Unit 1

THE EFFECTS OF ADVERTISING



1 Critical cartoons

A Warm up

Work with a partner or in small groups. Discuss the questions below.

1 How many hours of TV did you watch a day when you were a child?
2 The average child in the USA watches over 40,000 TV commercials each year. What effect does this have?
3 Why do advertisers spend so much money putting commercials on children's TV shows when children have so little money?

When I was a child, I . . .

In my opinion, . . .

If children watch so much TV, it must . . .

I think one reason is . . .



Media link

Consuming Kids: The Commercialization of Childhood is a documentary about the multi-billion dollar industry that sells everything from junk food to violent video games to children.

For additional media links, go to www.cambridgeinfocus.org

2 Core vocabulary

VOCABULARY APP ONLINE

A Scanning and skimming

1 Find and underline the keywords in the text. The first one is done for you. Try to guess their meanings.

Keywords

assume	behavior	brand	income	industry
label	prevent	stock	trend	warn

Advertising & Consumerism



Advertising is used in many ways. Health experts use advertising to warn the public against bad things. For example, they want to prevent young people from starting to smoke. They assume that young people won't start if they know how bad smoking is. Sometimes, health organizations may want to change people's behavior – getting them to exercise more, for example.

However, advertising is more often used by industry to sell things. A company's income depends on how much money it makes by selling its products and services. These days, the trend is for companies to advertise their brand. A brand is a mark, a name, or a label that stands for a company's products or services. In the past, a clothing company would advertise a coat or clothing. Nowadays, a company might advertise how people feel when they wear its label. In this way, the company develops "brand loyalty." That is when people like to buy only the products from one brand. Then the company can charge more money for its products. Investors in companies like brand loyalty very much because the price of their stock goes up when a company has a strong brand.

READING ONLINE

2 Read the statements below. Which best describes what this text is about?

A The uses of advertising in society
B The positive effects of brand loyalty
C How advertising can be used to improve our health

B Words in context: identifying a part of speech

1 Look at the text on page 2. Three of the keywords are verbs. Verbs describe an action. Find the verbs and write them below.

1 _____
2 _____
3 _____

2 The subject of the sentence is the same for all three verbs. Write it below.

_____

3 Use the three verbs to make your own sentences.

1 _____
2 _____
3 _____

C Word parts: *ism* Example: *consumerism*

1 Find five words with *ism* in the puzzle and circle them. Check their meanings. See page 97 if you need help.

D	T	U	W	D	G	R	Z	U	S	W
C	O	N	S	U	M	E	R	I	S	M
C	B	S	N	F	I	U	M	S	S	V
O	N	A	V	O	B	S	F	I	X	F
M	Z	L	N	H	I	P	R	I	D	N
M	L	L	E	E	M	O	F	Y	J	J
U	T	Y	H	O	R	B	U	I	Y	H
N	J	T	V	R	V	K	A	U	R	C
I	A	G	E	E	J	X	M	M	K	A
S	Z	T	R	M	F	P	X	O	K	X
M	E	N	F	E	M	I	N	I	S	M

2 Complete the sentences below with the words from the puzzle.

1 There have been many acts of _____ in the twenty-first century.
2 _____ is a belief that there is no god.
3 Many universities offer courses in _____ .
4 Advertising encourages _____ in society.
5 _____ in Eastern Europe ended in the 1990s.

3 Work with a partner. What do you think *ism* means? Circle the correct answer.

A an outdoor activity
B a belief or system of beliefs
C thinking too much about something

D Discussion dictation

1 Listen and write down the questions.

1 What were _____ ?
2 What are _____ ?
3 Are cigarettes _____ ?

2 Work with a partner. Ask each other the questions. Be sure to ask follow-up questions.

3 Reading skills

READING ONLINE

A Pre-reading questions

1 Have you ever bought a product because of an advertisement you saw? What was it? Why did you buy it?

2 What is one positive effect and one negative effect of advertising?

B Reading

Read the text. Highlight an interesting idea in each paragraph.

You Are What You Buy



Over the last 60 or 70 years, consumerism has been a trend in developed countries. People buy things they do not need, and they replace things before they wear out. (1) We used to repair things when they were broken, but today we throw out old things and replace them with new models. Indeed, many of the things we use cannot be repaired. Once, products were made to last for many years. Now, they are designed to last only a few years.

Advertising supports this behavior of buying things that we do not really need. Advertisements (or ads) make us notice products and brands by having them repeatedly appear in our lives, especially on television. (2) There are many interesting programs on television. The advertising industry tells us that to be happy we need this or that product in our lives. It does this with images that connect the product to happy, successful, or beautiful people. We assume that to be successful or happy, we must buy the product or brand or we must wear the same designer label as the beautiful, successful people in the advertisement.

The negative results of this consumerism are easy to see. (3) As people spend more and more of their income on things they do not need, they have to work more to pay for them. This prevents people from spending time with their family or spending money on education or healthy food. In America today, there are more shopping centers than high schools, and parents spend about 6 hours per week shopping but only 40 minutes playing with their children.

Another negative result is that we become more tolerant of lies and half-truths. To increase profits and stock prices, companies make many false claims about their products. Can we really lose weight simply by taking a pill, without dieting or exercising?

People also warn us of the negative effects of consumerism on the environment. (4) We use energy to produce these unnecessary goods, and that energy use puts more CO_2 into the air and causes climate change. When we throw away goods, they are either burned or buried, again causing damage to the environment.

Advertisers say that all they do is inform us. But in reality they have tricked us into working longer hours, buying stuff we don't need, and thinking we need their products to impress others.

