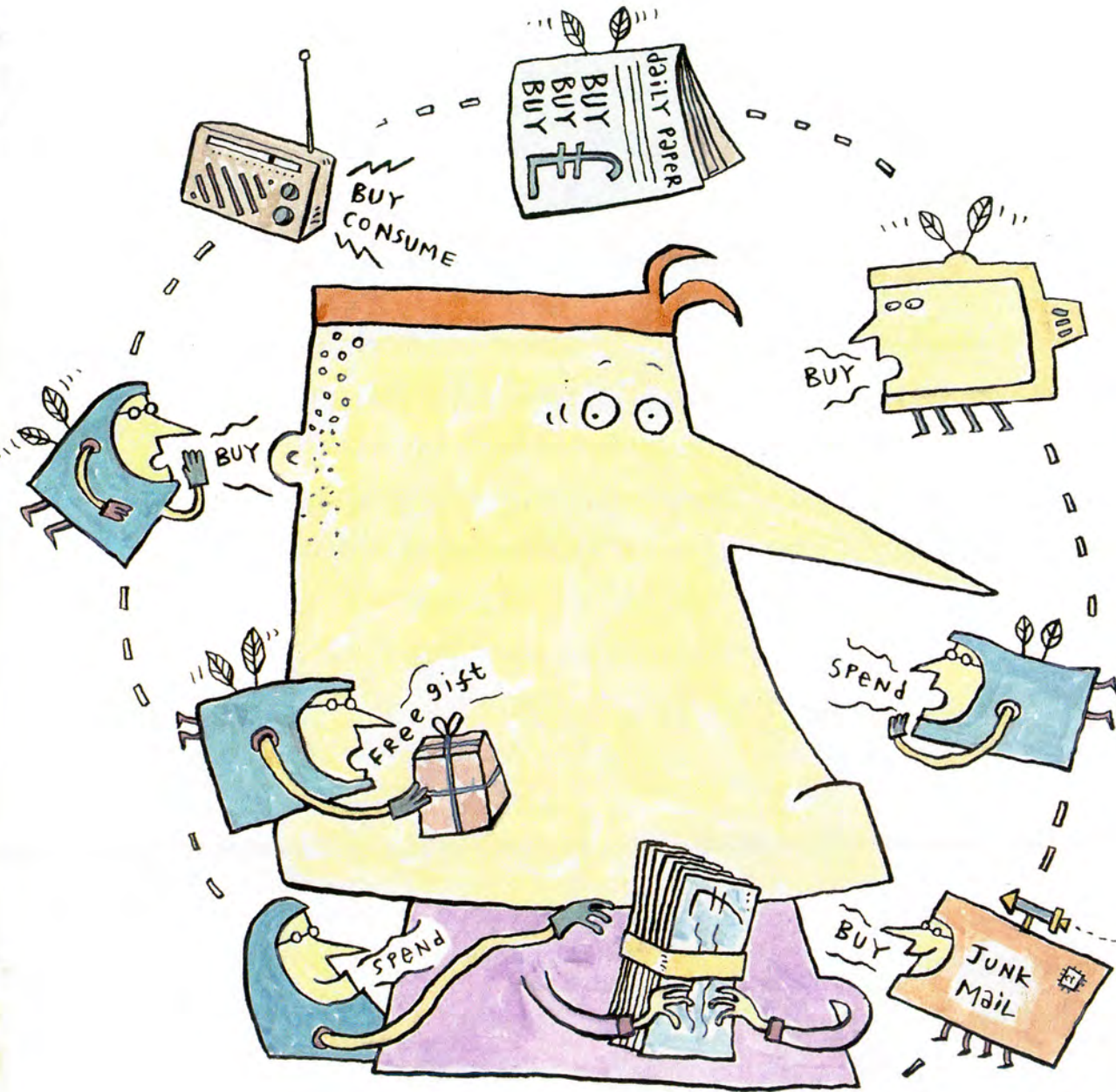


NO KIDDING!

For boys
and girls
aged 7 to 11

Number 14
Spring 1999



Are you brainwashed by adverts?

Who ate
half of this
piranha?



What do
you think
about clubs
for kids?
Tell us on
page 31.

Where can
you spend
one of
these?



Why are
bogies
green?

When
did Neil
Armstrong
first step on
the moon?



