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.

I. Read the text. Add TRUE or FALSE and copy the evidence from the text to support your answer. NO marks are given for only true or false. NO marks are given for T or F. (2 POINTS: 0.5 points for each correct answer)

1. TV and film producers send scripts to advertising companies so they can find suitable products to go with the story.
   True. Suggested answer: 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)

2. Product placement contributes to increasing the film production costs.
   False. Suggested answer: 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)

3. In the future, audiences might consider product placement a reason for finding different types of entertainment.
True. Suggested answer: critics predict that people will become bored with seeing product placement grow and that they will look for alternative means of entertainment instead of films (paragraph 4)

4. Product placement has become a way of replacing the commercial break between programmes.
True. Suggested answer: 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 (paragraph 1).

II. LEXICON/PHONETICS

A. LEXICON (1 point: 0.25 points for each correct answer)

Find words or phrases in the text that mean the same as these given.

1. Commercial
   advertisement
2. screenplay
   script
3. appliance
   device
4. story
   plot

B. PHONETICS (1 POINT: 0.25 points for each correct answer)

1. Write a word from the text that includes the same diphthong sound as "like"
   /aɪ/ *licence*
2. How is the "th" pronounced in "think", /θ/ or /ð/? *It is pronounced /θ/*
3. How is the "-s" pronounced in "forms", /s/, /z/ or /ɪz/? *It is pronounced /z/*
4. Write a word from the text that includes the same sound as "teacher" /ə / *Recorder*

SMART TIP: reading the whole text to find the right sound
There will probably be several correct answers for pronunciation questions. Do not worry if you cannot find a correct answer straightaway. Continue reading the whole text carefully and slowly until you find the answer you need. Try "saying" the words in your head until you find one with the same sound.
Make sure that you revise phonemes before your final examinations.

III. USE OF ENGLISH (3 POINTS: 0.5 points for each correct answer)

Rewrite the following sentences starting with the words given:

1. The mobile was too expensive for me to buy.
   I didn't have enough *money to buy the mobile.*

2. This month of June has been much hotter than last year.
   Last June was *much less hot than this year.*

3. Perhaps we have gone the wrong way.
   We might *have gone the wrong way.*

4. You are tired because you stayed up late last night.
   If you hadn't *stayed up so late you wouldn't be so tired.*

5. Meeting the lead singer was really surprising.
   I didn't expect *to meet the lead singer.*

6. We haven't arranged a date for the party yet.
   A date for the party *hasn't been arranged yet.*

SMART TIP: checking verb forms in transformations
Remember to revise conditional forms and other major grammar points (including tenses, reported speech, relative clauses, modal verbs, and the passive) in preparation for your examination. See your course book for more information.

IV. COMPOSITION (3 POINTS)

Write a composition of at least 125 words on the following topic:
Does advertising influence people?

Suggested answer:

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

In my opinion, the fact that we constantly see advertising affects our behaviour. I think that the ideas we have about what the 'perfect' body is all come from adverts. Advertising also has a great influence on what is considered 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 continually invest all this money if it didn't work.

In conclusion, I believe that advertising is very effective at persuading people to buy things. Without it, a lot of non-essential products would probably not sell.

SMART TIP: using information from the reading text
Often, a writing task will ask you to write about a similar topic to the text you have just read. It is a good idea to read the text again carefully for ideas. However, be careful: you should not copy information directly from the text. You must always use your own words, and try to add some of your own ideas too.