

Sample Poster (Visual Text) Analysis

This resource is designed to be used as a sample of how to write a visual text analysis. Students should create their own analysis during the relevant learning experience.

Overview

Year 7

Trains move faster than you

Year 7 (12-13 year old) students should concentrate on clarifying the use of gaze, angle and social distance to create perspective.

Year 8

Spray-painting poster

Year 8 (13-14 year old) students should concentrate on clarifying how allusions to other texts can enhance and/or layer the meaning of a visual or multimodal text.

Year 9

Trespassing could cost you more than a fine

Year 9 (14-15 year old) students should concentrate on how evaluation can be expressed directly and indirectly using devices, for example allusion, evocative vocabulary and metaphor.

Year 10

Pick up the pieces

Year 10 (15-16 year old) students should concentrate on how people's evaluations of texts are influenced by their value systems; the context; and the purpose and mode of communication.

Analysis

Year 7

Trains move faster than you



Terminology and learning objective: gaze, angle and social distance

This poster consists of a photograph of a young person, male or female (the victim seems gender-neutral) in a body bag with only their face showing through the gap in the zip. At the bottom of the poster the slogan reads 'Trains move faster than you. Only cross at pedestrian gates'. It is most likely to be an urban setting.

This is a *high angle shot* looking directly down onto the victim. A white *light* shines onto their face, creating shadow on the right-hand side. The *gaze* is indirect as we view the victim who is unaware of us. We see them as someone's child, someone's sibling, grandson or granddaughter, friend, neighbour... We also see them as the emergency service people might (the police, ambulance staff), as the train driver who hit the victim might. As this young person is unknown to us, we see them as a victim, and we are sad that someone so young has died in this way. That it is such a tragic and unnecessary waste of life. Their family, with a much closer association, will be devastated by the loss of their loved one.

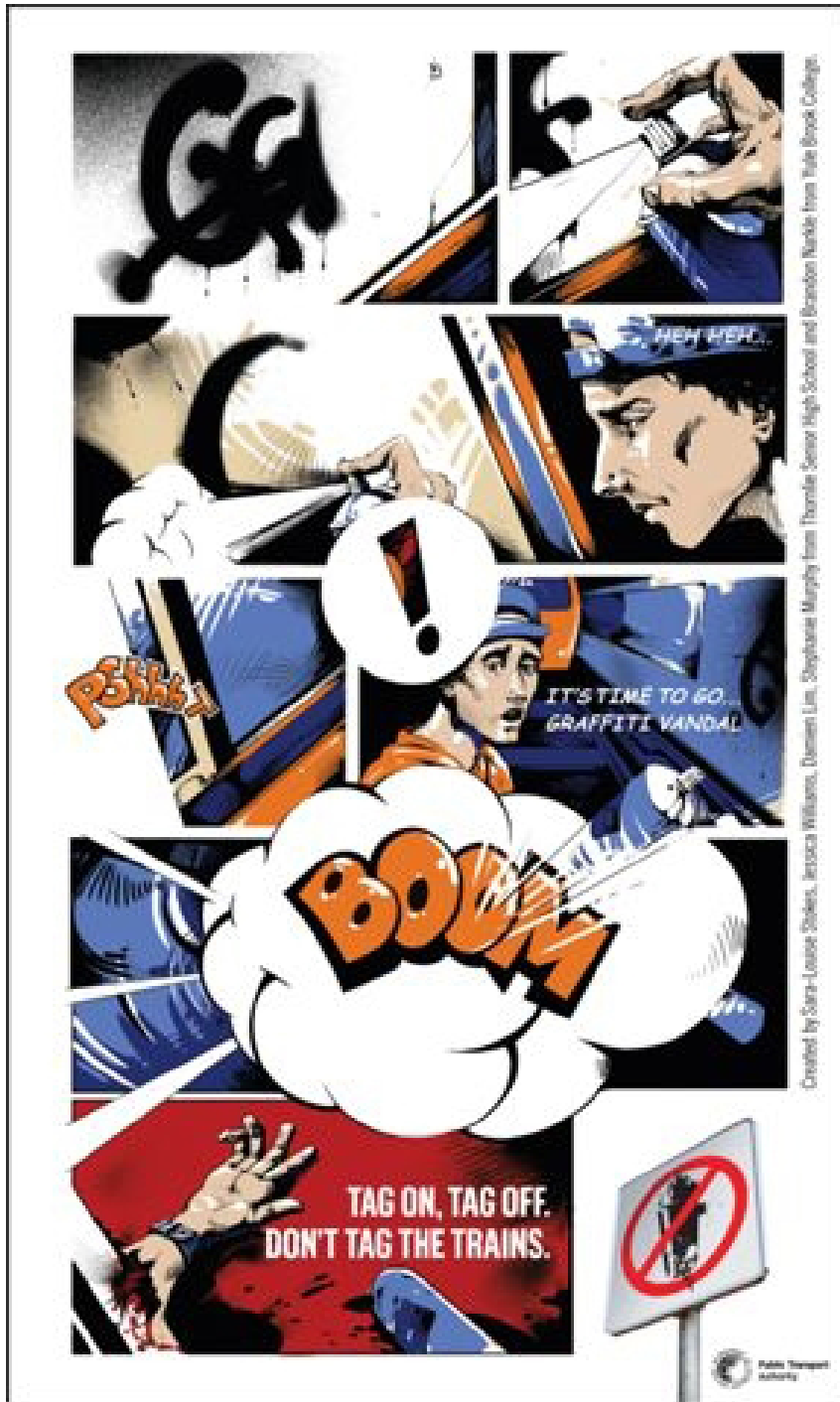
The *layout* is effective in that our eyes are drawn to the victim's face in the top right of the poster. We then follow the lines of the open zip downwards to where the teeth meet, join together and *symbolise* a railway track.