How do
you make
an advert
for TV?



If you would like to be in **No Kidding!**, write to us at PO Box 10427 London N8 8UP. Make sure you send your address!

If anything exciting is happening at your school, if you would like us to visit to tell you about how we make **No Kidding!**, or if you want to tell us what you like to read... get your teacher to ring us on **0171 354 5040**.

No Kidding! is edited, designed and produced by Gibson Orr Smith PO Box 10427 London N8 8UP

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Thank you
to all the children, teachers and parents who have advised and put forward ideas
Chris Cooke, London Aquarium
Mr David Albert, paediatric otolaryngologist

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No Kidding!
PO Box 10427, London N8 8UP.

Winners of all competitions will be notified by post and their names may be used in future issues of **No Kidding!** Competitions are not open to children of directors of Gibson Orr Smith or contributors to **No Kidding!**

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Who are you?

"My name is Arjun Bhanot. I am 10 years old. My date of birth is 18/09/88. I have one brother and one sister. My sister's name is Arti Bhanot, she is 15 years old, and my brother's name is Shankar Bhanot, and he is 8 years old.

"My dad is a supervisor at Ford Manufacturers, and my mum works at my school – Barley Lane Primary. My grandad works at a travel agents. My grandma stays at home.

"My hobbies are playing football and playing on my Play Station. My favourite game on my Play Station is "Tekken Three". My best friends are Jack Conelly and Sukhraj Atwall. My other friends are Kurran, Ben, James and Rahman. My teacher's name is Mrs Wye. My favourite subject at school is art, but I must admit I am not very good at it. I go to the Boys Brigade and Cubs. I go camping with Cubs, and when we go, I really enjoy myself.

"I think No Kidding! is fantastic and I bet everyone agrees with me."

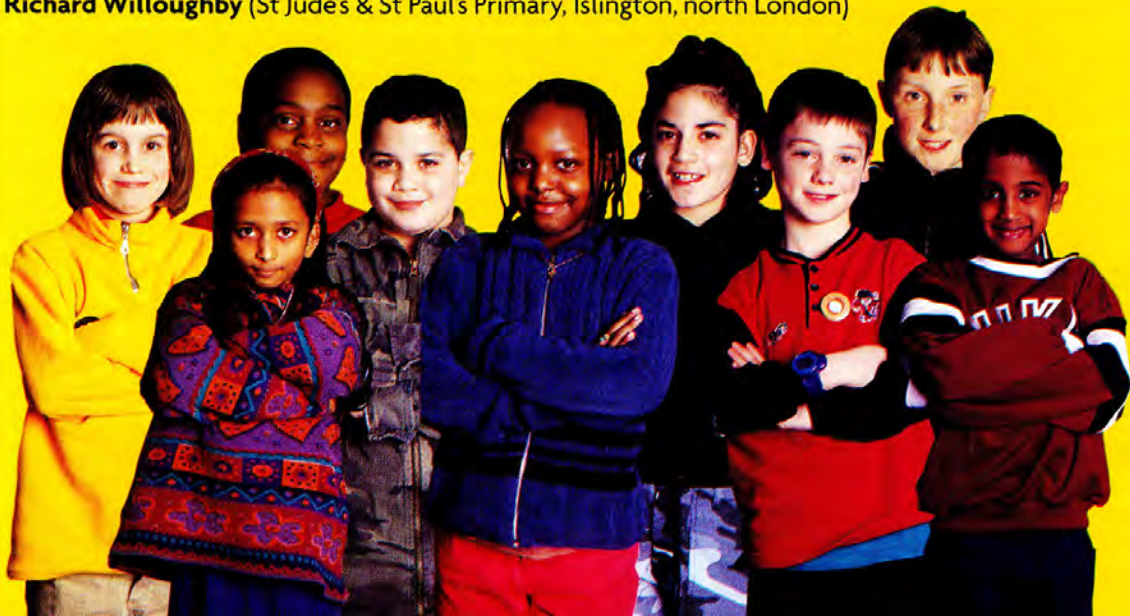


Arjun lives in Ilford in Essex. **Write and tell** us who you are – if we print your letter, we'll send you one of these



The names of the children whose pictures appear on the pages of this No Kidding! are:

