Advertising - Let the Buyer Beware!

Every day you are surrounded by advertising. You see it on television all the time. For every hour of TV you watch, you are probably seeing fifteen minutes of advertising. You also see it in magazines and newspapers. You see ads on billboards, too. You hear it on the radio. Advertising is everywhere! Advertising can educate and inform consumers about products. But it can also influence consumers to buy things they don't really need and can't afford.

Advertising can also be misleading. Most manufacturers rely on advertising not just to tell people about their products but also to persuade consumers to buy the products. They tend to tell you only the positive things and omit the negative ones. The more you are aware of the techniques advertisers use, the more you will be able to look objectively at a product and make a sensible decision.

Here are six ways advertisers try to grab you. First, there's the bandwagon technique. This type of ad tells you everyone else is buying the product and you'd better get on the bandwagon, too, if you don't want to be left out. Don't be motivated by this type of peer pressure. Look for a better reason to buy a product. Here's an example of a bandwagon type of ad: "Every kid on the block is wearing Cool brand jeans back to school. Get your pair of Cool jeans today and be part of the crowd!"

A second type is the celebrity endorsement. A famous person you admire is endorsing this product. You think if a celebrity is using this product, it must be great. Right? Not really. Celebrities advertise products because they get paid lots of money by the manufacturer. An example of a celebrity endorsement is when a famous baseball player says, "I eat Crispy-O's cereal for breakfast every day. It really helps me hit those home runs!"

The third type is the "image is everything" technique. The advertiser uses pleasing images, music, and fancy camera work to create a favorable impression. In truth, there may be no connection between the images and the product. For example, in a TV commercial, a pretty girl walks down a beautiful country road in the autumn. The trees' leaves are flaming reds, oranges, and yellows. Soft, romantic music plays. A persuasive voice says, "Get back to nature - get Cool jeans."

The fourth type is the emotional appeal. This type of ad uses persuasive images to get a strong emotion from the viewer. This ad makes you happy, sympathetic, or excited - anything to get you to want to buy the product it's pitching. An example: A boy is about to make a foul shot in the last seconds of a basketball game. He's the smallest player on the team, and his teammates are looking at him tensely. He looks down at the Champ sneakers he's wearing and then up at the hoop. He throws the ball, and you watch in slow motion as it goes through the

hoop, winning the game just as the final buzzer goes off. The small guy's teammates lift him up on their shoulders. Then you hear a voice say, "Champ Sneakers - footwear for winners."

The fifth type is the "misleading claims" ad. This ad makes impossible claims, but does it in such a way that it never actually promises anything. You should be alert to this sneaky technique. For example, an actor dressed like a doctor is sitting behind a desk with a pair of Champ sneakers in front of him. He says, "Wearing the right shoes can correct problem feet." What's wrong with that, you ask? Well, it may - or may not - be true. And who says that Champ sneakers are the right shoe to correct problem feet? An actor wearing a doctor's clothing?

Then there's the "We're the Best" technique. This ad leads you to believe its product is better than other brands. It doesn't offer any hard evidence. There is no proof. For example: Four runners are lined up for a footrace. One runner is wearing Champ sneakers. The others wear competing brands. The runner in Champ sneakers crosses the finish line first. Then the announcer's voice says, "Champ sneakers leave the competition in the dust every time!"

Many ads make exaggerated claims called "puffery." Ads "puff up" or exaggerate what the product can do. Do you think that's fair? The Federal Trade Commission or FTC is a government agency that regulates advertising. FTC rules permit puffery, but they require advertisers to make available to consumers the data on which the claims are made. If a business cannot provide proof of the claims, the FTC may find the ads misleading and the advertiser guilty of deception. The FTC can fine the manufacturer, stop the ads, and order the manufacturer to issue corrections.

It's really up to the consumer - you - to make smart decisions. You need to know how to choose from a wide variety of options. You need to be aware of the influences that affect your choices. If something sounds too good to be true, it probably is. Don't be fooled into buying something by ads. If you don't really need it, you're just wasting your money. If it is something you really need, then compare similar items and make sure you're getting the best deal. *Caveat emptor* is Latin for "Let the buyer beware." It's good advice.

