

LIVING ROOM CANDIDATE HOMEWORK – DUE MONDAY 2/23

<http://www.livingroomcandidate.org/>

A political commercial (or any commercial) is not a neutral or random form of communication. Its purpose is either to change the viewer's thinking in some way or to reinforce the viewer's belief in the candidate. The greater the viewer's awareness of the choices that went into the making of the ad, the better equipped he or she is to separate the image of the candidate from the issues.

Examine one political ad from the *The Living Room Candidate*, paying close attention to all of the questions listed below:

After recording your observations, consider the reasons that various cinematic elements were chosen. The following questions can help you organize your thoughts:

1. What was the candidate's main purpose in this ad? What did he want you to feel after watching it?
2. Look back at the worksheet. Choose three things that you observed about the commercials. How did these elements or qualities strengthen the candidate's purpose and message?
3. At whom do you think this commercial was aimed? Support your answer with at least three reasons.

AFTER WATCHING YOUR AD PLEASE ANSWER THE FOLLOWING IN PARAGRAPH FORM – THAT MEANS AT LEAST 7-9 SENTENCES – THIS WILL BE GRADED BASED ON LENGTH, AND QUALITY.

1. In your opinion, what makes an "effective" presidential campaign commercial? Based on your criteria, was the ad that you viewed effective? Explain why or why not, supporting your opinions with details.
2. Choose two other campaign commercials and analyze them using the questions listed below.
3. Choose a television commercial for any product. Analyze the commercial according to the same principles.

Questions to use for analyzing ads:

1. What is the setting of the ad? Is there one setting or many?
2. What props are featured?
3. How are people dressed?
4. Who are the "performers"—the candidate, or the "real" people? What kinds of people are in the ad? Consider age, race, and gender? What are they doing? How do they behave?
5. Where is the camera in relation to what is being filmed?
6. How has the ad been lit? Is it bright? Dark?
7. What colors are used?
8. What screen text do you see? For how long? Is the text small or large, color or black-and-white?
9. How have the images been edited together?
10. What music (if any) do you hear? What kind of music is it?
11. What other sounds do you hear—e.g. people speaking, sound effects, etc.?
12. Is there an audio voiceover? What type of voice is used? How does the voice sound? What is actually said?