C Identifying topic and main idea

Read the questions below and circle the correct answers according to the text.

1 Which of the following best describes the topic of the text?
- **A** Shopping
- **B** Consumerism
- **C** Fashion brands
- **D** Money

2 Which of the following best describes the main idea of the text?
- **A** Buying fashionable goods affects how people feel.
- **B** Modern products are not designed to last.
- **C** Advertising influences people's behavior in negative ways.
- **D** Consumerism has effects on the environment.

D Identifying unnecessary information

1 Look at the four numbered sentences in the passage. Which contains information that is not related to the main point of the author?

Sentence number: _____

Reason it is not necessary: _____

2 Compare your answers with a partner.

E Identifying opinions

Which one of the following sentences best describes the author's opinion? Circle A, B, or C.

- **A** Advertising causes us to buy too many things, and this has many negative results.
- **B** Advertising is neither good nor bad; people are free to choose not to buy things.
- **C** Advertising is a useful way to find out about a product.

Going beyond the text

Work with a partner or in small groups. Ask and answer the questions below.

1 Look back at the ideas you highlighted. Are they the same? What are the differences?

2 You have 3 minutes. How many different ways of advertising can you think of? For example, newspaper advertisements are one way.

3 Imagine you want to buy these items:
- a mobile phone
- a pair of shoes
- a pizza

How important is advertising to you when you decide to buy these things?

4 Find out more

A Information gathering

Work in small groups. Find at least five advertisements. If you can, use the Internet to search for popular advertisements. Write notes about each one in the chart below.

Advertisement	Product	Target group	Why the ad appeals to the target group
photo of Kobe Bryant	*Nike*	*Young people*	*Kobe Bryant is strong, cool, and good-looking.*

B Comparing results

Form new groups and compare your advertisements. Discuss the questions below.

1 How many of these products do you buy? How do you feel about them?
2 What words can you think of to describe the products?
3 Do the makers of any of these products use a celebrity spokesperson to advertise? Which makers? Does this make you want to buy the product?
4 Do any of the products use humor to sell the product? Which ones? Does this make you feel more positive about the product?

I think the advertisement for . . . is original / funny / memorable / romantic / eye-catching / feminine

The ad suggests / appeals to / features . . .

I like the way some advertisements . . .

Some / quite a few ads use celebrities. An example is . . . , which uses . . .

5 Critical thinking

A What does the author mean?

inference: a guess that something is true or not from the information you have

1 Work with a partner. Read the statements below and decide if they are suggested by the text on page 4. Write down your reasons.

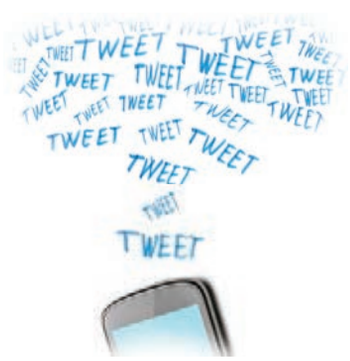
Statement	Inference? (Yes/No)	Where (line no.)
1 In the past, products were of a higher quality.		
2 Consumerism causes parents to spend less time with their children.		
3 Advertisements are a reliable source of information.		
4 Advertising makes people assume that they will find happiness if they buy something.		

2 Compare your answers with a new partner.

B Categorizing

Read the statements below about some of the effects of advertising. Decide if they sound positive or negative. Check (✔) the boxes. Then compare your answers with a partner.

Advertising . . .	Positive	Negative
creates more waste.	☐	☐
means people have to work harder.	☐	☐
increases company profits.	☐	☐
leads to less time with family.	☐	☐
gives more information to customers.	☐	☐
changes bad behavior.	☐	☐



C Tweet your opinion

1 Work with a partner or in small groups. Here are some common advertising techniques. Explain what you know about each technique.

1 Comparing products
2 Using creativity
3 Recommendation or appeal by a famous person
4 Using fear
5 Selling top-quality products at a high price
6 Focusing on lifestyle
7 Selling at a low price
8 Using scientific research

tweet: a very short message posted online using the social media site Twitter

2 Which techniques are popular in your country? Which do you think are most effective? Write a tweet with your opinion. Use the model on the right.

Tweet

Here, a popular technique is . . .

The most effective one is . . .

D Discussion

1 Work in small groups. In C, you looked at eight advertising techniques. Read these statements taken from advertisements. Which techniques do they use? Write 1 to 8 in the chart below.

Advertising statement	Technique (1–8)
1 *Tests showed a 69% improvement after using Brand A.*	
2 **Mouthwash A is better than Mouthwash B.**	
3 TIGER WOODS LOVES TO USE BRAND Z.	
4 *30% off Brand X this week*	
5 Smoking shortens your life by 10 years.	
6 Enjoy your life. Drive an XYZ and feel free.	

2 Another advertising technique is called "greenwashing." This is when advertisers say their product is good for the environment in order to increase sales. Look at the advertisement below and discuss the questions in your groups.

1 What is this advertisement for?
2 Do you think the ad is effective? Does it make you more likely to buy the product?
3 What things does the ad NOT say about this product?
4 Why could this be an example of greenwashing?
5 Can you think of any other examples of greenwashing?



Although the ad is probably telling the truth, I think . . .

This could be an example of greenwashing because . . .

The ad doesn't say anything about . . .

Another example of greenwashing is . . .

Quotable Quotes

Final thoughts . . .

Advertising is legalized* lying.

H. G. Wells
English writer

1 Do you think that advertisements sometimes lie? Give examples.
2 Do you think there should be laws on what and how products are advertised? Give examples.

***legalized** allowed by law