

## Great adverts

### ■ Uncle Sam “I want You for U.S. Army” – 1917

The United States has many symbols, including the bald eagle and the Statue of Liberty, and Uncle Sam was officially adopted as a national symbol of the United States of America in 1950. It was featured in a recruiting poster for the army during the first world war and was a personification of the government. More than four million copies were distributed between 1917 and 1918.

This image, with a thousand variations (propaganda, satirical, advertising) and right from the early years of the last century, has entered with **arrogance** into our imaginations. The person represented in the image provokes the observers, stimulates their attention and waits for a reaction.

The effect achieved by the image and the text as a whole is the synthesis of different languages: the communicative form of advertising with that of political propaganda.

**Despite** his age, America’s most famous Uncle still lives on and his image continues to be **borrowed** by contemporary graphic designers.



### ■ Coca-Cola’s Santa Claus – 1931

Before 1931, the iconography of Santa Claus was different from what we are used to. He was represented as a tall, thin man or as an elf. The Coca-Cola Company decided to commission the advertising illustration of Santa Claus to the designer Haddon Sundblom, who was inspired by the poem by Clement Clark More “the visit of St. Nicholas”. In the text Santa Claus was described as a **portly, chubby**, humane and sweet man. In the poem, Santa Claus was already wearing red; the detail did not escape Coca-Cola, which linked the colour to its brand. The goal was to use a reassuring, generous image, a sort of grandfather to **superimpose** it on the brand: since then, Santa Claus has definitively gone from green to red, **rooting** his iconography in our common imagination.

### ■ Rosie the Riveter – “We Can Do It” – 1942


This is one of the most famous patriotic advertisements ever. Rosie, who **rolls up** her **sleeves** to get busy, was named after a very popular American song in 1942. After the attack on Pearl Harbor (1941), industries in the United States had lost much of the male **workforce**, so the government commissioned some advertising studios to produce a manifesto with the aim of increasing the morale of workers producing war goods – now women. However, the ad soon came to be perceived as a symbol of women’s rights and Rosie became the symbol of female work in factories. Today, Rosie is considered an icon of feminism thanks to the famous slogan “We Can Do It”.



**arrogance:** forza  
**to borrow:** prendere in prestito  
**chubby:** paffuto

**despite:** nonostante  
**portly:** corpulento  
**riveter:** rivettatrice  
**to roll up:** arrotolare

**rooting:** mettendo radici  
**sleeve:** manica  
**to superimpose:** sovrapporre  
**workforce:** forza lavoro

- 1  **GROUP WORK** Choose one of the three ads on the previous page and analyse it according to the grid you studied earlier on.

Type of product or service	
Format (headline, body copy, payoff, caption, logo, brand, visual, call to action)	
Setting	
Characters	
Design	
Action	
Language	
Typeface	
Type of shot	
Year of production	
Atmosphere	
Possible target	
Socio-cultural, political and economic references	

- 2  Look at these Italian ads. Analyse them according to the previous grid.

