

Intermediate 2
Unit 1 Reading
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The Advertising of a Product

A consumer walks into a store. He stands in front of hundreds of boxes of laundry detergent. He chooses one brand, pays for it, and leaves. Why does he pick that specific kind of soap? Is it truly better than the others? Probably not. These days, many products are nearly identical to one another in quality and price. If products are almost the same, what makes consumers buy one brand instead of another? Although we might not like to admit it, commercials on television and advertisements in magazines probably influence us much more than we think they do.

consumer = a person who buys goods or services for their own use

store (American) = shop (British)

detergent = a material that we use to wash the dishes or the dirty clothes

pick = choose, select

identical (to) = the same (as)

quality ≠ quantity

quality = how good something is

quantity = amount

although = even though, though

influence (n.) = impact, effect

influence (v.) = affect; have an impact on

commercial (n.) = advertising on TV or on the radio

advertisement (n.) UK /əd'vɜː.tɪs.mənt/ US /,æd.və'taɪz.mənt/ = advertising in newspapers or magazines

Advertising informs consumers about new products available on the market. It gives us information about everything from shampoo and toothpaste to computers and cars. But there is one serious problem with this. The "information" is actually very often misinformation. It tells us the products' benefits but hides their disadvantages. Advertising not only leads us to buy things that we don't need and can't afford, but it also confuses our sense of reality. "Zoom toothpaste prevents cavities and gives you white teeth!" the advertisement tells us. But it doesn't tell us the complete truth: that a healthy diet and a good toothbrush will have the same effect.

available = on hand; accessible

misinformation = wrong information

benefit = advantage ≠ disadvantage

lead sb to do sth = make sb do sth; cause sb to do sth

afford = have enough money to buy something or have enough time to do something

➤ *Mr. Williams can afford a new car.*

➤ *Mr. Williams can afford to buy a new car.*

➤ *Some parents don't afford the time to be with their children.*

sense = feeling; understanding

reality = truth, fact

cavity = a hole in a tooth

Advertisers use many methods to get us to buy their products. One of their most successful methods is to make us feel dissatisfied with ourselves and our imperfect lives. Advertisements show us who we aren't and what we don't have. Our teeth aren't white enough. Our hair isn't shiny enough. Our clothes aren't clean enough. Advertisements make us afraid that people won't like us if we don't use the advertised products.

method = way

successful ≠ unsuccessful

dissatisfied with sb/sth = unhappy with sb/sth

perfect ≠ imperfect

life + s → lives

If fear is the negative motive for buying a product, then wanting a good self-image is the positive reason for choosing it. Each of us has a mental picture of the kind of person we would like to be. For example, a modern young woman might like to think that she looks like a beautiful movie star. A middle-aged man might want to see himself as a strong, attractive athlete. Advertisers know this. They write specific ads to make certain groups of people choose their product. Two people may choose different brands of toothpaste with the identical price, amount, and quality; each person believes that he or she is expressing his or her personality by choosing that brand.

motive = stimulus = a reason for doing something

self-image = what you think of yourself

athlete = sportsman, sportswoman

ad = advertisement

express = say; put into words

personality = character



Before
(Fear; Dissatisfaction)

After
(Good Self-Image)



(Fear; Dissatisfaction)

(Good Self-Image)

Advertisers get psychologists to study the way consumers think and their reasons for choosing one brand instead of another. These experts tell advertisers about the motives of fear and self-image. They also inform them about recent studies with colors and words. Psychologists have found that certain colors on the package of an attractive product will cause people to reach out and take that package instead of buying an identical product with different colors. Also, certain words attract our attention. For example, the words "new", "improved", "natural", and "giant size" are very popular and seem to draw our eyes and hands toward the package.

psychologist = someone who studies the human mind and human emotions and behavior, and how different situations have an effect on people

package (American) = parcel (British)

attention (n.) notice, thought, or interest

Many people believe that advertising does not affect them. They feel that they have freedom of choice, and they like to think they make wise choices. Unfortunately, they probably don't realize the powerful effect of advertising. They may not clearly understand that advertisers spend billions of dollars each year in aggressive competition for our money, and they are extremely successful. Do you believe that ads don't influence your choice of products? Just look at the brands in your kitchen and bathroom.

