Notes to the teacher

This is a comprehensive student booklet which accompanies the novel *Ads R Us* by Claire Carmichael.

You can choose to use it in its entirety or extract sections as you wish.

The novel *Ads R Us* is suitable for an Area of Study type of unit or straight media unit or close study of novel. The novel deals with topical and relevant issues surrounding the power of advertising and the media.

In the student booklet, I have endeavoured to cover a range of skills and tasks. These include: language analysis, evaluative writing skills, creative and media tasks, comprehension and research tasks across a range of text types and modes suitable for Year 9, 10 or 11 students.

For the New South Wales Stage 6 English current syllabus, this novel is suitable as a supplementary text for Module C: ‘Powerplay’ and ‘Telling the Truth’. For the 2009–12 New South Wales Stage 6 English Syllabus, this novel is suitable as a supplementary text for Module C: ‘Conflicting Perspectives’.

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Food for thought: The Power of Persuasion

1. What is advertising?

2. Which aspects of our life does it affect?

3. What are some of your favourite brands or products? List them below.

4. Some supermarkets have their own ‘No Frills’ brands. How do you think the power of advertising has been used here?
5. Let's consider the effectiveness of the different types of media when it comes to advertising. Give a star rating out of 5 for each of the following media types and explain its effectiveness in persuading their target audience to buy their product. Complete the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Media</th>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Television</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Radio</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Print media (magazines and newspapers)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Electronic media</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Billboards and posters</td>
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6. In what ways can advertising be used to promulgate an idea rather than a product? Brainstorm and find as many examples as you can.

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Research Task

PART ONE

- Find an example of an electronic or print version of your favourite ads or brands. Create a portfolio of FOUR ads.

- For EACH advertisement, write a 10 line paragraph explaining why the ad is effective. Consider: its purpose, audience and the medium used, layout, colour, slogans, symbols, catch phrases, neologisms and jargon.

- How effective is the ad in persuading you to buy the product? What emotive appeal does it have for you? Explain in one paragraph.

PART TWO

- Find TWO examples of ads which you find offensive or ineffective or annoying. For each example, explain why you dislike the ad. Which particular elements of the advertisement are poorly constructed or thought out? Write five lines for each advertisement.

CLASS DISCUSSION

Discuss your findings with the class. Tally the class findings in a table like the one below:

| Favourite Ads | Name of ad | Common reason e.g. colour, layout, slogan, etc. | Worst Ads | Name of ad | Common reason e.g. colour, layout, slogan, etc. |
Food for thought: The Power of Packaging

Read the following article, ‘Tricks of the Trade’ from Good Living (Sydney Morning Herald, May 6, 2008) and answer the questions that follow in full sentences. This article can be found at:

"Consumers these days are far more aware of nutritional values and ingredients than they were even 10 years ago and I think they are looking for more premium products," he says.

But enough about authenticity.

Let’s get back to the pretty colours, which awe, amuse, excite and fascinate. The best and fastest way to catch a consumer’s eye—other than shape, images and last, but not least, colour—"Cadbury purple is a great example of branding by colour," he says.

A genuinely tasty product lies inside its tasty packaging.

"So is Whiskas purple. It’s not necessarily that people think: ‘Oh, I like that colour, I'm going to buy that product’ though that can play a role. It’s more about using semantics to help people make quick decisions and find what they’re looking for."

"Even there is so much on the shelf, you are giving people a trigger to recognise the brand they’re searching for. If you’re looking for Cadbury, you can walk into the confectionery aisle and find it without even thinking. They can also make unadvertised products that are stocked in different aisles and you instantly recognise them as Cadbury because the colour is so powerful."

Paul Drowne, director of Fields Design, a Sydney supermarket packaging specialist whose clients have included Nestlé, Arnotts and France, says if packaging is going to sell a product successfully, it first needs to stand out from its competitors on the shelf—but not too much.

"For example, pale blue, dark blue and white tend to be associated with dairy products," he says. "If you suddenly put icecream in a fluorescent purple container, it might well stand out from the crowd but it might also alienate some people for not looking natural enough in the dairy lane."

These “category acronyms”, whether they’re dominating colour, shape or image, also help consumers find what they’re looking for. Potato chips, for instance, have a set of common pink, for salt and vinegar; dark blue for plain and green for chicken, for example, for they think’s honest or Real McCoy.

