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### Assignment Part 1: Denotative and Connotative Meaning

*Real Simple* is a New York based magazine published and distributed by its' parent company, Time Inc. According to the *Real Simple* online media kit, 8.1 million readers flip through the clean and contemporary designed pages of each issue. The 180-page monthly publication targets the “modern woman” and serves as a simplification guide to food, lifestyle, home, family, beauty, health and as the tagline suggests, is “life made easier” (Real Simple Media Kit). The magazine is known for its sleek, uncluttered designs that “[maintain] a warm and feminine quality” (Margolis). The target demographic of the magazine is women between the ages of 25 and 40 (Johns). Founded in 2000, 90% of *Real Simple* readers are women, 87% are college-educated, 75% are employed, 63% are married and 40% have kids (Real Simple Media Kit). The focus on life simplification is understandable as the magazine caters to busy, working, women. Since its founding, *Real Simple* has launched products with Bed Bath and Beyond, a realsimple.com website and mobile and tablet applications.

The February 2014 issue of *Real Simple* features a cover photograph captioned “healthy dinners in minutes: one bowl, endless possibilities.” The cover feature directs readers to page 144, to a spread titled “Super Bowls.” The eight page/four-spread article teaches readers how to create quick, healthy meals mixing grains, vegetables and leftover food. The first four-pages/two spreads of the article will be the focus of the next portion of the assignment. Furthermore, the February 2014 issue contains articles on couples that married late in life, transforming a small living space with big ideas and the latest beauty products. The magazine’s mantra of “life made easier” is evident through the table of contents’ article headlines and sub-headlines. For example,

an article titled “15 Minutes and You’re Done” focuses on how to clean upholstery. For the tired, working married mother of two, “15 minutes” makes the article quite an attractive read.

The magazine *Real Simple* is an object of communication through means of 180 colored, printed pages filled with photographs, copy, illustrations, typography and more. Each photograph is carefully styled and impeccably placed on a spread to create a modern, graphic design. Mixed with mostly sans serif fonts, each photograph is captioned or part of a collection of images for a certain feature article. A team of editors, photographers, stylists, writers, graphic designers, executives, interns and more collaborate to publish one issue of *Real Simple* a month. Then, diligent women soak in their hard work through means of reading and analyzing articles and photographs and perhaps try their hand at the recipes published in the issue.

## Works Cited

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Denotative Description	Connotative Readings
<p>A navy, cursive, handwritten, 9 line description of how to give yesterday night's leftovers "new life," written and signed in cursive by food director Sarah Copeland with a navy arrow pointing to a photograph of cheese. The handwritten text is on the left most side of the first page.</p>	<p>The fact that this description is handwritten connotes a warm, cozy and comfortable feeling. It gives the reader a sense of the magazine being personalized for them. The fact that Copeland chooses to write in cursive gives the description a grandmotherly, letter writing, caring feel. In addition, the navy is a nice contrast to the white background of the spread and adds a little bit more color (rather than having the description be black.)</p>
<p>A section of the photograph on the first page contains two beets with nice magenta leaf stalks and veins and dark green leaves. One of the beet's roots is longer than the other with parts of the root trailing off onto the page. The beet stalks are the largest thing on the side of the page and bleed off the top of the page, commanding most of the attention on the page. Some of the beet's leaves are little imperfect and parts of the leaf gone. Another similar part to this photo is the section towards the bottom of the first page with four bright pink radishes with their pink to white roots and light green leaves. Some of the light green leaves have slight tears and crinkles on them.</p>	<p>The beets and radishes make the spread look more all natural and fresh, as the vegetables look like they came straight from a farmer's market. The beetroots trailing off into the background show that they are natural and not fake (because they are breaking apart), and the little specks of dirt make it seem like they just came from the garden. The beet stalks bleed off the top of the page because if the editors included the entire beet stalks, the rest of the ingredients would look minute and much less important. The bright pink radishes are lively and easy to spot on the spread and the bright green leaves add to the freshness and lightness of the vegetables, making the ingredients look healthy and hand grown. Some of the beet's leaves and the radishes' light green leaves have slight tears and crinkles on them, to show that these ingredients are not perfect or airbrushed, and to show the reader that they can get these ingredients themselves too.</p>
<p>There is a black and white zigzag plate with uncooked white quinoa on the right side of the first page. The quinoa is concentrated mostly on the left side with a few grains of quinoa sprinkled around the rest of the plate. There are a couple grains of quinoa that are blended in to the background if you look carefully, and are very difficult to spot.</p>	<p>The black plate with minor white zigzags is a good contrast with the white quinoa and helps the quinoa stand out. Because the background is white, if the editors put the quinoa on the background, it would blend in. In addition, the black plate really defines the circular shape of the quinoa. Because the quinoa is concentrated on the right side of the plate, the zigzag plate is being advertised and shown by <i>Real Simple</i></p>
<p>The small, black smartphone symbol has a purple "RS" in the middle of it, with the caption to "Save these recipes to your Smartphone, Scan this page for the recipes and ingredients list." The</p>	<p>The black iPhone icon is a symbol representing an interaction the reader can have with their phone in regards to the magazine. The purple "RS" is the same color as the title type and stands for <i>Real Simple</i>. The logo instantly forces the reader who wants more</p>

