

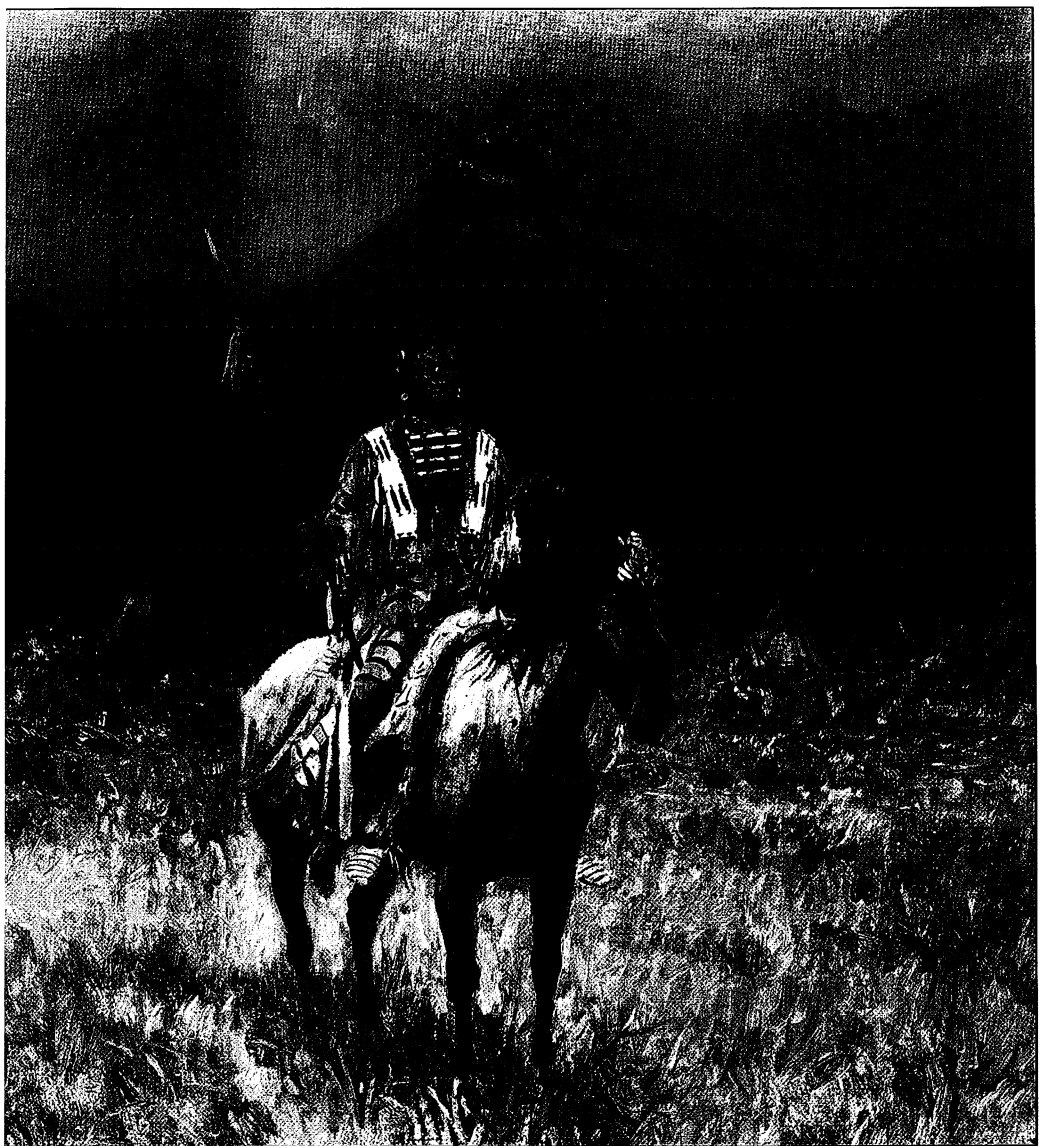
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Für den Tageslichtprojektor:

Zu unserer Folienbeilage

Friederike Klippel

Four Advertisements

We are surrounded by advertising every day. Advertisements are carried by our daily paper and the magazines we read, they are pushed into our letterboxes and posted on billboards which we see on our way to school or work. They take up a considerable amount of time on radio and television. We just cannot escape from them. Our permanent contact with advertisements has led us to develop a certain feeling for the techniques used, even if we are often not fully aware of them. Advertising makes use of particular colours to create an intended emotional response. Likewise, images, situations and slogans are geared towards a clearly defined target group, from young mothers to cat owners, from teenagers to old-age pensioners.

The style of advertising varies in different cultures. A lot of British advertisements – both on television

and in the printed media – work with understatement, ambiguity, word play, humour or irony. German advertising is more direct, straightforward and, I think, far less funny.

We may use real advertisements in the English class for a variety of reasons, as an introduction to popular British culture, as an eye-opener for advertising techniques or as a language exercise. The transparency of this issue of ENGLISCH carries four incomplete advertisements, which are mainly intended as a stimulus for creative language work. Thus the transparency could form the initial or the final step in a teaching unit on (British or American) advertising, but it can also be used as an independent language exercise. Considering how avidly children watch advertising on TV, it is reasonable to expect that some of that interest will be transferred to working with a transparency of adverts.

Teaching hints

Although the transparency does not demand a lot of language work in order to fill it in, it can nevertheless provide the focal point for a number of preparatory and follow-up activities. Even beginners in English may be able to complete the drawings with a product name and perhaps a simple slogan. For further activities connected with the transparency, however, a more than elementary grasp of the English language is necessary.

1. Matching words and pictures

Before you show the transparency to your class, write these adjectives on the board: *fresh, strong, beautiful, fast, natural, quiet, modern, healthy, clean, useful, best, sweet, luxurious, expensive, cheap, happy, exciting, peaceful, lonely*. Then put the transparency on the projector. The pupils are asked to choose three adjectives for each picture. The most popular and the most unusual choices are noted on an overlay transparency and discussed.

2. Writing an advertisement

The class is divided into four (or eight) groups. Each group is allotted one picture in such a way (e.g. a photocopy of it in a sealed envelope) that the other groups are not aware which one each group is working on. Each group invents a name for the product advertised in their picture and writes a slogan. They add the slogan to their picture. When the groups have finished, they write only the names of their products on the board. The others try to guess which pictures and products are referred to. Some of these may be quite obvious, others more obscure. Finally, all advertisements are displayed and discussed.

3. Promotion campaign

The pupils work together in small groups or pairs. They work out a complete promotion campaign for one of the products shown in the advertisements on the transparency. This includes interviews with some other pupils in the class about the appeal of the name they thought up, a description of their intended target group, in-depth interviews with prospective buyers, some thoughts about the price, maybe even ideas for a TV commercial or a radio spot. This activity could be organized as a simulation game with different roles being assigned to the pupils in each group and a presentation of their work either in the form of a poster display or a role play at the end.

Working with this transparency might lead some classes to want to design their own advertisements or prepare collages from authentic English language advertisements. Follow-up projects may include a look at the language of advertising (e.g. puns, alliteration), the comparison of authentic adverts for certain types of products, or the choice of names for products. The latter especially could be quite an eye-opener for those pupils who always wondered why pet food, sweets or household cleaners have such funny names.