

Advertisement: "There Are Three Things Everyone Should Read before Entering College . . ."

In an attempt to attract students, educational institutions have been advertising since the nineteenth century. And anyone who watches college sports on television today is aware of how often schools run commercials promoting their campuses, special programs, illustrious history, prominent faculty, outstanding alumni, and — most importantly — student satisfaction. In 1989, Adelphi University ran advertisements like the following one to stimulate applications. The ad, which reads like a mini-essay in itself, captures a world that seems at once old-fashioned and forward-looking as it tries to persuade potential students that philosophy and the liberal arts are wholly relevant to whatever career one wants to pursue. (For more on how to read an advertisement, see p. 40 in the Introduction.)

THERE ARE THREE THINGS EVERYONE SHOULD READ BEFORE ENTERING COLLEGE:

PLATO'S REPUBLIC, THE COMPLETE WORKS OF ARISTOTLE, AND THIS AD.

Not so fast.

If you think you can get away with ignoring the first two works and get right into this ad, stop. Rip this page out and stick it in your sock drawer.

Don't read this ad until you've first savoured Plato. And discovered Aristotle, if not the complete works at least the incomplete collection, maybe the *Ethics* or the *Politics*.

Then you'll be able to deal with the Madison Avenue manipulators who market universities the same way they market sausages or deodorant soap.

Your mind will then be keen enough to dismiss the vapid slogans that university marketers conjure up to attract you, the consumers, who enter the education marketplace each spring. Slogans also designed to soothe parents whose checks enter the universities' treasuries each autumn.

[Used to be a school's slogan would be a nice Latin phrase such as *lux et veritas* or *semper paratus* or *ut omnes te cognoscant*. Now we get corporate gobbledygook like: People making successful people ever more successful, successfully].

If you're heading for business school, for example, you'll not only note the obvious: how many successful graduates in all fields that Adelphi can point to. You'll also investigate what you can learn at Adelphi besides LIFO, FIFO, and the other Principles of Accounting. What is it that a liberal arts environment imparts that a trade school can't?

(continued)

The same is true of the psychology student or the communications major. Or the pre-law and pre-med students who are, after all, students of the Arts and Sciences, respectively.

When you visit our school, ask to see a dean, even the President. (The President of Adelphi still teaches his philosophy class every Thursday at 5:10 PM. If you drop in with an inquiring mind, he'll welcome you, albeit argumentatively).

The premise of Adelphi is that all students (whether of nursing, psychology, business, the humanities, the physical sciences, education, the fine arts) deserve the opportunity to enrich themselves by exposure to ideas.

Now: will your day-to-day involvement in those ideas make you a better investment banker? Or social worker? Or lawyer? Or high school teacher? Or nurse? Or statesman? Or accountant? Or psychologist? Or doctor? Does a liberal education make a difference in one's ability to make a living in 20th Century America, not to mention 21st Century America?

Yes. And we believe a profound difference. It has done that for 2500 years in every corner of the world. It will be no less efficacious today in the Western Hemisphere, in the United States, on Long Island 45 minutes from Manhattan and a five-block stroll from the Nassau Boulevard station of the Long Island Railroad.

Now that you've removed this ad from your sock drawer, there are three more things to do before entering college. One, give us a call. Two, read our publications and look at our video. And three, visit our campus and say hello.

ADELPHI UNIVERSITY

Garden City, New York 11530. (516) 663-1100.
For application materials and a video, write or call.



BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

1. Madison Avenue in New York City has long been the home of American advertising, and the location has become synonymous with advertising (e.g., *Mad Men*). Why does the ad introduce “Madison Avenue manipulators”? What do you think the point is about marketing “sausages or deodorant soap”? Why are you supposed to think this ad is different from what the “manipulators” do?
2. How do you think you, as reader of the ad, are supposed to feel about “the education marketplace”? Why doesn’t the ad say you’ll be entering “colleges” or “universities” here instead? Why does it use the word *consumers*? What does the term *marketplace* suggest?

STRATEGY, STRUCTURE, AND STYLE

1. How do you immediately respond to the ad’s headline? Do you think anyone would stop reading the ad, turn to the formidable works of Greek philosophy it recommends, then return to the ad? What is the point of the headline?
2. Why doesn’t the ad define what the Latin expressions mean in the sixth paragraph? Or explain *LIFO* and *FIFO* in the next paragraph? What is the purpose of leaving these expressions unexplained?

COMPARISONS AND CONNECTIONS

1. Note the ad’s illustration. Why do you think the ad never refers to it? What purpose do you think it serves? What does the image suggest? What era does it seem to come from? How does it reinforce the ad’s message about the way the ad is composed?
2. How do you think the ad, though it appeared nearly thirty years ago, addresses the issues introduced in this chapter? What educational issues still pertain? What parts of the ad seem no longer applicable to the present? Can you identify any elements in the ad that you do not think would appear if it were written today?

Discussing the Unit**SUGGESTED TOPIC FOR DISCUSSION**

Value can be related to monetary worth, or it could be related to where something falls in our personal—and less tangible—estimation. The authors in this chapter debate the value of an education, both monetary and personal. After