

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYZING ADS

STORYBOARD: Use specific examples from one or more candidates' advertisements to answer the following questions.

1. How is this ad divided into scenes? What are the dividing lines between scenes?
2. Is the ad too long? too short? How important is the ad's length to delivering its message?
3. How does each scene relate to, or fit into, the ad's overall goal?
4. In your opinion, which scene(s) is the strongest? Why? Where does it fall in the storyboard's scene chronology?
5. What similarities, if any, can you find in each candidates' storyboards? What types of scenes do opponents' ads share? How do they contrast to one another? Do they try to reach similar goals?

CATEGORIES: Use specific examples from one or more candidates' advertisements to answer the following questions.

1. How would you categorize each ad? (biographical, issue-oriented, value-laden, or negative)
2. Describe the language and tone of the ad(s). Is the narrator a male, female, or the candidate? Does the ad specify an action for the viewer (i.e. to elect the candidate, to visit the candidate's website, to vote against the opponent)? How do language and tone shape the overall message?
3. How do words, images, color, music, camera angles, lighting, people, and symbols contribute to the message of the ad? Do you think they are effective?
4. Do you see any trends—in language, in style, in images/symbols, in people—in these ads? Can you find any common links between them?
5. Did this ad influence you? Did you learn from it? How did it appeal to you? How would you change it to make it more effective?

STRATEGY: Use specific examples from one or more candidates' advertisements to answer the following questions.

1. What is the goal of each ad? What is the candidate trying to accomplish with his message?
2. How do the candidates' ads attract or appeal to their audiences? Which voting audience are they intended to reach (retired voters, new voters, working voters, swing voters)?
3. Consider this election's battleground states. (Link to list of battleground states.) Where is each candidate most likely to spend the most money on advertising? Where will he likely spend the least? Does the ad mention who paid for it?
4. Examine at least one ad. Look closely at its message. In what states might this ad air? Which voting audience is the candidate(s) trying to reach? How important is the ad's message, and how crucial are the votes of the targeted audience? At what point in the campaign would this ad be most effective?
5. What are the issues you want the candidates to address? Are you satisfied with the ads running in your state? Do the ads alone convince you to support one candidate over another?