The blue and red *colours* reflected in the shiny fabric of the body bag, represent the flashing lights of the police car or a similar emergency vehicle. The bright white light at the bottom centre of the poster symbolizes the train's light and can be looked at from two perspectives – the light moving along the track (the zip) towards the victim and secondly, coming towards us, the viewer, so that we see through the eyes of the victim, as seen in the flare given off by the bright light.

The two lines of bold white *font* are block style along the left hand margin, instead of being centred. The second line has smaller font than the first. This helps to create *balance* because of the off-centre placement of the victim's face in the top right of the poster.

Year 8

Spray-painting



Terminology and learning objective: how allusions to other texts can enhance and or layer the meaning of a visual or multimodal text.

This poster uses *allusion* in this poster as it is like a graphic novel in its style and layout, which will appeal to viewers. The 'story' focuses on a train tagger who, while tagging, has a nasty accident and loses his hand when hit by another train.

The viewer gets drawn in as they follow the comics to make meaning. The *close-ups* of the tag and spray can, zoom out to become an *oblique angle* of the tagger's face. The train, that he is tagging, becomes *personified* or humanized when it says 'Pshhht', "It's time to go graffiti vandal". The tagger, with a puzzled look on his face, is then hit by another passing train. The use of *onomatopoeia* 'Boom!' and the *movement lines* show the impact of the train hitting the young man. The final comic cell is a *high angle shot* looking down on the severed arm of the tagger and lying alongside, the can of spray- paint. The *slogan*, in this final cell, is in bold white font and reads 'Tag on, Tag off. Don't tag the trains" This slogan could also be seen as an *allusion* to The Karate Kid feature film where Danny learns to "Wax on. Wax off" as part of his martial arts training; as well as the process of electronic ticketing 'tagging on and off' when catching a train. In this case, however, the "Tag off" means that his tagging arms gets cut off.

The design of the poster means that the viewer doesn't have to see a horrific image of the severed limb. The comic shot of the arm, while being quite gruesome, would be even more shocking if portrayed in a 'real' image. The comic also protects the viewer from seeing the real impact of the collision with the train. The message for the viewer is enhanced by the use of the graphic novel genre as it has appeal for a young (and possibly not so young) audience.

Year 9

Trespassing could cost you more than a \$200 fine



Public Transport Authority Transperth

**TRESPASSING COULD
COST YOU MORE
THAN A \$200 FINE.**



STAY OFF THE TRACKS

There's no good reason for you to be on the tracks. The penalty is \$200 or your life.

Terminology and learning objective: directly and indirectly using devices, for example allusion, evocative vocabulary and metaphor.

In this poster we are presented with a highly *emotive* black and white *image* of a young man holding towards the camera his right arm, which has been amputated below the elbow. Below the photograph, on a contrasting orange, red and yellow background is a pun 'Trespassing could cost you more than a

\$200 fine.' At the foot of the poster the crossed railway tracks become a symbolic cross, signifying death, and together with the imperative Stay off the tracks, and slogan 'There's no good reason for you to be on the tracks. The penalty is \$200 or your life' bring across a strong message for the Transperth and Public Transport Authority WA railway campaign.