Moses Alausa (Lark Hall Juniors, Stockwell, south London)
Tosin Alausa (Lark Hall Juniors, Stockwell, south London)
Thady Byrne (St Gilda's RC Juniors, Crouch End, north London)
Sam Chedzoy (St Paul's RC Primary, Wood Green, north London)
Sabrina Duporte (Barclay Juniors, Leyton, east London)
Racheal Kafero (St Paul's Primary, Whitechapel, east London)
Amarah Khan (William Patten School, Stoke Newington, north London)
Ferdous Khan (Berger Primary, Homerton, east London)
Hamad Khan (William Patten School, Stoke Newington, north London)
Karar Khan (Berger Primary, Homerton, east London)
Carlos Lopez (St Peter's Primary, Hammersmith, west London)
Lynn O'Leary (Bounds Green Juniors, Bounds Green, north London)
Hasina Patel (St Peter's Primary, Hammersmith, west London)
Tarun Patel (St Peter's Primary, Hammersmith, west London)
Eleanor Simpson (Wanstead CE Primary, Wanstead, east London)
Julia Syrichas (Hornsey School for Girls, Hornsey, north London)
Stelios Syrichas (St Mary's CE Juniors, Hornsey, north London)
Dheepan Visakan (William Torbitt Juniors, Newbury Park, Ilford, Essex)
Sinhuja Visakan (William Torbitt Juniors, Newbury Park, Ilford, Essex)
James Willoughby (Our Lady & St Joseph Primary, Islington, north London)
Richard Willoughby (St Jude's & St Paul's Primary, Islington, north London)



NO KIDDING!

For boys
and girls
aged 7 to 11

Number 14
Spring 1999

Do adverts get inside your head? 4-17

Do they make you feel you "must have" something? Do they brainwash you or help you choose what you want to buy? How are TV adverts made? – and how can you sell a new cake without advertising?



Sport 18

Find out about different sports by watching TV

Countdown to the 21st Century 19

Neil Armstrong walked on the moon in 1969. What else happened in the 1960s and what was it like being your age in the 7th decade of this century?

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What makes carbon so important?



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They sometimes eat humans for dinner!

Tell us what you think about clubs for kids 30

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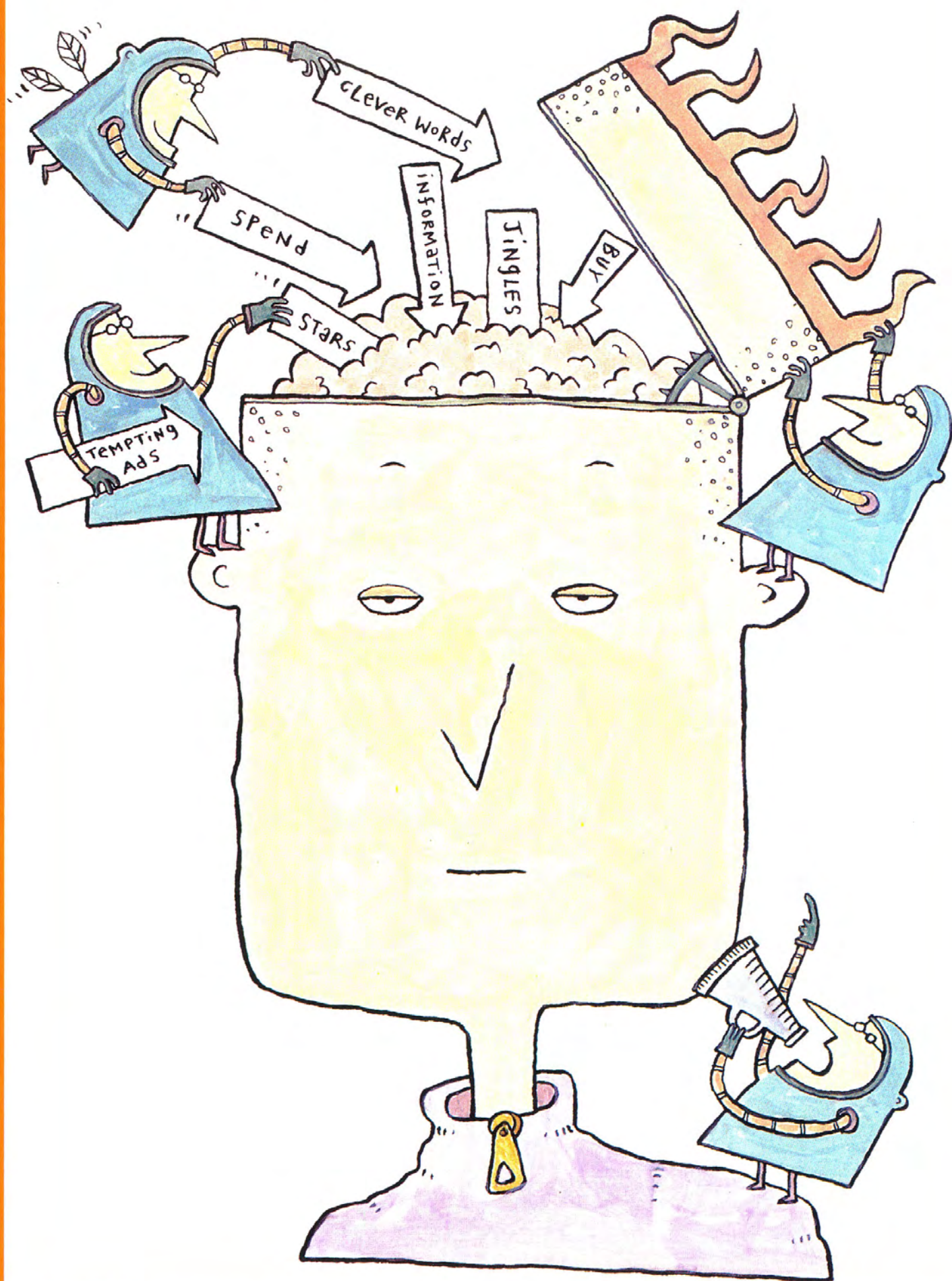
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Do adverts get inside your head?