<p>smartphone symbol is to the left of the radishes on the first page.</p>	<p>information regarding ingredients and recipes to further interact with the brand. It is interesting to note that this is a healthy meals article with no recipes given to the reader; the recipes are only online. The purpose of this logo is to get the reader to interact with the <i>Real Simple</i> mobile site, which thereby means more advertising money and users of their mobile interface.</p>
<p>The layout of the first two pages (or the first spread) with the natural ingredients (including beets, radishes, cheese, a jar of olives and the black and white quinoa plate) and handwritten description, the smartphone symbol, a salt and pepper shaker that are modern and square, the “super bowl” itself, a gold lined plate underneath it and a fork and a knife with light gold handles. In addition, all of these elements are placed on a white background. The type package for the title and subheadline is on the right side of the spread underneath the “super bowl.”</p>	<p>All of the elements on the left side of the page are the natural ingredients required to make the dish on the right hand side of the page. The fact that the ingredients are laid out on the left side of the page make the dish on the right hand look really simple to make, like the reader can simply grab the ingredients and literally toss them into the bowl on the right hand side. Furthermore, the handwritten, personalized note connects with the natural, freshness of the ingredients. The right side of the page with the completed bowl and utensils has a more sophisticated, modern look while the left is more natural and homey. The purpose of the salt and pepper shakers symbolize that it is extremely simple to flavor your meal and that you only need the most basic of ingredients to create a healthy meal. The white background of the spread makes the spread look clean and modern, showcasing the actual food and the ingredients on the spread.</p>
<p>The title “Super Bowls” is in a sans serif font and is in a dark purple color. The title is the largest piece of type on the page and is right under the photograph of the bowl of food.</p>	<p>The reason why the title “super bowls” is in a sans serif font is that the fonts without a serif look much more modern. The modern look goes along with the <i>Real Simple</i> aesthetic and helps bring the spread to a modern era, as the handwritten cursive on the left side of the first page makes the spread homier and less modern. The color of the title is purple, to pick up on the pink of the radishes, the magenta color on the beets and the dark purple of the steamed beets present in the bowl right above the title package. In addition, the title itself, “Super Bowls” is extremely interesting. The double meaning of the word “Super Bowl” can reference either the Big Game or the bowls of super food. <i>Real Simple</i> is picking up on the fact that the big game is in February and it is a clever way to tie in current happenings. In addition, because 90% of <i>Real Simple</i> readers are women, perhaps this title was made to appeal to male readers, as a society’s construction of the male gender includes a fondness for watching sporting events.</p>

