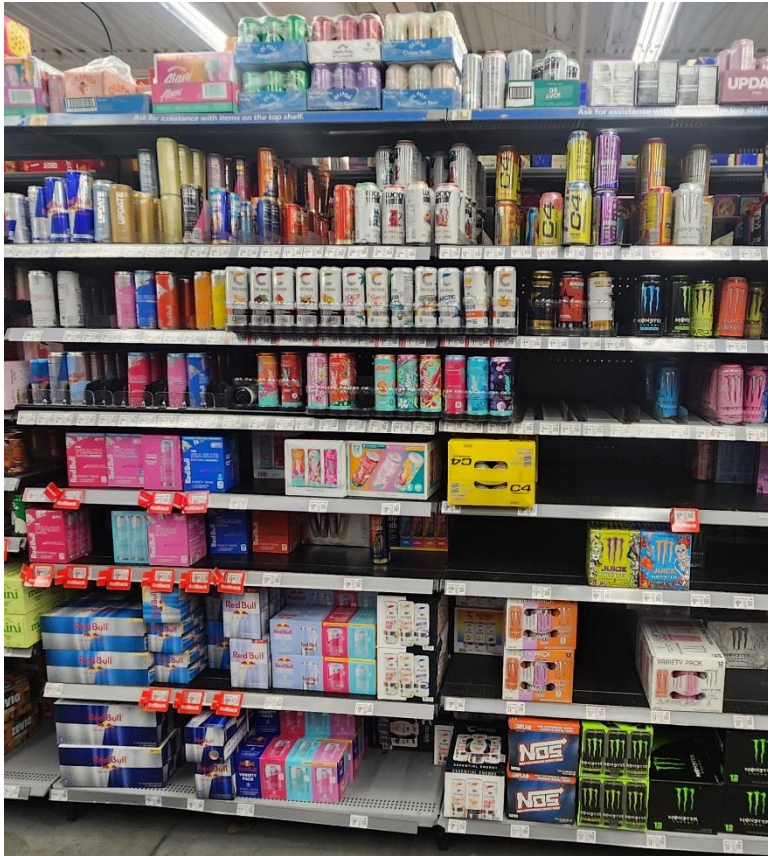


Final Critical Analysis and Written Assignment

For my product I chose beverages/energy drinks. The three that I picked were Monster, Red Bull, and Celsius. I chose these three for their different appeals to different people. The primary difference lies in how each brand frames the purpose of the caffeine kick to appeal to specific lifestyles. Monster targets a younger, value-oriented demographic (primarily Gen Z males) by emphasizing "intensity" and "quantity," using extreme sports and gaming culture to position itself as a bold, rebellious choice. In contrast, Red Bull targets high-achieving professionals and students by selling "wings," focusing on mental focus and elite performance through a premium, smaller-format can that commands a higher price. Finally, Celsius pivots away from the "energy drink" stigma entirely, targeting health-conscious adults and fitness enthusiasts by marketing itself as a "thermogenic" wellness tool that burns body fat, using clean ingredients to appeal to a demographic that prioritizes physical health over raw stimulation. Energy drink brands use visual shorthand to attract specific shoppers, such as clean, high-value white cans with minimalist typography for health-conscious buyers and high-saturation neons on low-value black backgrounds for gamers. High-traffic "eye-level" shelves and glossy metallic finishes suggest premium quality and immediate convenience, while bottom-shelf placement and large multi-packs signal value and bulk-buying. These design choices, enhanced by bright overhead lighting, leverage cultural cues and color theory to trigger fast, emotional purchase decisions.

A.) Photos





B.) Looking at the photos, the dominant color swatch across the entire aisle is a deep, high-saturation royal blue, primarily driven by the massive presence of the Red Bull and Monster Lo-Carb sections. As for the photos taken, they were taken on a Samsung s22 and the lighting was caused by LED Strip Lighting.

C.) Energy drinks are organized to grab your attention quickly. Brands like Celsius and Monster sit at eye level to target "grab-and-go" shoppers, while heavy multi-packs are placed on lower shelves for people stocking up. These inner-aisle displays use bright red "Rollback" signs to highlight discounts and encourage sales. You can see high-saturation colors and gaming rewards on the cans to attract younger buyers. This layout balances convenience for the immediate drinker with value for the budget-conscious shopper, making it easy to choose based on price, flavor, or health needs.

Monster targets a young, edgy demographic by utilizing a low-value black background contrasted against high-saturation neon green accents, creating a visual "punch" that signals intense energy. The matte finish on the can feels rugged and modern, while the jagged, aggressive typography reinforces a rebellious, high-action identity suited for gamers and extreme

sports fans. In contrast, Celsius appeals to a health-conscious fitness demographic by using a high-value, bright white canvas that feels clean and clinical. Its sleek, satin finish and vibrant fruit hues suggest natural freshness, supported by minimalist, sans-serif typography that mirrors the branding of high-end supplements. Red Bull captures a broad, traditional audience through its iconic glossy metallic finish, which gives the can an industrial, premium feel. The primary hues of silver and blue provide a balanced background for the bold, red serif typography, which conveys a sense of established authority and reliability for those seeking a functional, professional boost. Each design element works together to communicate the product's specific lifestyle purpose at a single glance.

As far as the lighting goes, the bright, high-value overhead lighting is designed to maximize the brightness of the packaging, ensuring that the high-saturation colors of the energy drinks appear vibrant and enticing rather than dull. When products are placed at eye level, they receive the most direct illumination, which enhances the perceived "pop" of the brand's hues and triggers an immediate, impulsive emotional response characterized by excitement or a sense of urgency. Conversely, products placed on lower shelves often sit in deeper shadows, increasing their perceived darkness and making them feel less urgent or more utilitarian, which aligns with the "stock-up" mentality of a budget-conscious shopper. The glossy finishes on cans like Red Bull are specifically designed to catch these overhead light sources, creating specular highlights that signal a "premium" quality to the viewer. This interplay of light and placement creates a psychological hierarchy; the well-lit, colorful middle zone evokes a feeling of energy and variety, while the shadowed lower zones feel stable and grounded. For a creator, understanding how these values shift under different lighting conditions is essential for directing a viewer's eye and evoking a specific mood, much like how a cinematographer uses light to emphasize a subject's importance within a frame.

Finally, to wrap this up, I collected and photographed my items at my local neighborhood market Walmart in Battlefield Missouri on West Republic Road, I had no limitations finding my items, and I had no issues commuting there due to it being less than 5 minutes away by driving there.

Sources

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