Lovelock is less concerned with the setting power of packaging aesthetics than with the selling power of functional, safe and convenient packaging and he believes consumers are, too.

"Because they walk with unique attention when a redesign adds a new element of convenience, such as when Fritos moved from selling glass bottles to tomato sauce in plastic, squeezable containers."

Goodman Fielder's move to sell its White Waxy flour in screw-top plastic jars may be another such example. "Lovelock believes manufacturers and packaging designers want their products to succeed on the shelf—which is an increasingly competitive place."

particularly with supermarket private labels moving in—they should be thinking more about the ageing of the population and shrinking households."

Typography on packaging is often too small, too busy, packages are difficult or even dangerous to open, and as an example—pre-packed portions of meat are too large for one- and two-person households, which may explain why some shoppers are returning to butchers.
1. According to research from the British Supermarket chain Tesco, identify how many products are vying for our attention on supermarket shelves and how many are actually selected on an average shopping expedition?

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________________________________________________________________________

2. What THREE aspects play a significant role in determining which products will appeal to the consumer?

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3. Who is Louis Cheskin? Explain the coined phrase: ‘sensation transference’.

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4. What did Louis Cheskin do to margarine in the U.S to make it more of a desirable product?

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5. According to Chris Perks, managing director of Anthem, Melbourne, list the best and fastest way to catch a consumer’s eye in order of priority.

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6. Explain what is meant by the phrase: ‘Branding . . . is more about using semiotics to help people make quick decisions and find what they are looking for’.

7. What products are the colours pale blue, dark blue and white usually associated with?

8. Explain what is meant by ‘category norms’.

9. What does Lovell have to say about the power of packaging to persuade consumers to buy?

CREATIVE TASK

Now apply the information you have acquired from your reading of this article to design your own cereal box. Ensure that you think about the following: the purpose, your intended audience, visual appeal, name, logo, colours, information, typography, etc. In your design, you should include the front, side panel and the back of your cereal box. You may use any medium you wish to design your cereal box. HAVE FUN!!!
CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

Prologue, Chapters 1 and 2

1. Describe the events that take place in the Prologue.

2. The narrative voice changes from third person narrative in the Prologue to first person narrative in Chapters 1 and 2. Why do you think the author has done this?

3. We are introduced to a number of important characters in these opening chapters. Describe the following characters in detail by referring closely to the text as support:
   a) Taylor
b) Aunt Kara

c) Uncle Paul

d) Barrett
4. The **setting** of this novel is futuristic and introduces two contrasting worlds. As we move from Simplicity to the Chattering World, we are given an insight into the cultural beliefs and customs of each community.

List all the cultural beliefs and customs you learn about each world in the table below. A few examples have been provided for you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Simplicity</th>
<th>Chattering World</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Simple clothing in muted shades</td>
<td>- Clothing is bright</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Emphasis is placed on quietness and harmony</td>
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5. Read page 16 carefully and describe in your own words the philosophy of Simplicity.
6. A predominant **thematic concern** that is emerging from these opening chapters is **Nature vs Technology**. A **theme** is the main message or idea a text. Find two examples which best represent this theme and explain it below.

**Nature**

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**Technology**

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**CREATIVE TASK – Persuasive poster**

7. Now that you have acquired a better understanding of Simplicity, design a persuasive poster which captures its philosophy and lifestyle.

A **persuasive poster** is a large, eye-catching public notice or advertisement, which is designed to change the way people feel, think and act. They attract public interest to important social and political issues.

Your persuasive poster should include the following features:

- **Striking graphics** – images which focus the viewer’s attention on an issue or person and identifies the target audience for whom the message is intended

- A **simple message** or **slogan** – of Simplicity’s philosophy, using a minimum of text in large, bold print

- **Selective use of facts** – of Simplicity’s lifestyle.
8. You will have noticed that in these opening chapters, the author, Claire Carmichael, has used neologisms such as *drekdom, om, Resonic Earbud* in keeping with the futuristic setting.

**Neologisms** are new words or phrases which have been created to show the changes in expression, technology or ideology.

