, advertisers have the best chance of arresting attention and affecting communication."

Freshmen in English 1 use a mnemonic from the College Board, SOAPSTone, to analyze the Speaker, Occasion, Audience, Purpose, Subject, and Tone of an ad. Students convert the acronym into a series of questions that enable them to identify the message of the text.



SOAPSTone

Who is the **Speaker**, the “voice” of the ad?

What is the **Occasion**, the context for the advertising? Why now?

Who is the **Audience**? Who will view this ad?

What is the **Purpose**? What is the specific reason for the ad?

What is the **Subject**? What is the topic for the ad?

What is the **Tone** or attitude of the author toward the subject?

For example, the 2017 ad for *Rolling Stone Magazine* entitled, “We are Made of Rock,” an anatomical metaphor that fuses a metal ribcage and spine to create a guitar with a heart prominently inside it -- communicates the inspiration for and timelessness of the brand. The **speaker** is the magazine itself, *Rolling Stone*; however it becomes alive through the metaphor of the human guitar. (Some may argue that image of the guitar evokes rock and roll hall of famers as the speakers, too.) The **occasion** here is the tenth anniversary of *Rolling Stone Italia*, but that is not evident or particularly relevant because of the agelessness of classic rock. The **audience** may vary depending on the magazine where the ad is run. It may be seen by disciples who subscribe to *Rolling Stone*, so it will confirm their belief in the power of the magazine and rock as an artform, a consistent **purpose** of this brand. If it is featured in other magazines, it may

serve dual purposes -- to remind readers of the nostalgia of rock or seduce them through its power and prowess. The **subject** is self-evident. *Rolling Stone* is rock. It not only embodies rock, it sees itself literally as rock and roll. Finally, the **tone** is inspirational and poignant. The tone mirrors the life created in the ad through the use of the human form; the heart, the contrasting colors, and the flowing font also create an earnest attitude. *Rolling Stone* is the heir to rock and roll through its reliance upon an appeal to credibility, *Rolling Stone's* reputation as the premier music magazine since 1967. It also relies upon an emotional appeal to a viewers' sense of hipness and prestige. **Young readers or consumers who**

understand the tools that advertisers use to motivate customers are better prepared to choose what businesses, political campaigns, or causes to support.

Rolling Stone is not alone in harnessing the power of ethos and pathos. A triptych of ads for NorthFace that ran last year entitled, “Winter is Here,” also relies on reputation and prominence. This series portrays Cersi Lannister, Jon Snow, and Daenerys Targaryen from the HBO series *Game of Thrones* as the **speakers**. The **occasion** for these ads, the end of the eight year run of *GOT* in May of 2019, demonstrates NorthFace’s desire to ally itself with the popularity of the characters and series. The **audience** is adventurous or wanna-be adventurers who feel a need for affiliation or prominence that this branding of the jacket may create. The **purpose** of the ad is to seize on the brand loyalty of *Game of Thrones* and use that passion and allegiance to sell winter gear. The **subject** of the ads are 1990 Mountain Jackets, which are promoted through the caption, “Winter is Here,” a tagline for the HBO series. “Winter” was foreshadowed “as coming” during many of the prior seasons; however, “winter is [literally and symbolically] here” during the final season of the adaptation of George R.R. Martin’s *A Song of Fire and Ice* series. NorthFace uses that phrase to motivate buyers to prepare for the winter of 2019. The **tone** of the ad is somber. The tagline creates a sense of foreboding, while the facial expressions of the characters evokes seriousness. **Deconstructing ads like these enables students to understand the purpose of marketing -- increased sales**, while recognizing one tactic that advertisers use, celebrity endorsements.



**PROLIFIC
SERIAL KILLER
MURDERS
MORE THAN ONE MILLION.**

**THAT'S QUITE THE BODY
COUNT FOR A STRAW.**

Plastic straws contribute to the suffocation, injury, poisoning, and entanglement of one million mammals, fish, sharks, birds, and turtles a year. We created Avostraw, a straw that biodegrades in 240 days, helping you eliminate threats to marine life. Our straws won't even get soggy like paper straws do.

avostraw

Logical appeals also persuade readers and viewers. Techniques such as analogies, cause and effect or comparison and contrast organization, examples or facts, expert opinions, and data and statistics impact audiences rationally. Corporations like Avostar, an environmentally- conscious home products company, may shock readers with emotional appeals like this line: **“Prolific serial killer murders more than one million. That’s quite the body count for a straw,”** and then follow-up with statistics that provide the context for the shocking hyperbole. The copy reads, **“Plastic straws contribute to the suffocation, injury, poisoning and entanglement of one million mammals, fish, sharks, birds, and turtles a year.”** This data informs readers of the consequence of straw usage and appeals to consumers’ global awareness. The final lines state, **“We created Avostraw, a straw that biodegrades in**

240 days, helping you eliminate threats to marine life.” An appreciation of logical appeals empowers readers to analyze ads and apply valid reasoning to decision-making.



Bill Murray may have put it best in the Jeep Gladiator commercial: ads “aren’t personal. It’s a game.” **Arming students with the knowledge that they are playing defense against multi-million dollar corporations that will do anything to control consumers’ dollars and earn their brand loyalty, enables them to become wise consumers - of merchandise, ideas, and beliefs.**