# English 110

# Ad Analysis

# Camera Technique

# INTRODUCTION

In order to be able to analyze advertisements intelligently, you must first understand that they aren't simply thrown together at the last minute. Corporations spend millions and millions of dollars on marketing their products and services. They spend millions of dollars trying to persuade viewers (of commercials) and readers (of magazines) to purchase their products. Although somewhat sneaky, it's rather interesting to analyze advertisements for how they are constructed, and how they play with the hopes, fears, and dreams of viewers.

While you may think you know everything about advertisements because you see them every day, you probably don't take time to actually ponder each component of the advertisement, its target audience, the magazine's target audience, or the ad's overall strategy. In order to begin analyzing images, you first need the tools (and vocabulary) to do so.

In this lesson, we will begin with analyzing camera technique. Camera technique can greatly influence how an advertisement is interpreted by the viewer. Let's get started.

Consider where the camera is placed in relation to the subject, and how it relates and contributes to the ad’s overall message.

# CAMERA TECHNIQUES: SUBJECTS

In advertisements, camera techniques are as carefully thought out as the words on the page, and models selected. When analyzing camera technique, you need to know what the subject of the photograph is. The **subject** is the main focus of the advertisement or photograph. A subject can be the product itself, an object (such as a car), or a model in the scene. If the advertisement includes a group shot (with several people) there may be several subjects in the photograph. Once you have identified the subject of the advertisement, consider the subject’s relationship to the camera.

# CAMERA ORIENTATION

Consider where the camera is placed in relation to the subject, and how it relates and contributes to the ad’s overall message.

**Close Up** – The camera is located very close to the subject. In this type of shot, the subject is emphasized and the setting is either deemphasized or is nonexistent.

**Middle Shot** – In a middle shot, the subject is placed directly in front of the camera and the camera is not placed above or below the subject. This implies equality among subjects.

**Long Shot** – The camera is far away from the subject. In this type of shot, the setting rather than the subject is emphasized.

**Low Shot** – The camera is positioned below the subject, making the subject appear larger than life. This type of shot emphasizes the power and importance of the subject.

**High Shot** – The camera is positioned above the subject, making the subject appear smaller than usual. This type of shot deemphasizes the importance of the subject.

**Front View** – Is the subject facing the camera directly, or is the subject turned away from the camera? Front views, like close ups and middle shots, tend to emphasize the subject’s confidence, power and prominence in the photograph.

**Rear View** – When a subject’s back is turned to the camera, the setting (and other subjects) are emphasized. Oftentimes, this technique, like eye gaze, moves a viewer’s eyes to different areas of the advertisement.

# Eye Gaze

When considering your advertisement for the first time, think about where the model(s) are looking. Advertisers often utilize eye gaze in order to move the viewer’s eyes to different areas of the advertisement. For example: the main model in the advertisement may be placed in a prominent front-and-center position, but when we look at her, we notice she is looking at another model in the advertisement. Our eyes naturally follow her gaze to the subject that she is looking at.

**Direct Gaze** – When a subject looks directly at the camera, their power and confidence is emphasized. This establishes a direct and explicit connection between the viewer (person reading the ad) and the subject.

**Indirect Gaze** – Sometimes subjects deflect emphasis to other people or objects in the scene. If the subject is looking at someone else in the scene, consider why. This may be a strategy to move a viewer’s eyes from one subject to another subject in the advertisement.