



"Advertising is accepted and expected. Young people don't see anything wrong in being sold to and think that if a product is in a TV ad, it must be good. It's a myth that they are interested in clever ads – they are not willing to decipher complicated messages, they want simple ones. They are looking for an instant message. If it's not there, they don't take any notice. And they literally, and naively, believe celebrities in ads really use the products they are advertising," says Armon. A girl panellist from Birmingham commented: "In some of the Nike ads they've got all these well-known footballers. You think, 'Oh my God, they've got everybody famous there.' You think it must be good if they want it."

The youngsters only read newspapers for the celebrity gossip and sport, rather than news, and couldn't distinguish between papers' political stances. They also failed to distinguish between TV channels – they access TV through programmes, not channels, for example watching Sky because *The Simpsons* is on, not because it's Sky.

The results of the research deeply worry Sid McGrath, planner at an ad agency, but they do not surprise him. "My worry is that the youth of today are not being called upon to flex their intellectual muscles enough," he says. "There is instant gratification everywhere – in food it's Pot Noodles or vending machines, even their pop icons are one-dimensional figures delivered on a plate. Young people are living vicariously through other people's lives and are not asking for much at the moment. A lot of stimulation is 'lean back' – it doesn't require as much involvement as it used to."

He says advertising is changing as a result: "Lots of the most popular ads at the moment are happy, clappy, fun. Easy to digest. They've got no time or inclination to decode ads." One reason behind the shift, McGrath believes, is that young people want relief from the traumas of real life: "Advertising is becoming the opium of the masses rather than the educator."

5 It is suggested that young people today

- A prefer watching cartoons to political programmes.
- B prefer newspapers for current affairs.
- C cannot detect differences of quality between TV channels.
- D cannot detect different perspectives in newspapers.

6 Sid McGrath is concerned that young people these days

- A are given too many choices.
- B are encouraged to eat too much.
- C do not get enough exercise.
- D are not required to think.



Vocabulary Practice

2

Match the highlighted words in the article with their synonyms below.

- change • attitudes • satisfaction
- work out • noticeable
- represented • stimulate



Text Analysis

3

What does the writer mean by the following?

- media, marketing and advertising literate (l. 9)
- celebrity endorsements (l. 15)
- bombarded with fast-turnover information (ll. 20-21)
- thoroughbred consumers (l. 23)
- one-dimensional figures delivered on a plate (ll. 62-63)
- living vicariously (l. 64)



Discussion

4

Discuss these questions in groups.

- 1 Do you agree with the writer's views on today's youth?
- 2 How do you think advertising will develop in the future?

5

THINK! In pairs, decide on a product to advertise. Prepare two