PRUEBA/PROVA: BRAND FANS

EXAM and ANSWERS

PART A. Reading Comprehension
Read the following text:

BRAND FANS

One look at the logo on your T-shirt and people know that you ‘just do it’. The three stripes on your trainers tell everyone that ‘impossible is nothing’ for you. But those signs send another message to the world: you’re a brand fan.

In the past, advertising focused on product quality, but advertisers discovered that people don’t discuss what their sports gear is made of. They talk about Nadal’s victories and Messi’s goals: in other words, experiences. As a result, some companies stopped making products and started creating experiences.

Today, factories in the developing world make the products, while the companies make sure that consumers associate their brands with success. This involves using marketing techniques that appeal to their biggest customers: teenagers.

Today’s teenagers are relatively wealthy and, consequently, companies work hard to attract their custom through the internet and by sponsoring special events. There are Facebook pages to visit, and events such as pop concerts that provide the ‘lifestyle experiences’ the company wants customers to associate their brand with. In fact, companies want teenagers to see their brands as celebrities, not as products.

But a celebrity image can have negative consequences for a brand. News about brands, good or bad, is now celebrity news, not business news. When some companies were discovered using workers in sweatshops, it was headline news. As a result, if companies want people to love their brands, they will have to behave ethically. Otherwise, their fans might stop feeling proud of wearing their logos and take their custom elsewhere.

I. Answer the following questions using your own words, but taking into account the information in the text. (2 points: 1 point each)

a. What do the logos you wear clearly tell people?
Suggested answer: They tell everyone that you like buying branded products.

b. What did advertisers discover about people’s conversations?
Suggested answer: Advertisers found out that people prefer to talk about sport and popular entertainment rather than what trainers are made of.
SMART TIP: answering open questions
When answering open questions, try to use your own words. Find the information you need in the text and see if you can think of any synonyms, especially for the verbs and the nouns. Also make sure that you write complete sentences in your answers, not just notes.

II. Are the following statements true (T) or false (F)? Identify the part of the text that supports your answer by copying the exact passage on the answer sheet. (1.5 points: 0.5 each)

   a. Companies used to talk about sporting achievements in their advertisements.
      False. ‘In the past, advertising focused on product quality …’
   b. Companies create advertising that they hope teenagers will like.
      True. ‘This involves using marketing techniques that appeal to their biggest customers: teenagers.’
   c. News about brands has less impact these days.
      False. ‘News about brands, good or bad, is now celebrity news, not business news.’

SMART TIP: answering ‘true or false’ questions
‘True or false’ questions often use the same vocabulary that appears in the text so the sentence appears correct. However, the tense in the question may be different to the tense used in the text.

III. Find a synonym for each of the four words below from these six options: (1 point: 0.25 each)

   marketing  sweatshop  wealthy  celebrities  logo  custom

   a. symbol
      logo (paragraph 1 / 5)
   b. rich
      wealthy (paragraph 4)
   c. trade
      custom (paragraph 4 / 5)
   d. factory
      sweatshop (paragraph 5)

SMART TIP: deciding on the meaning of a word
If you’re not sure about the meaning of a word, re-read the sentence (and, if necessary, the paragraph) in which it appears in the reading text, and use the context to help you. For example, in the first paragraph, the word ‘logo’ refers to something on a T-shirt. The rest of the paragraph talks about the ‘stripes’ on trainers and refers to both ‘logo’ and ‘stripes’ as signs. The context should help you to realize that ‘logo’ is a kind of symbol.

IV. Choose a, b or c in each question below. Only one choice is correct. (1.5 point: 0.5 each)

1. Factories in the developing world ...
   a. create advertising for brands.
   \textbf{b. make products for companies.} 
   c. have stopped making products for companies.
2. Companies organize pop concerts so that teenagers ...
   a. will associate their brands with cool activities.
   b. will spend a lot of money on products available at these events.
   c. can meet celebrities.

3. Today, news about brands ...
   a. is found in the business section of newspapers.
   b. always increases sales.
   c. could produce a negative reaction from a brand’s customers.

SMART TIP: answering questions with three options
When answering questions that offer three possible answers, first read the question and find the part of the text that it refers to. Reread that part of the text and see if you can answer the question before you look at the options. This will help you to choose the correct option and avoid being ‘tricked’ by options that use vocabulary from the text but are wrong.

PART B. Composition (130–150 words approximately) (4 points)

‘Shopping at shopping centres is fun.’ Discuss.

Many different answers are possible. Here is a suggested model.

For most families, shopping for necessities is a daily or weekly routine. However, shopping centres have been doing their best to turn shopping into an entertainment.

People often visit shopping centres to buy non-essential goods. This is the kind of shopping a lot of people enjoy. Furthermore, there are restaurants, cinemas and activities for children, so a trip to a shopping centre can often become a day out for the whole family.

Unfortunately, all these attractions mean that shopping centres are extremely crowded. Moreover, you always find the same shops in every centre and it’s virtually impossible to find anything original.

As far as I’m concerned, shopping centres are great if you like buying goods from well-known chain stores, eating fast food and watching blockbuster films. However, if you’re looking for something different, you’d better stay away!

SMART TIP: organizing your writing
Before you start writing, make a list of all the things connected to the title that you can think of. Choose which things you want to write about and organize your ideas into three or four paragraphs: an introduction, the main part, and a summary.