

## **Suggestions for Reading Advertising, (pg 206 *Reading Culture*)**

1. What is the product being sold, and what is that product used for?
2. What does the ad promise? What claim does the ad make about the product?
3. What visuals are used in the ad? Do they illustrate the product claim or promise, or do they associate the product with something else—for example, a lifestyle or a celebrity?
4. Who is the target audience? Who is likely to buy the product? Is age or gender an important issue for the ad or the product? Is cost an issue? How can you tell?
5. Where does the ad appear? If it is a magazine or newspaper ad, who reads that publication? If it is a billboard, where is it placed? Who is likely to be the target audience for that publication or location?
6. How are people depicted in the ad image? Do they conform to or break with stereotypes?
7. Can you identify the cultural significance of this product? Is it a product that has been around for several generations? Is it associated with a particular idea or ideal about American culture or family life? Is it new to the market and suddenly popular with teens or young children? Does the ad refer to current events in the news or to popular films or media events?
8. Is this ad more text than image or more image than text? In other words, does the advertiser think the audience wants more information about the product, or is the audience one that will more likely be persuaded by the visual appeal of the ad? For example, ads in electronics equipment magazines give readers quite a bit of text—the details of the equipment—suggesting that advertisers assume the readers know something about the product and are looking for specific features. Ads for clothing, cosmetics, soap products, or cigarettes rarely provide much information beyond the product name, the product claim—“softer, younger-looking skin”—and the advertising image.
9. Does the ad look familiar to you? Does it remind you of other ads or other media? If it does, what is that association?