As you read *Ads R Us*, keep a thorough list of all the neologisms used. For each neologism you find, provide a definition or description in the table below. Be sure to write down the page references so you can determine its meaning from the context.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Neologism</th>
<th>Definition/Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Drekdom (p 2)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Om (p2)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Resonic Earbud</td>
<td>(p2)</td>
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<td>The Plagues (p 8)</td>
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CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

Chapters 3 and 4

1. What does Taylor’s attitude towards the use of real plates and handkerchiefs tell us about the Chattering World? Support your view with close reference to the text.

2. Explain how billboards work in the Chattering World.

3. a) Review Chapter 2. What is Aunt Kara’s Organisation called and what is its motto?

   b) Read page 27 carefully. What is her belief about the importance of ads?
4. Explain the significance of Taylor's comment that: 'Only a few select people could turn advertising off' (p27).

5. Use THREE adjectives to describe how Barrett feels about leaving Simplicity. Support each adjective with specific references to these two chapters.

6. Another thematic concern is raised in this novel. This is evident in Uncle Paul’s quotation usually used to describe his sister, Kara: ‘Power tends to corrupt and, and absolute power corrupts absolutely’ (p33). What do you think is meant by this? Explain your answer with specific references to what you have learnt about Aunt Kara and her world thus far.
7. Who is Professor Adrian Stokes and what is his role in the advertising company?

8. According to Uncle Paul, how might advertising be used to control other people? Explain your answer by referring closely to the text.

9. a) What is the ‘Ugly-D to Teen Queen’ television show?

b) Read pages 35–37 carefully. How does Aunt Kara justify this TV show to Barrett?
Food for thought: The Power of Persuasion

10. Uncle Paul states that through advertising, ‘people’s minds are controlled, their willpower sapped’. What do you think? Refer to TWO television shows that you think serve to illustrate your view.
11. As Aunt Kara enters the rapid restaurant/drive-through, the attendant greets her by name and her meal is automatically debited to her account. What are the advantages and disadvantages of this society? In dot points, list these below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advantages</th>
<th>Disadvantages</th>
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CREATIVE TASK – Television advertisement

A television advertisement or commercial is the use of moving images from a storyboard which, when combined with aural devices such as dialogue, sound effects and a captivating jingle; serve to sell a product or service to a target audience.

Compose a series of drawings to form a storyboard of 6–8 panels which advertises Cluck Cluck Chicken using the information acquired from pages 39–41 of your novel.

Remember to include only the important visual action in the panels. Visual devices include: characters, dramatic situations, variations of light and colour. You may use a variety of camera shots to do this: extreme long shot, close up shot, mid-shot, full shot, extreme close-up shot.

Aural features include voice-over, music, sounds, a clever slogan (using alliteration, or repetition or pun). Check out the following website to give you some ideas: http://hometown.aol.com/grehigh6/storyboard_design.html

Enjoy!
CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

Chapters 5, 6, 7

1. From your reading of Chapter 6, what does Taylor think about her mother and father?

2. What is a GPS Safety Sentinel?

3. Why does Adrian want his daughter, Taylor to spy on Barrett?

4. What do we learn about the following characters in these chapters?
   a) Gabi
b) Eva

c) Acantha

d) Steve Rox
When Adrian meets Barrett, he is intrigued by him and uses an allusion to describe him as a ‘noble savage’ (p 60). An allusion is a historical, topical, mythical or biblical reference adding greater depth of description to the text.

Find out the meaning of ‘noble savage’ for each literary text that is being alluded to and write your information in the space below.

a) Rousseau’s noble savage

b) Huxley’s noble savage

According to Eva, why don’t people in the Chattering World shake hands anymore?
7. Why does Eva seem to think that the media would take great delight if there was a Q-Plague outbreak?

8. Another thematic concern of power and technology is raised in these chapters. Explain how technology is being used in the Chattering World to control and corrupt individuals. In your response, you should consider the role of television and electronic tagging for identification.

9. When Barrett is told that he will be meeting Senator Rox for dinner, he is amused by the term ‘senator’. What connotations does this term have?
CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

Chapters 8, 9, 10

1. In point form, list all the character traits of Senator Rox/Uncle Maynard from these chapters.

2. What hidden motive does Uncle Maynard have for monitoring Barrett closely?

3. What does Taylor think about this task she has been given to monitor Barrett? Support your answer with close reference to Chapter 8.
4. What is Steve Rox’s attitude towards Barrett?