Do you remember the songs you've heard on TV adverts? Do you and your friends know which stars and footballers appear in which adverts?

There are adverts all around us – not only on television and in newspapers and magazines, but also on cinema screens and on the radio.

Think where else you see them – on the backs of buses, on the sides of taxis, in bus shelters and at train stations. There are adverts on tube

trains and adverts that come through your letterbox. Most of these adverts are trying to persuade you, your family or your friends to buy something, to go somewhere, to do something.

Adverts try to catch your attention – they use clever words, unusual pictures, catchy tunes, famous people.

Sometimes they try to shock you.

Advertisers want you to remember the words, the pictures, the song, the packet or the logo. If these things stick in your mind, perhaps their product or brand will stick in your mind too.

Companies spend millions of pounds on advertising each year. They think it's worth spending the money. If people buy the products that are advertised, the companies will make millions more.

Can you remember slogans like ...

"Never underestimate the power..."

"Once you pop..."

"Have a break..."

"The drive of your life..."

"Pick up a..."

"Now they're supercharged..."

"How do you eat yours?"

"Makes milk fun..."

"Kills all known germs..."

"Because I'm worth it..."

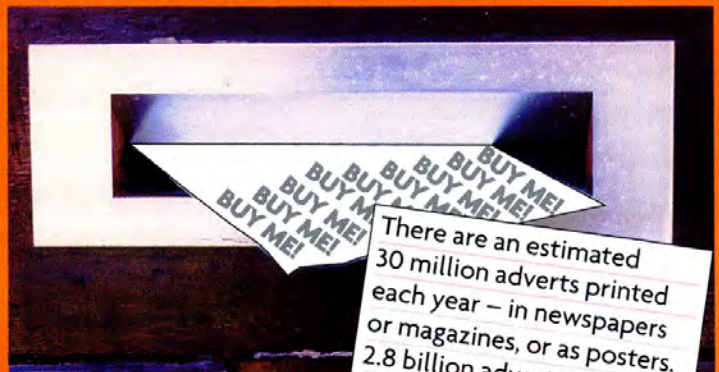


Adverts make money for all sorts...