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Questions

_____ 1. Why do you need to know about the ways advertising tries to influence you?
- A. so you can look objectively at a product and make a sensible decision
- B. so you will not waste your money
- C. both A and B
- D. neither A nor B

_____ 2. An appeal to "be a part of the crowd" is which type of advertising?

    A. emotional appeal
    B. misleading claims
    C. celebrity endorsement
    D. bandwagon

_____ 3. What is puffery?

    A. ads that use celebrity endorsements
    B. ads that exaggerate what the product can do
    C. ads that make you happy, sympathetic, or excited
    D. ads that say "everyone" is using the product

_____ 4. What does *caveat emptor* mean?

    A. Be wise in all things.
    B. Let the buyer beware.
    C. Go forth with courage.
    D. The government will protect you.

_____ 5. An ad that is so touching it brings tears to your eyes is probably an example of:

    A. misleading claims
    B. bandwagon
    C. emotional appeal
    D. celebrity endorsement

6. List the six techniques advertisers use to influence you to buy their products.

_____

_____

Emily rolls a die. What is the chance of her rolling a 3? _____	You cannot decide what pizza store to go to. Mary's pizza cuts their pizza into 8 slices. Each slice costs $5 each. Ava's pizza cuts their pizza into 5 slices. Each slice costs $2 each. If you like each pizza the same, which pizza store has the better buy?

$$\begin{array}{r} 9\,0 \\ -\ 4\,4 \\ \hline \end{array}$$

971 - 937 = _____

5 x 3 = _____

Name: _____

How many of these can you write about? Think! Write! Check all the ones you answered.

☐ How many hours of TV do you watch in one day? In one week? If about one-fourth of that time is advertising, how many hours of ads do you see in one week?

☐ Why do you think people buy products because a celebrity or sports star endorses them? Please explain.

☐ Do you feel the government needs to do more or less to regulate advertising? Please explain your opinion.

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Don't stop writing. Use a blank piece of paper to continue.

Name: _____

The vowels are missing in the word search.
Fill in the missing vowels and circle the words.

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N  P     P     M  P  L     S
T  C  R     Z  M     L  D
P  L     S     R        L
D     S     P  P  R     V
M  J  S     L     M  N  C  B
D        G  H  T     R  C
         T  H  L     T     R
L  F     R           S     D
N     R  E  C  O  U  N  T
R     S  T     N     S  H  R
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MILD • FURIOUS • ASTONISH
RECOUNT • PLEASURE • DAUGHTER
CRAZE • SOLEMN • DISAPPROVE
ATHLETE • BORDER • AMPLE

26 cm = _____ mm

12 ÷ 6 = _____

$$25 + 39$$

How many dimes make $2.30?

14 ÷ 2 = _____

10 x 12 = _____

8 x 8 = _____

What number is halfway between 23 and 30?

How many kilograms are in 7,000 grams?

_____ kilograms

Can 489 be evenly divided by 7? Circle:

489 is divisible by 7

489 is NOT divisible by 7

$$\begin{array}{r} 4\,6\,0 \\ +\ 3\,7\,0 \\ \hline \end{array}$$

$30 \div 3 =$

Which is the largest?

$96.6 \div 5.5$ $96.6 \div 5.4$ $96.6 \div 5.6$

1 km = 1,000 m

9 km = _____ m

Wendy invented a robot. The robot's name is Adam. Adam can go a maximum speed of 4 mph. At that rate, how long would it take Adam to go 15 miles?

$$\begin{array}{r} 4\,7\,6 \\ -\ 2\,7\,5 \\ \hline \end{array}$$

Circle the smallest number:

1,487,092,437   8,140

861,054,712   29,536,792,653

Sarah is getting messy. She has made a 4' x 5' x 2' cube made out of clay blocks. She wants her art project to have at least a surface area of 49 square feet. Does she need to add more clay?

Which reference material would you consult to find the answer to this question?

What is the pronunciation of the word latte?

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