

Culture

Advertising and you!

Learning objectives

- The students learn about advertisements which are aimed at teenagers.
- In the project stage, they design their own advertisement and present it to the class.

Preparation

For the warmer activity, find a selection of magazine advertisements or some short video clips.

Warmer


Show the class a selection of advertisements (see Preparation).

Write these questions on the board:

- What is the advertisement for?
- What is it saying?
- What does it want you to do?

Ask the students to look at the ads and discuss the questions in small groups.

- 1 In pairs, encourage the students to ask and answer questions about the five products in question 1, e.g. *Do you own a smartphone? What's your favourite smartphone company?* and ask them to write down the names. Then ask them to discuss questions 2 and 3.
- 2 Ask the class to identify the products in the photos (fried chicken, tonic water, a breakfast cereal, a car, an advert for a search engine) and say if they have seen the advertisements for these things. Next, ask them in pairs to try to guess what problems they caused in other languages.

Then ask them to match the products to problems 1–5. Encourage them to think about similar words e.g. tonic water and toilet water. The students will listen to a podcast in exercise 3 to check their answers.
- 3  2.05 Ask the students to listen and check their answers to exercise 2. If necessary play the recording twice.

Answers

1 e 2 b 3 a 4 c 5 d

Audioscript

Speaker 1: ... Yes, advertising is never easy, and of course, then there are the problems with taking your products into other countries, and making sure the name is OK.

Speaker 2: Sure, or the words you use in your adverts. Have you heard of this famous mistake? This famous fried chicken company described its chicken as 'finger-lickin' good', but that was translated into Chinese as 'eat your fingers off'!

Speaker 1: Not quite the same thing! And it isn't only translations into languages that are very different, like Chinese. This famous brand of tonic water was advertised in Italy as toilet water!

Speaker 2: Oh no! That isn't very attractive, is it? There's also this famous example of not checking your translations with terrible results – it's a car, right? And what's a car meant to do? It's meant to go. So why did this famous car manufacturer name this model Nova? Nova in Spanish – no va – means 'doesn't go', or 'won't go'. Not exactly what you want to hear about a new car if you live in Spain or South America!

Speaker 1: Mm. I've heard of that one and apparently it isn't true. Think about it – we say Nova for the car but the Spanish for 'doesn't go' is no va, so quite different.

Speaker 2: Hm, good point. And you'd think that an enormous company wouldn't make that mistake anyway.

Speaker 1: Indeed! But talking of names, this one is my favourite. It's a common breakfast cereal.

Speaker 2: Sure, I eat it all the time.


Speaker 1: Yes, but maybe you wouldn't if you lived in Sweden, where the name means 'burnt farmer'.

Speaker 2: Ooops! This internet search engine made a real problem for themselves when they wanted to break into the market in China, because the name means 'illness' in Chinese, or 'pancake', depending on which part of China you're in.

Speaker 1: Pancake?

Speaker 2: Yes, you know, those sweet fried things you eat with lemon, not a really useful way of finding things on the internet!

Speaker 1: Right. And the last one here is cheese ...

- 4  2.05 Ask the students, in pairs, to try to complete the table from memory. Then play the recording again for them to check their answers.

Answers

	Product	Country/countries with problem translation
1	fried chicken	China
2	tonic water	Italy
3	car	Spain, South America
4	breakfast cereal	Sweden
5	search engine	China

- 5 Ask the students to describe the photos in pairs and then answer the question. Encourage them to talk about why young people might be attracted to these ads. In exercise 6 they read the complete text and check their ideas.
- 6 Ask the students to read the text quickly, check their answers to exercise 5 and say why they think the text was written. Then ask them to match their ideas with one of the descriptions 1–4.

Answers

bottom photo: clothes

top photo: milk

Description 3 gives the purpose of the text.


- 7 Ask the class to read the first sentence of the second paragraph again and say what it is about (reasons why advertisers try to sell to young people). Next, ask them to find four reasons in the text. If necessary, point out that each reason begins with a word like *First*, *Second*, etc. Then ask them to match these reasons with four of the sentences (1–6) in this exercise.

Answers

- 1 (you're very aware of what your friends have and do, and no one wants to be different)
 3 (You may not be happy with your body image)
 4 (you choose what to spend your money on, not your parents)
 6 (You may not think you have much money, but you can spend it on what you like.)

Extension activity

The students look at the two remaining sentences and decide if they are true. Then in pairs, they write some reasons why advertisers try to sell to other groups of people, e.g. children, professionals, retired people, etc.

- 8  2.06 Ask the students to read the first sentence of the third paragraph and say what it is about (why we want to buy things after watching or listening to an advertisement).

Encourage them to say what they remember from the text about advertising techniques a–d. Then ask them to read the paragraph again, find the four techniques and check their ideas. Ask different students to explain the techniques to the class using examples from real advertisements where possible. Finally, ask the students to listen to the recording and match the speakers to a–d.

Answers

1 c 2 a 3 d 4 b

Audioscript

Narrator: One

Speaker 1: So, I've got an idea for a new ad. What I'm thinking is this – they're all sitting round the table, you know, maybe Sunday lunch or something, and there's this great smell coming from the kitchen. One of the kids looks up and smiles, and says something like 'Oh, chocolate pudding, my favourite', at which point everyone looks at each other and smiles.

Narrator: Two

Speaker 2: That's a great idea for the new ad, but we need something more to attract young people. Just the clothes themselves aren't enough, we need someone actually wearing the jacket.

Speaker 3: Mm, we need a name.

Speaker 2: Yes, someone they respect, like ... someone cool.

Speaker 3: Yes, but we can't afford to pay them too much, so it can't be someone too expensive.

Narrator: Three

Speaker 4: So, I've got a great idea for this ad. I think you have this great image of a beach, it looks calm, it looks quiet, and then all these teens come running along it, having the time of their lives. But they're not wearing the shoes, they're holding them, and suddenly they put them on and start dancing to this kind of hip hop number that gets louder and wilder – not too wild though, 'cos we want it to stay with the audience.

Narrator: Four


Speaker 5: Look at this advert I'm working on and tell me what you think.

Speaker 6: Advert! What do you want to ask me for?

Speaker 5: You're the right age – it's a new advert for an energy drink, aimed at teens, you know, for when you're doing sports.

Speaker 6: Oh, OK. What's this then?

Speaker 5: Well, these two young people are obviously quite rich. They're wearing great clothes, they're happy, they're easygoing, and they're drinking our new drink. We want teens to look at it and think 'I want to live like that.' What do you think?

- 9  2.06 Encourage the students to answer this question from memory in pairs first. Then play the recording again.

Answers

1 chocolate pudding 2 clothes 3 shoes 4 energy drink

Project

Tell the students they are now going to design their own advert. Organise them into groups or pairs and encourage them to think of a product and also whether they are going to produce a poster, a radio ad or video clip for the internet. Remind them to choose one or more of the techniques in exercise 8.

When the students are ready, ask them to present their ad (or their ideas for an ad) to the class. Encourage the others to identify the techniques used. If appropriate, encourage the students to vote for the best in different categories, e.g. the best poster, radio or TV ad, the best acting, artwork or music, the most original, the most persuasive, etc.