<p>The handwritten note description from associate food editor on the top left hand corner in white is cursive on the third page with a brown background. In addition, there is a white border around the third page.</p>	<p>The brown color of the background is an autumn color, which makes the reader think of Thanksgiving and comfort food, giving the reader a sense of hominess. In addition, the white handwritten note gives the spread a sense of personalization and adds to the warmth of the spread. The contrast of the white plate and the dark background makes the meals on the white plate stand out. The white border acts as a frame and causes the reader to focus on the center of the image.</p>
<p>On the top right hand corner of the third page, there is a white horse on top of a brass bottle opener. The bottle opener is bleeding off of the top right hand corner.</p>	<p>The purpose of the horse and the bottle opener itself is a good representation of the colors of the plate which the food rests on. The brass tone of the bottle opener is the same color as the ring around the white plate. The white horse is the same color as the plate. The bottle opener could represent the reader possibly opening up a beer at the end of his or her busy workday and could symbolize the start of a quick meal and beverage to end the workday.</p>
<p>The super foods on the third page rest on a white bowl with another white plate underneath. The bottom white plate has a ring of gold and pleats on its sides.</p>	<p>Having a bowl and a plate as opposed to a single plate makes the meal feel a little more formal, yet still a little laid back and not too uptight, as there are no utensils or fancy napkins surrounding the plate. The plate underneath the bowl creates an addition circle of white around the food, drawing even more attention and the readers' eye to the star of the page, the bowl itself. The plate underneath the bowl also acts as an additional frame for the bowl, giving even more attention to the "super bowl."</p>
<p>On the third page, the bowl itself is filled with steak, brown rice, kimchi brussel sprouts, roasted red onions, red leaf lettuce, watermelon radishes and tomatoes. The red colored foods are centered on the plate while the greens and the grains are on the top and bottom of the plate, respectively.</p>	<p>The reason why the red foods are in the center of the plate is because the color red stands out the most and the brown background brings out the red color, as both brown and red are warm, fall, autumnal colors. The grains do not have as much of a contrast with the white plate as the red foods do, so the steak was intentionally on top of the grains to create more contrast. In addition, the greens on the plate lie towards the top, which draws the readers' eye up the page, towards the white horse bottle opener and to the top of the page.</p>
<p>The different plates on the fourth page include a larger plate on the bottom right hand side with a white plate and a gold rim, a white china plate with a blue design and gold rim with an egg on it, a black rimmed and white deep</p>	<p>The larger plate on the bottom right hand side is a white plate with gold rims. This reflects the gold-rimmed plates from the third page, creating a flow between the two pages that make up this spread. Next, the china plate's gold, shiny rims picks up from the brass horse bottle opener from the third page, causing</p>

<p>dish, rectangular pan and a jar top with grilled cauliflower in the center.</p>	<p>the reader's eye to go from the third page to the fourth page. In addition, the white china plate's center hosts an elegant blue design, which increases the cultural diversity of the fourth page and adds to the sophisticated feel of the magazine. The grilled cauliflower on the jar top make the cauliflower seem easier to make and a really quick snack to make simply because it is only on a jar top (as opposed to a plate). In addition, the gold again moves the reader's eye towards the center of the fourth page. The gold on this spread moves the reader's eye throughout the two pages.</p>
<p>The kimchi, a spicy fermented cabbage Korean specialty dish, is in a jar on the top of the fourth page. It is red with different tones of yellow and little bit of green. In addition, near the bottom of the page is a jar of Conservas Ortiz tuna, a type of Spanish tuna. The jar top is half off of the jar, leaning on its side so the brand of the jar is clearly seen.</p>	<p>The purpose of the kimchi and the Spanish tuna is to increase the cultural diversity of food on the spread and expose readers to different varieties of ethnic healthy foods. There are many options to being a healthy eater no matter what type of cuisine the reader enjoys or relates to the most. Here, the editors at <i>Real Simple</i> combine different flavors from different countries to create a unique and healthy bowl. In addition, the Conservas Ortiz brand is clearly shown, so <i>Real Simple</i> could have some sort of advertising deal with the Ortiz brand to feature their food.</p>
<p>On the left hand side of the fourth page, there is a list of items that the reader can "pick their lineup" with. It is a loose grocery list styled type package that is categorized into grains, greens, proteins, vegetables and herbs, cheeses and wild cards. Each category is in the same purple color as the "super bowls" headline while the actual items are in a black font.</p>	<p>The purple of each category commands attention when contrasted with the white background and helps the reader distinguish when each category begins and ends. The items are categorized because this allows the reader to choose the specific item he or she wants. There is a focus on natural ingredients and there is no recipe given to the reader (just a list of items) so the reader has the freedom to invent their own dish and use these ingredients as a basic starting point for their own healthy and quick meals.</p>
<p>There are arrows on every single page in these two spreads, pointing to various items. On the first page, the arrow points to cheese, on the second to the "super bowl," on the third page to the "super bowl" and on the fourth page to the kimchi brussel sprouts. The arrows seem to look handwritten and are thin.</p>	<p>The arrows are one of the most literal representations of "look here!" The arrows on the second and third page describe the ingredients in the "super bowl" and serve as a fun typographic feature to help connect the reader from the complete bowl to the parts the bowl is comprised of. In addition, for the first page, the arrow points to cheese and in the descriptor, the editor mentions to eat your bowls topped with "cheese." The literal arrow helps the reader make a visual connection between the editor's words and actual cheese. Furthermore, the handwritten non-perfect look to the arrows ties into the handwritten notes left by the food editors of <i>Real Simple</i>, making the handwritten notes</p>

seem less out of place in a modern, graphic magazine.



