



# The Thirty-Second Candidate

## Political Advertising on Television

### Pre-Visit Activity:

Through the following exercise, you and your students can explore political advertising and better understand its tools and techniques.

### Vocabulary

Begin by asking students to define and discuss the following words. Students should become familiar with these words and concepts as they will be referenced in the class.

**Advertising:** Paid communication conveyed by a mass medium that directs public attention to a product or idea by emphasizing its desirable qualities.

**Brand:** A class of goods identified by name as the product of a single firm or manufacturer. To brand is to create a unique identity for a product in order to distinguish it from its competitors.

**Jingle:** A catchy, repetitious short verse or song in a commercial, created to help the consumer remember the product.

**Logo:** A product's visual identifying statement, created from a unique lettering style, typeface, or graphics.

**Media/Medium:** A channel or system of communication, information, or entertainment, such as broadcast or cable television, magazines, newspapers, radio, or billboards. Mass media bring advertising messages to the public.

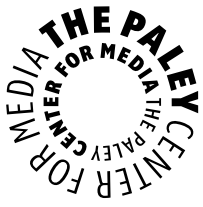
**Slogan:** A short, catchy phrase, usually more memorable than meaningful, that the audience will automatically associate with the product. Generally central to an advertising campaign.

**Target audience:** A specified audience or demographic for which an advertising message is designed. The members of a target audience often share certain characteristics, such as age, income, gender, ethnicity, values, or lifestyle.

### Read

Read the following from the PBS website.

- Rosser Reeves Report  
[www.pbs.org/30secondcandidate/from\\_idea\\_to\\_ad/collection/5.html](http://www.pbs.org/30secondcandidate/from_idea_to_ad/collection/5.html)
- Newspaper article, "Ball Blasts Plan to Fill Airwaves with Ike Spots"  
[www.pbs.org/30secondcandidate/from\\_idea\\_to\\_ad/collection/25.html](http://www.pbs.org/30secondcandidate/from_idea_to_ad/collection/25.html)



### **Question**

Ask your students to answer the following questions about the Reeves Report:

1. Why is Reeves convinced that this is the new campaign method?
2. What are the advantages? Disadvantages?

### **Discuss**

Ask your students the following questions about the newspaper article:

1. Describe public sentiment toward the rise of political advertising on television.
2. What were the public's reservations? Why?
3. Do you think that the public's reaction was justifiable? Why or why not?
4. What do you think of presidential advertising on television? Use examples from the article to support your opinion.

### **Compare**

Ask your students to compare the two documents and answer the following questions:

1. What is the tone of each document? What makes you say that?
2. Do you think Reeves could have anticipated the public's reaction? Why or why not?
3. How do you think he could have prepared for it?
4. What were the concerns of the general public?



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### Post-Visit Activity:

#### Target Audience Study

1. Develop a set of questions that reflect important issues at your school. For example, you might ask about school violence, dress codes, homework policies, etc.
2. Take a poll asking different groups of people this same set of questions. For example, target ninth graders, then teachers, and finally school administrators.
3. How do the results for the various groups compare? Why do you think they differ?
4. How could you use this information if you were creating an advertising campaign?

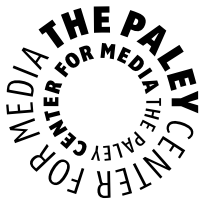
#### The Perfect Candidate – Discussion

1. What would your own “perfect candidate” be like if you could create one from scratch?
2. What issues would he/she focus on and what positions would he/she take on those issues?
3. What experience would he/she have? How old would he/she be?

#### Class Leader – Discussion

For your own class, what attributes would a “perfect” leader possess? List the characteristics.

Your “perfect” class leader is your candidate, and you need to help your leader get elected. Begin by determining your candidate’s “message.” You also need to identify the political climate at school. Then define your target audience and create a marketing strategy for your candidate. Incorporate a variety of persuasive techniques in your campaign, such as celebrity endorsements, testimonials, slogans, humor, or special effects.



## **Create advertisements for your class leader**

Break students into teams and ask each team to create an ad for a class leader.

### **To begin, teams must:**

1. Establish what kind of candidate the class will value, in terms of character and position on important issues.
2. Assess the political climate.
3. Develop a relevant, timely platform or “message” for the candidate.
4. Identify the candidate’s natural constituency.

### **Now for specifics:**

1. Create an image for the candidate that conveys the qualities that will be most valued by his/her peers.
2. Determine the tone of the ad and the persuasive techniques that will create that tone.
3. Create a tagline or slogan for your campaign. How can you encapsulate your primary message in one or two lines?
4. Each group should make a presentation to the entire class, after which the ad should be evaluated. In this evaluation, students should think about what worked, what didn’t work, and why. Then, each group should vote for one candidate and provide the reason for its selection.