

# Advertising

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**Read these notes carefully before discussing the questions that follow.**

## **Against:**

- Advertising is a corrupting and manipulative influence on our lives.
- It tells us that without certain products we are inadequate.
- It tries to sell us lifestyles most people can never have. It makes us materialistic.
- You don't need advertising to sell products. The Fair Trade range, for example, has done well without.
- Adverts home in on our insecurities: about beauty, cleanliness, keeping up with fashion, keeping up with certain lifestyles, etc.
- Adverts can make us wasteful and want to throw out perfectly serviceable stuff (e.g. IKEA's "chuck out your chintz" campaign).
- The Advertising Standards Authority can only stop an advert going out; it can't issue fines. By the time people complain, the damage has already been done.
- Adverts for children's products give rise to 'pester power.' Is this fair on parents?
- The advertising of unhealthy food and certain alcoholic drinks has probably contributed to the rise in childhood obesity and excess drinking by teenagers.

## **In defence:**

- Advertising is an essential part of the economy of the UK, providing lots of jobs in advertising itself. It helps to sell lots of products, so creates manufacturing jobs too.
- Without advertising, Britain's independent media would not exist.
- We can always say no to advertising. We do not have to buy the product.
- The product still has to be good if it is going to continue to sell. We might buy something once on the strength of an advert, but we won't buy it twice if it's no good.
- Advertisers have to stick to strict rules laid down by the Advertising Standards Authority, about being 'legal, decent, honest and truthful'.
- Understanding how the media works is an essential part of modern life. Most children are more sophisticated and less gullible than many adults suppose.
- Advertising makes food cheaper.
- Adverts can be very creative, entertaining and memorable.
- Some film directors and producers have started their careers in advertising.

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## Points for discussion:

- The government has banned most forms of advertising for cigarettes, as they are detrimental to people's health. Were they right to do this?
- Should the government ban fast food advertising, as fast food is full of fat, salt and sugar?
- How successfully could adverts be used to promote 'good' things like fresh fruit and vegetables for kids or teetotalism for teenagers?
- Overall, does advertising have a positive or negative effect on our lives?

## Tasks:

1. **Design a new food product** that is healthy for young children. Draw a storyboard of a TV advertisement for your product. Make it fun! It should last for 30 seconds.
2. Many teenagers indulge in binge drinking. **Think of a message** which could turn them away from this habit (for example, you could lose your looks, lose your dignity, become ill, get attacked, get injured, waste money, etc).
  - Design a storyboard for a TV information advertisement that will get your message across to teenagers in a way that is likely to affect and influence them.
  - Your storyboard should last for 30 seconds.

**Equipment: plain paper, blank storyboards, pencils.**