wise (adj.) = logical; reasonable

- a wise man
- a wise decision

wise ≠ foolish

realize = understand

aggressive = tough, violent

competition = rivalry

Full Text:

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A consumer walks into a store. He stands in front of hundreds of boxes of laundry detergent. He chooses one brand, pays for it, and leaves. Why does he pick that specific kind of soap? Is it truly better than the others? Probably not. These days, many products are nearly identical to one another in quality and price. If products are almost the same, what makes consumers buy one brand instead of another? Although we might not like to admit it, commercials on television and advertisements in magazines probably influence us much more than we think they do.

Advertising informs consumers about new products available on the market. It gives us information about everything from shampoo and toothpaste to computers and cars. But there is one serious problem with this. The "information" is actually very often misinformation. It tells us the products' benefits but hides their disadvantages. Advertising not only leads us to buy things that we don't need and can't afford, but it also confuses our sense of reality. "Zoom toothpaste prevents cavities and gives you white teeth!" the advertisement tells us. But it doesn't tell us the complete truth: that a healthy diet and a good toothbrush will have the same effect.

Advertisers use many methods to get us to buy their products. One of their most successful methods is to make us feel dissatisfied with ourselves and our imperfect lives. Advertisements show us who we aren't and what we don't have. Our teeth aren't white enough. Our hair isn't shiny enough. Our clothes aren't clean enough. Advertisements make us afraid that people won't like us if we don't use the advertised products.

If fear is the negative motive for buying a product, then wanting a good self-image is the positive reason for choosing it. Each of us has a mental picture of the kind of person we would like to be. For example, a modern young woman might like to think that she looks like a beautiful movie star. A middle-aged man might want to see himself as a strong, attractive athlete. Advertisers know this. They write specific ads to make certain groups of people choose their product. Two people may choose different brands of toothpaste with the identical price, amount, and quality; each person believes that he or she is expressing his or her personality by choosing that brand.

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Main Ideas

- Commercials and advertisements influence people a lot
- Advertising both informs and misinforms people
- Advertising confuses our sense of reality and we don't know what is right and what is wrong
- Advertisers don't tell us the truth completely
- Advertising may make us buy things that we don't need
- Advertisers use two important methods: they give us a negative motive and a positive motive
- They make us believe our life is imperfect and they make us dissatisfied with what we have
- They give us a positive self-image and they make us try to improve ourselves and our lives
- Psychologists help advertisers. They believe certain colors and words can attract consumers
- Advertising is so important that billions of dollars is spent on it every year

Sample Summary:

The text discusses the significant influence of advertising on consumer choices, highlighting that many products are similar in quality and price, making advertising a key differentiator. It points out that advertisements often provide misleading information, emphasizing only the benefits and not the drawbacks of products. This can lead to unnecessary and unaffordable purchases, distorting consumers' sense of reality. Advertisements also exploit psychological tactics, such as creating dissatisfaction with oneself and one's life, to drive sales. They play on fears and desires for a better self-image, with advertisers using specific colors and words to make products more appealing. Despite many people's belief that they are immune to advertising's influence, the text suggests that its impact is profound and often underestimated, with advertisers investing heavily to sway consumer behavior. The text invites readers to consider the extent to which advertising affects their own product choices.

Sample Summary:

The text says that ads make us want to buy things. Even if many products are the same, ads make us choose one over another. Ads tell us good things about products but not the bad things. This can make us buy things we don't need. Ads also try to make us feel bad about ourselves, like we need to be better or have more. They use colors and words to make us want to buy things. Even though we think ads don't change what we buy, they really do. Companies spend a lot of money on ads to get us to spend our money. The text asks us to think about if ads change what we buy by looking at what we have at home.

Source:

www.anglophone.ir