5. Once again a literary allusion is used to describe Senator Rox’s smile on page 84. Explain the significance of this Shakespearean quote?

6. Another thematic concern emerging in this novel is that of deception. How might this apply to Taylor? Explain your answer with specific references to the text.
CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

Chapters 11, 12, 13

1. Chapter 11 opens with a description of Barrett’s first day at Fysher-Platt Academy, where he is startled to learn some of the misguided values of the Chattering World. Describe Barrett’s attitude to the following:

   Huge garden

   Water fountains

   Behaviour of the students

   Security and teaching staff as ‘nons’

   The tight control of all information

2. How do companies use school students to endorse their products?
3. What potential problems do you see with this form of advertising? List these below.

4. Chapter 12 introduces another important thematic concern – that of peer pressure. Discuss, with close reference to the text.

5. Barrett is given an anaesthetic at the dentist without his permission and has had a Safety Sentinel inserted in his wrist to establish his exact location at any given moment. What impact is technology having over humanity in the Chattering World?
6. What are the advantages and disadvantages of living in a bedroom like Barrett’s, once it has been ‘activated’? List these in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advantages</th>
<th>Disadvantages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

Chapters 14, 15, 16

1. Explain how the news and advertising are closely linked.

2. Why is Barrett made to sit the entrance exams?

3. Mrs Ives’ lesson in Corporations and Culture raises another thematic concern about loss of privacy. Discuss this idea with specific reference to the text.
4. Explain how Acantha’s description of Mr Dunne as ‘iconoclastic’ (p138) is appropriate.

5. What is ADA and what is its intended purpose?

6. What criticisms are made by ADA about Aunt Kara’s Ads-4-Life Council and Senator Maynard Rox?
By now you should have read the novel in its entirety. Complete the following writing tasks and activities in order to gain a thorough understanding of the novel and its key concerns.

1. **PLOT SUMMARY – Listing the main events**

   In dot points, list in chronological order the main events that occur until the conclusion of the novel.
2. a) Read pages 246 and 247 carefully and explain what ‘UnderThought’ is and how it relates to the Hitler Youth.

b) Research the Hitler Youth to find out some interesting facts about the following:
   - How the Education system was changed to indoctrinate school children
   - Compulsory organisations and activities for children outside of school
   - Statistics of Hitler Youth members between the period of 1932 – 1939
   - Propaganda through the press, radio, cinema, literature, the theatre, music and fine arts.

3. **IMAGINATIVE RECREATION – Letter**

   You are Barrett. Write a letter to your friends back in Simplicity describing your experiences in the Chattering World. Your letter should be typed up and correctly formatted. Be sure to use language that is appropriate to Barrett’s age and intelligence. Here is a checklist of some of the main events to include:

   - [ ] your first couple of days at school
   - [ ] your experiences at Shoppaganza
   - [ ] your bedroom in Aunt Kara’s house
   - [ ] what you think about your cousin Taylor
   - [ ] your opinions of Steve Rox and Senator Maynard
   - [ ] what you learn about the power of advertising in the Chattering World
4. **LINKING THE CHARACTERS TO THE THEMATIC CONCERNS**

Obviously in a didactic novel like this, characters are representations or embodiments of themes, values or issues the author is trying to explore. Often, these values and characters are conflicting. Settings can also be used as symbols against which the characters move and against which we judge their moral and ethical standards. To this end, provide a character profile of the main characters, aligning them to themes, values and issues they represent.

Use the following tables as a starting point to create your own table on character, themes and setting.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character</th>
<th>Character Traits</th>
<th>Textual evidence</th>
<th>Theme/s which they represent</th>
<th>Your explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Setting</th>
<th>Description of setting</th>
<th>Textual evidence</th>
<th>Theme/s concerns which they represent</th>
<th>Your explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

5. **DEBATE TOPICS**

The novel obviously raises some controversial ideas about the power of the media through advertising. In teams of three or four, debate the following topics that relate to the ideas of the novel:

- That advertising should be banned
- That parents should have the right to use personal tracking devices on their children
- That only members of the Elite Crowd should profit from company endorsements
- That it should be against the law to criticise corporations and companies
- That personal privacy is a selfish desire
- That advertising should be tailored to your personal needs
- That politicians have the right to indoctrinate the young