There are all sorts of different companies working in advertising. If a big business has a product it wants to advertise, like a washing powder, it will probably hire an advertising agency to come up with ideas for a "campaign" to persuade people to

Series like *Brookside* and *Coronation Street* are called "soaps" after a radio series in America which was sponsored by a company that made soap powder. The company paid to have the name of the brand mentioned in each programme and advertised in the breaks. More people bought the soap powder!

buy the brand. People who work at advertising agencies buy space for adverts in newspapers and magazines, or buy time to broadcast adverts on TV and radio. They book poster sites too. Other people who work for advertising agencies design the adverts, write the words, or come up with ideas for slogans. Some agencies also ask people what they think of their adverts and try to work out if the adverts have worked – if people have remembered the washing powder's name, for example, and bought it while they are shopping. All the big companies hire advertising agencies – the companies that make food and toys, videos, cars, washing powder and fridges, the companies that run supermarkets and chain shops. There are also companies that make adverts for television, and companies that make adverts shown in the cinema. There are companies that hire out poster sites on the streets and others that deliver leaflets, coupons and product samples to your home. You can even pay the Post Office to hand out leaflets over the counter!



There are an estimated 30 million adverts printed each year – in newspapers or magazines, or as posters. 2.8 billion adverts are sent into people's homes each year through their letter boxes – the stuff that some people call junkmail.

There are more than 7,000 different newspapers and magazines in the UK – from national newspapers that you can buy everywhere to magazines about just one thing, like knitting, cooking or football, fishing or stamp collecting.

The first newspaper started at the beginning of the 1700s. In those days, not many people could read, but as more and more learnt to read, more newspapers were set up.

Radio started in the 1920s and television was first seen in this country in 1936.

All these sources of information are called **the media**. Apart from the BBC, which is paid for by our TV licences, the media needs advertising to make money.

Sometimes your mum or dad might go looking for adverts – if they want to buy a second hand bike, for example, they might look in a newspaper at little adverts put in there by other mums and dads. These little adverts are called "classified" because adverts about the same sort of thing are grouped together – they are classified according to what they are selling. Big adverts are called "display" adverts – they display or show something.

Easter at

DISCOVERY ZONE

- MONDAY **FACE PAINTING DAY-**
GET YOUR FACE PAINTED IN AN EASTER DESIGN
- TUESDAY **ARTS & CRAFTS DAY-**
MAKE VARIOUS EASTER OBJECTS AND GIFTS
- WEDNESDAY **TREASURE HUNT-**
FIND THE HIDDEN EASTER CHARACTERS TO WIN A PRIZE
- THURSDAY **EGG DAY-**
BRING IN YOUR PAINTED EGGS TO ENTER OUR COMPETITION
- FRIDAY **ODD SOCK DAY-**
£1 OFF GENERAL ADMISSION WHEN YOU WEAR ODD SOCKS

ACTIVITIES RUN FROM MON 29TH MARCH - FRIDAY 23RD APRIL
PARENT AND TODDLER SESSIONS WILL RUN IN THE MORNING ONLY 10AM - 1PM. £1.99 PER CHILD
THERE WILL BE NO 4 O'CLOCK CLUB DURING THE EASTER BREAK.
DISCOVERY ZONE, THE JUNCTION SHOPPING CENTRE, ST JOHN'S HILL, CLAPHAM JUNCTION SW11 1SA. TEL: 0171 223 1217



A Century of BEARS

13 March to 6 June 1999

Church Farmhouse Museum
Greyhound Hill
Hendon
London NW4 4JR
Telephone 0181 203 0130



Do advertisers want you?

Advertisers only want to talk to people they think are the most likely to buy what they are advertising. They call these people their target audience.

When companies advertise, they have to decide whether to show their adverts on TV, put them in newspapers or magazines, make them into posters, put them on the radio....the choice is huge. There are so many newspapers and magazines, so many different TV channels and so many places to put posters – how do advertisers decide where to put their adverts?

Imagine you have invented a new toy and you have decided to advertise it. Would your target audience be kids and their families, or would it be older grown-ups who have no children?

If you wanted to sell shoes made for girls, would it make sense to advertise them in a magazine read mostly by boys?

Advertisers want their adverts to be seen by people they think will buy what they are advertising,

or who will be interested in what the advert is saying.

The number of people who read a magazine is not as important to advertisers as the *type* of people who read it. If advertisers find out what sort of people read a magazine, they can decide if this sort is their target. Some newspapers have closed down because even though they were read by large numbers of people, they were not the type of people advertisers wanted to see their adverts.