The *oblique*, slightly *high-angled shot* focuses on his facial expression, but the stump is more *salient* by being deliberately placed closest to the viewer. His face, unsmiling, is lit by *side lighting* and surrounded by shadow. His nakedness suggests vulnerability but his facial expression could also suggest that he is accepting of the loss and feels comfortable enough to display it to a wider audience. He is not looking at the viewer, but away into the distance – an *averted Gaze*. This allows the *Gaze* to be non-confrontational – as the viewer we are able to look at his injury with curiosity or pity or whatever emotions we feel and not feel guilty for judging him or examining the stump closely. There is a sense of *Direct Gaze* as he wants us to look at his arm. The shadow is a subtle *frame* around the victim. By viewing the person, not just the amputation, it is more real, more human and we realise that accidents like this do happen.

The bright orange, red and yellow *colours* of the background provide contrast to the photograph above, but they also add weight to achieve balance within the poster. The *composition* of the poster relies on the golden rectangle or the golden ratio that is visually or aesthetically pleasing. The photograph, although smaller than the much larger contrasting section, is the more *salient* in terms of the composition. The emphasis and impact lie with the photograph. The *colours* are *symbolic* of danger and there is deliberate *framing* with the red-orange around the edge of the yellow centre. The yellow, usually associated with happiness, draws attention to the symbolic railway cross at its heart. The use of space between the pun and the cross helps the viewer to glean several messages from the poster. The bold black capitalised font of the *pun* is centred. The use of the capitalized *font*, which is more difficult to read than lower case, makes us concentrate on what the pun is saying, as we make links to the image above.

The *language devices* used in the poster are clear in their message. The *pun* is less direct than other examples of language used as it requires some thinking and linking between the image and language. The two meanings of ‘cost’ refer to a financial cost of \$200 but more importantly, the physical and emotional impact of the loss of a limb or (as another link is made to the symbolic railway cross) ultimately the loss of life. The use of the *personal pronoun* “you” directly targets the viewer and the *imperative* commands the viewer to “Stay off the tracks’. The slogan, while having a colloquial tone, reiterates the ultimatum to the viewer, with “The penalty is \$200 or your life”. The use of ‘penalty’ here seems almost an understatement when referring to the loss of life.

Year 10

Poster 4: Pick up the pieces



Terminology and learning objective: how people's evaluations of texts are influenced by their value systems, the context and the purpose and mode of communication.

This poster consists of three separate but connecting parts within its *composition*. A jig-saw coffin, made up of pieces of wood fitted together, sits at the top of the poster. The *pun* 'After we pick up the pieces, it's your family's turn' is written below this in large white bold *font* on a black background. At the foot of the poster the crossed railway tracks become a *symbolic* cross, signifying death, and together with the *imperative* Stay off the tracks, and *slogan* 'There's no good reason for you to be on the tracks. The penalty is \$200 or your life' bring across a strong message for the Transperth and Public Transport Authority WA railway campaign.

Our attention is drawn immediately to the *image* of the coffin with its many blocky parts fitted together. Why is it like this we ask? Our curiosity is satisfied by the *pun* below the image where reference is made to "pieces" – both literally and metaphorically, giving meaning to the image. "After we pick up the pieces" refers to the police, emergency services and train staff who literally pick up the 'pieces' or remains of the victim after an accident. The *metaphorical* meaning refers to the emotional impact that the accident will have on your family who have to deal with this tragic loss of a family member when "it's your family's turn" to pick up the "pieces". The use of *space* between the pun and the cross helps the viewer to build their understanding from several messages within the poster. The use of the capitalized *font*, which is more difficult to read than lower case, makes us concentrate on what the pun is saying, as we make links to the image above it. The full stop at the end of the sentence suggests finality.

As the viewer, we gaze upon the coffin, which symbolizes a dead person, rather than upon a person. It is almost a sense of the surreal as the victim is anonymous and this anonymity suggests that it could be us in the coffin. There is no hint made as to what age, gender, or race the victim is. The only thing that we know, as the viewer, is that our family is involved. The repetition of the *personal pronouns* 'you' and 'your' target you as a potential victim.

The diagonal *lighting* illuminates the coffin in the darkness of the morgue with darkness creating a shadowy, spooky atmosphere. This *high angle shot* looks down on the coffin and is intercepted by the light from the top left which creates a subtle framing by the darkness around it. The same lighting angle is highlighted in the railway cross symbol which is a similar shape to the coffin itself. Light reflects off where the tracks meet at the top left intersection. The black background is also lit from the top left as we can see flecks of shiny gravel shining in the top left section of the background.

The *composition* of the poster relies on the golden rectangle or the golden ratio that is visually or aesthetically pleasing. The photograph or shot, although smaller than the much larger black contrasting section, is the more *salient* in terms of the composition. The emphasis and impact lie with the image of the coffin. The viewer's eye, initially drawn to the coffin image, is led down to the weighty lower section of the poster by the large bold white font contrasting heavily with the black. The eye is drawn through the font, which is centred on the poster, to the vertical railway track leading to the imperative and slogan.