

# The Characteristics of Memorable Images

One of the first steps toward creating powerful visual messages is to examine images created by others. In this activity, students are asked to use the criteria outlined in *Made to Stick* (Heath & Heath, 2007) to evaluate two separate images designed to provoke thinking around the issue of global poverty.

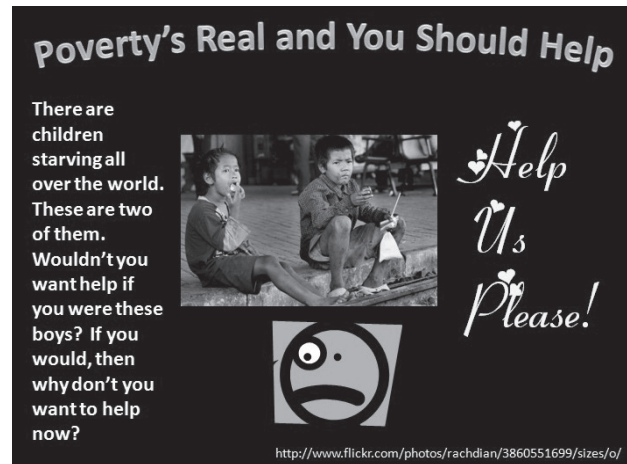
## Image 1



Source: Adapted from "Homeless in Sugamo 1" by james-fischer. Creative Commons, 2006.



## Image 2



Source: Adapted from "Save Our Children" by rachdian. Creative Commons, 2009.



## Questions for Consideration

1. Like any content, both of these images have strengths and weaknesses. Begin by listing everything that you like about image 1. What is most impressive to you? Least impressive? If you were to change anything about image 1, what would it be?

Then, answer the same questions about image 2.

2. The most influential messages are simple. They are stripped down, sharing only core principles and key ideas. Which of these images does a better job at sharing a small handful of core principles with viewers? What would you do to make the more complicated image simpler?

3. The most influential messages are unexpected, either communicating with audiences in a nontraditional way or sharing ideas that are startling. Is there anything surprising about either of these images? What impact does that have on you as a viewer?
4. The most influential messages are concrete. Instead of sharing complicated language, they appeal to the basic senses of the audience. Which of these two images does a better job appealing to your senses?
5. The most influential messages are credible. The ideas shared must be believable to viewers. Something about the message has to resonate with an audience's experiences. Which of these two images can you relate to better? Why?
6. The most influential messages are emotional, making viewers feel instead of simply think. Influential people know that when they can tap into powerful emotions, their ideas are more likely to be remembered. Which of these images does a better job of making you feel instead of just think? What emotions does it evoke?
7. When crafting visual messages, the layout, size, and color of all fonts and images are incredibly important. The best visual images appear balanced and clean to viewers, rather than distracting. How do you think the authors of these two slides did at creating balanced, clean images?

*Source: Heath, C., & Heath, D. (2007). Made to stick: Why some ideas survive and others die. New York: Random House.*