

PRUEBA/PROVA: A LICENCE TO SELL

EXAM and ANSWERS including SMART TIPS

A LICENCE TO SELL

Modern films and TV shows often feel like long advertisements thanks to product placement. This advertising technique involves using a product in a film or TV programme as if it were part of the story. Product placement owes its success to the invention of the video recorder, as owners fast-forwarded when adverts appeared in the middle of recorded programmes. Video recorders were a problem for advertisers; product placement was the solution.

Today, advertisers receive scripts from producers and then look for products that fit 'naturally' with the story. For example, a studio making a film about a teenager at university might ask for clothes, a laptop computer and a mobile phone for her. The camera could easily focus on all of these objects without greatly damaging the story. The problems begin when nobody worries about the story.

Ian Fleming, who wrote the James Bond novels, gave his hero a 'licence to kill'. Many people say the Bond films have given him a new licence: a licence to sell. When Bond isn't using the latest mobile phones, GPS devices or handheld tablets, he is driving sports cars and flying with airlines that have all been placed in the films for enormous amounts of money. Companies paid \$45 million for their products to appear in the last Bond film. Many Bond fans think there is too much product placement and not enough plot.

It seems that product placement is here to stay. Nevertheless, many critics feel that if TV programmes and films just become vehicles for advertising, audiences will soon look for alternative forms of entertainment.

1. Read the text. Indicate whether the following statements are TRUE or FALSE and write down which part of the text justifies your answer. [2 POINTS]

- a) TV and film producers send scripts to advertising companies so they can find suitable products to go with the story.
True. After they have read the scripts, advertisers select products that will fit in with the plot. (OR '... advertisers receive scripts and then look for products that fit "naturally" with the story.' – paragraph 2)
- b) Product placement contributes to increasing the film production costs.
False. Companies pay studios millions of dollars to include their products in the latest films. (OR '... that have all been placed in the films for enormous amounts of money. Companies paid \$45 million for their products to appear in the last Bond film.' – paragraph 3)
- c) In the future, audiences might consider product placement a reason for finding different types of entertainment.
True. The article says that if product placement increases then audiences might get bored or frustrated and look for other types of entertainment instead of films.

- d) Product placement has become a way of replacing the commercial break between programmes.

True. The article says that video recorders were a problem for companies because people fast forwarded over the advertisements and so product placement has become a way to replace advertisements.

SMART TIP: finding key words in the text

It can be helpful to search for key words in the text to locate the information you need. Remember that key words in the statement may appear in the text in a slightly different form, so search for words with the same root but a different part of speech.

If you cannot find any key words in the text, try searching for synonyms or words with a similar meaning instead.

2. Answer the following questions in your own words according to the text. [2 POINTS]

- a) What does product placement do to a lot of films and TV programmes?

Suggested answer: It turns them into non-stop commercials.

SMART TIP: using linkers and time expressions

You may need to include several ideas in your answer. Try to organise your ideas with linkers, such as *because* or *so that*, or time expressions, such as *before* or *after*. Read your answer carefully afterwards to make sure it has the correct grammar, spelling and punctuation.

- b) What is a common complaint about product placement in James Bond films?

Suggested answer: Audiences feel that the story is weak because there is too much emphasis on advertising products.

3. Find words or phrases in the text that correspond to the words and definitions given.

[1,5 POINTS]

- a) a particular way of doing something (paragraph 1) *technique*
b) freedom to do whatever you want, often something bad or unacceptable (paragraph 3) *licence*
c) the storyline of a book or film (paragraph 3) *plot*
d) despite this (paragraph 4) *nevertheless*
e) something that can be used as a way of achieving something (paragraph 4) *vehicle (for)*

4. Choose the correct option, a, b, c or d for each question and COPY the sentence onto your answer sheet. [1,5 POINTS]

1. Product placement ...

- a) first appeared in video recordings of TV programmes and films.
b) describes a TV programme that is about a product.
c) *makes products part of a TV programme or film.*
d) is the advertisement which appears between programmes.

2. TV viewers' habits changed because of ...

- a) *a new device.*
b) repeated programmes and films.
c) the introduction of product placement.
d) more leisure time.

3. Product placement causes problems when ...
- a) *the products become more important than the story.*
 - b) the products fit naturally with the story.
 - c) there aren't many products in the story.
 - d) it is difficult to notice the product placement.

5. Write 120–150 words on the following topic. [3 POINTS]

Does advertising influence people?

Suggested answer:

Advertising surrounds us. It's in the media, on the internet, on hoardings and on public transport. It's impossible to escape.

In my opinion, all this advertising affects our behaviour. Our ideas about what the 'perfect' body is come from adverts. Advertising also has a great influence on what is fashionable, whether it's clothing, gadgets or popular culture.

Another demonstration of the power of advertising is the willingness of companies to spend millions on it. They wouldn't invest so much if it didn't work.

In conclusion, I believe that advertising is incredibly effective at persuading people to buy. Without it, a lot of non-essential products wouldn't sell.

SMART TIP: using paragraphs

You will receive points for the way you organize your writing, as well as for the accuracy of your work. Each time you talk about a new subject, use a new paragraph. The model essay above is organized as follows:

- paragraph 1) introduction, giving some background information
- paragraph 2) first main argument (advertising influences behaviour and fashions)
- paragraph 3) second main topic (companies invest a lot of money in advertising)
- paragraph 4) conclusion, summarizing the writer's opinion.