Figurative Language in Advertising

Since ancient times, the figures of speech have served three main purposes:

1. to instruct and entertain people through the play of language,
2. to persuade people of the truth or value of the message that a figure conveys, and
3. to help people remember both the meaning of the message and its figurative expression.

It should come as no surprise then that in our own time the classical figures have been adopted by advertisers to sell everything from soap and cigarettes to political causes and candidates.

In this review quiz, we several of the best known slogans (sometimes called *taglines* or *straplines*) introduced by advertisers over the past century.

Your job is to choose the one figure of speech (from a list of three) that each slogan most clearly illustrates.

1. "If you think asparagus has a lot of iron, you don't know beans." (Van Camp's Pork and Beans)
   a. pun
   b. irony
   c. alliteration

2. "If gas pains persist, try Volkswagen." (Volkswagen automobiles)
   a. simile
   b. pun
   c. onomatopoeia

3. "Sleeping on a Seely is like sleeping on a cloud." (Seely mattresses)
   a. simile
   b. metaphor
   c. assonance
4. "Plop plop, fizz fizz, oh what a relief it is!" (Alka-Seltzer)
   a. hyperbole
   b. allusion
   c. onomatopoeia

5. "When it rains, it pours." (Morton salt)
   a. idiom
   b. onomatopoeia
   c. pun

**TOP 10 JINGLES OF THE CENTURY**

You deserve a break today (McDonalds)

Be all that you can be (U.S. Army)

Pepsi Cola Hits the Spot (Pepsi Cola)

M'm, M'm good (Campbell's)

See the USA in your Chevrolet (GM)

I wish I was an Oscar Meyer Wiener (Oscar Meyer)

Double your pleasure, double your fun (Wrigley's Doublemint Gum)

Winston tastes good like a cigarette should (Winston)

It's the Real Thing (Coca Cola)

A little dab'll do ya (Brylcreem)
Your Assignment . . .

Figurative language is not just used in fictional text. In fact, it is used frequently in the copy of advertisements.

You will be looking through magazines so that you may explore advertisements.

Find two examples of figurative language in the copy of advertising text. Cut out the advertisement and paste it to a sheet of paper. On the back do the following:

In order to fully analyze the figurative language, you must LIST them.

L - Label (What type of figurative language did you find?)
I - Identify (Quote the actual figurative language written in the text.)
S - So what? (So what’s the big deal with this language?)
  What makes this language effective in this ad?
  Why not choose a different type of figurative language? Why wouldn’t something else work better?
  Who is the intended audience?
  What effect would this figurative language have on the audience?
  Is this an appropriate effect?
  What is the author’s overall purpose of this ad?
  How does using the device help or hurt the author’s overall purpose?
T - Talk (Share your analysis with the others in the class in order to model analytical thinking.)