



Yvonne: Hello - I'm Yvonne Archer, this is "6 Minute English" - and thanks to Rob for joining me today.

Rob: It's good to be here, Yvonne.

Yvonne: Great. Rob – how do you feel about the colour pink?

Rob: Pink? Well, it's not my colour but my four-year-old daughter loves it.

Yvonne: Well, she's got good taste because pink is the colour of choice for today's programme. But before we find out why, it's time for today's question. Are you ready, Rob?

Rob: I'm ready and waiting!

Yvonne: Good. In 1918, according to an article that appeared in The Ladies' Journal, what was thought to be the most suitable colour for girls? Was it

- a) red
- b) pink or
- c) blue

Rob: Hmm...

Yvonne: a) red
b) pink or
c) blue

Rob: I guess as we're talking about pink, I'd say pink.

Yvonne: As usual, I'll have the answer for you later on in today's "6 Minute English"! Now, recently, a BBC Radio 4 programme called "Fight the Power of Pink" investigated why little girls have **a preference for** the colour pink, like young Imogen. She spoke to the BBC Breakfast team about her love of pink.

Insert 1: Imogen

It's not really an obsession, it's when you like, look at it, you feel like, quite dizzy and you go on day dreaming. It's like you're in heaven!

Yvonne: Imogen says her love of pink isn't really '**an obsession**' - she's not so passionate about it that she doesn't have time for any other interests. But looking at pink has a physical effect on her.

Rob: Yes, Imogen says she feels quite '**dizzy**' - weak and shaky as though she might **faint**. So, pink has quite a dramatic effect on her, doesn't it?

Yvonne: It definitely does, Rob. It gets her daydreaming - but what does she mean by 'daydreaming'?

Rob: Well, she imagines things and situations and can't **concentrate** or focus on what's actually happening around her.

Yvonne: For example, a little girl might be thinking about having a big pink wedding instead of thinking about her school work. So everything would be pink at her wedding, everyone would be dressed in pink, including the men and boys...

Rob: You wouldn't catch me wearing pink!

Yvonne: Oh no, Rob! I bought you a pink shirt for your birthday.

Rob: Oh no. Have you got the receipt?

Yvonne: Hmm - I'd better take it back! Anyway, we might be thinking that a preference for pink is only a problem for parents' bank accounts.

Rob: Yes, buying all those pink goods could be very costly for us parents. My daughter has convinced us to buy a pink doll's house.

Yvonne: No! How expensive was that?

Rob: Very expensive.

Yvonne: But a child's firm belief that pink is only for girls can also lead to more serious problems. Here's BBC Breakfast's Charlie Stayt with a story from a viewer:

Insert 2: Charlie Stayt, BBC Breakfast

Mrs Davies got in touch, she's in Kent, she says: "My 4-year old grandson refused to take his antibiotic medicine given by his doctor because it was pink! He said pink was for girls. He was really upset."

Yvonne: As we heard, Mrs Davies' four-year old grandson refused to take his antibiotic medicine. He didn't want to take it even though he was quite ill.

Rob: No, he believes that anything pink is for girls, even medicine - so that can be difficult for parents and perhaps dangerous in some cases.

Yvonne: That's true - but in this case, I'm happy to say that he did finally did take his medicine. Well, Greg Hodge, a research director, says that businesses certainly make use of the fact that children generally believe that anything pink is only for girls.

Insert 3: Greg Hodge, Research Director

People like what their friends like and retailers and manufacturers aren't silly with that, and they look to build on that and get children to buy stuff that their parents like. So if you're merchandising in a store, if you can persuade the parent that it's good as well and that they want to buy it, then you can also trick the child as well.

Yvonne: **Retailers** and **manufacturers** - the people who sell and make goods - try to get children to buy things that their parents like and as we'll all have noticed, a lot of it is pink.

Rob: And the way stores or shops show - or merchandise - their stuff helps to sell more goods. Both parents and children can be convinced that they want to buy the pink stuff that they see.

Yvonne: And it's interesting that Greg Hodge, a research director, says **merchandising** can '**trick**' children into getting their parents to buy what they see.

Rob: Yes, the word 'trick' suggests that there's something slightly dishonest about merchandising which makes children want to buy things that they might not really want.

Yvonne: So do girls prefer pink for scientific or cultural reasons?

Rob: Well, the debate will probably continue for quite some time.

Yvonne: Oh, that's a good job, then because we've got to deal with today's question, Rob. Earlier, I asked: in 1918, according to an article that appeared in The Ladies' Journal, what was thought to be the most suitable colour for girls? Was it red, pink or blue?

Rob: And I said it had to be pink.

Yvonne: And you were absolutely...wrong.

Rob: Oh, dear!

Yvonne: They felt that blue was a dainty and delicate colour so it was prettier for girls.

Rob: Hmm – I like blue. Good choice!

Yvonne: But that's all for today and we hope you'll join us again soon for more "6 Minute English" - from BBC Learning English!

Both: Goodbye!

Vocabulary and definitions

favourite	best, most liked or loved
a preference for	a strong liking for one thing rather than another
an obsession	feeling a need to do something without wanting to stop
dizzy	light-headed, unsteady, unwell
faint	unwell, feeling as though you are about to pass out or lose consciousness
concentrate	pay attention to a task
retailers	people or companies that sell things
manufacturers	people or companies that make things
merchandising	displays, advertising, selling
trick	cheat, scam, dishonestly convince someone to do something

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