

PRUEBA: A LICENCE TO SELL

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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. Choose the correct answer a, b or c. (3 points; 0.5 each)

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.
2. TV viewers' habits changed because of ...
 - a. a new device.
 - b. repeated programmes and films.
 - c. the introduction of product placement.
3. Why did viewers use the fast-forward function when watching recorded programmes?
 - a. to avoid programmes they didn't want to watch
 - b. to avoid product placement
 - c. to avoid advertisements
4. TV and film producers send scripts to advertising companies so they can ...
 - a. suggest changes to the story.
 - b. find suitable products to go with the story.
 - c. find solutions for any problems in the story.

5. Product placement causes problems when ...
- the products become more important than the story.
 - the products fit naturally with the story.
 - the camera focuses on some products.
6. One of the complaints about product placement in James Bond films is that ...
- audiences want to buy the products they see immediately.
 - it's very expensive for companies.
 - audiences can't concentrate on the story.

2. Answer these questions in no more than 5 words. (1 point; 0.25 each)

- Who did product placement solve a problem for?
- What should product placement not do in a film or programme?
- Why is there so much product placement in Bond films?
- What might audiences in the future do as a result of product placement?

3. Find a word in the text for these definitions. (1 point; 0.25 each)

- commercials (*paragraph 1*)
- story (*paragraph 3*)
- appliances (*paragraph 3*)
- screenplay (*paragraph 2*)

4. Rephrase the following sentences so that their meaning is as similar to the original as possible. (1 point; 0.25 each)

- a. Advertisers introduced product placement because of the success of video recorders.

Product placement _____

- b. You are tired because you stayed up late last night watching that film.

If you hadn't _____

- c. The critic said, 'The film was ruined by product placement.'

The critic said that _____

- d. Product placement is an advertising technique. This advertising technique promotes a product in a film or TV programme.

Product placement is _____

5. Write an opinion article of 150 words on this topic: Advertising influences people. Write about the different forms of advertising that exist today and say how it influences people. Give your opinion on how effective advertising is at influencing people (specify the number of words at the top right-hand side of your essay). (3 points)

6. You have arranged to see a film with a friend but you are going to be late. Write a text message to your friend explaining the situation. Apologise and suggest a solution (write between 35 and 50 words). (1 point)