Advertisers use different ways to decide what type of people we are. One of the most common ways is to split us into groups called A, B, C1, C2, D and E. These groups are called “social classes” or “social grades”. The “social class” of a grown-up depends on their job, their education, what sort of home they have and how much money they have to spend. People

Most adverts you see at the cinema are targeted at young people. More people aged 15 to 24 go to the cinema than any other sort of person.

in the “A” group earn thousands of pounds each year and have the top jobs. People with no job are put in the “E” group. These social grades have been used for years and years to work out the behaviour of “types” of people and how likely each type is to do something or buy something.

Even though new “social groups” have recently been made up to be more up to date, most advertisers still talk about As, Bs, C1s, C2s, Ds and Es. Advertisers think everyone who is put into the same grade will, more or less, think the same thing, want the same sort of things and act in the same way, will live near each other and go on the same sort of holiday.

Do you think this is true?

Advertisers sometimes try to work out what sort of person you are by your postcode. Some areas of the country are richer, some have lots of retired people, some have lots of young families. Postcodes can help advertisers find their target audience. Where would you send adverts about nappies?



Bank of England Museum

See our unique display of Banknotes and Gold Bars
Experience the world of modern technology with
our exciting interactive videos



Open

Monday to Friday
10.00 - 17.00

Admission free

Bartholomew Lane
London EC2R 8AH
Telephone 0171 601 5545

Complete our children's
Easter Holiday Activity
Sheets and WIN A PRIZE

Acres of fun for everyone at Bowmans!



- * Indoor animal barns * Outdoor animal paddocks
- * Adventure playground * Playbarn † Watch the milking
- ‡ See Ben the Shire Horse † Meet the falconer
- * Lots of baby animals * Daily and seasonal activities
- * Gift Shop * Coffee Shop * Guided Educational Visits



Bowmans Open Farm,
London Colney, near St Albans
01727 822106
Just off J22 of M25

Free entry for one child with this
advert when accompanied by a full
paying adult.

Valid until 30th June 1999 NKSPG

The television is on for more than 5 hours a day in the average home in Britain – and 97 per cent of homes have at least one set. Millions of people may be watching TV at any one time and an advert shown on TV could be seen by all of them.

There are about 11,000 new adverts made for TV each year – by the time people are 35, they are likely to have seen 150,000 adverts on the television, and seen most of them at least 6 times!

But when the “commercial break” comes during a programme, some people start talking, do something else or go to make a cup of tea. That’s why the same advert may be shown many times. People that make adverts for television try to make adverts that will grab your attention, catch your eye and stop people putting the kettle on!

The adverts you see on “commercial” television – ITV, Channel 4 and Channel 5 – pay for the

programmes. Most satellite and cable stations also show adverts between and during the programmes.

In this country, commercial television stations are only allowed to show, on average, 7 minutes of adverts during each hour.

to buy time to show an advert during a very popular programme like *Coronation Street* than it would be late at night when most people have switched the television off. More people watch TV in the evening than in the daytime – a 30 second “spot” on Carlton in peak

between 5.16pm and 7.25pm would cost between £6,000 and £12,000. During the day (9.25am to 5.15pm), the price would be between £2,000 and £4,000 while late at night – after 11.31pm – an advertiser can have 30 seconds for as little as £1,000.

Carlton is watched in 11 million homes, but other ITV stations have fewer viewers so their prices are cheaper. Westcountry Television, for example, is seen in 1.6 million homes in Devon, Cornwall and parts of Somerset and Dorset. On this station, 30 seconds during late peak evening costs between £1,500 and £3,500, and during the day, between £300 and £600.

Prices for advertising time on television are also different at different times of the year – in the summer, fewer people have the TV turned on, and it’s most expensive of all during the run-up to Christmas.

Not only do advertisers have to buy time on television to show their adverts, they also have to pay for making the advert! This can be really expensive – a 30 second advert can cost hundreds of thousands of pounds to make!



It costs loads of money to buy time on television to show an advert – lasting from a few seconds to 1 minute. And it costs even more when most people are watching – these are called “peak” times. It would be more expensive, for example,

evening time (7.26pm to 11.30pm) would cost between £8,000 and £22,000, depending on the programme being shown and the number of people watching. It’s cheaper to advertise on early evening TV – 30 seconds on Carlton

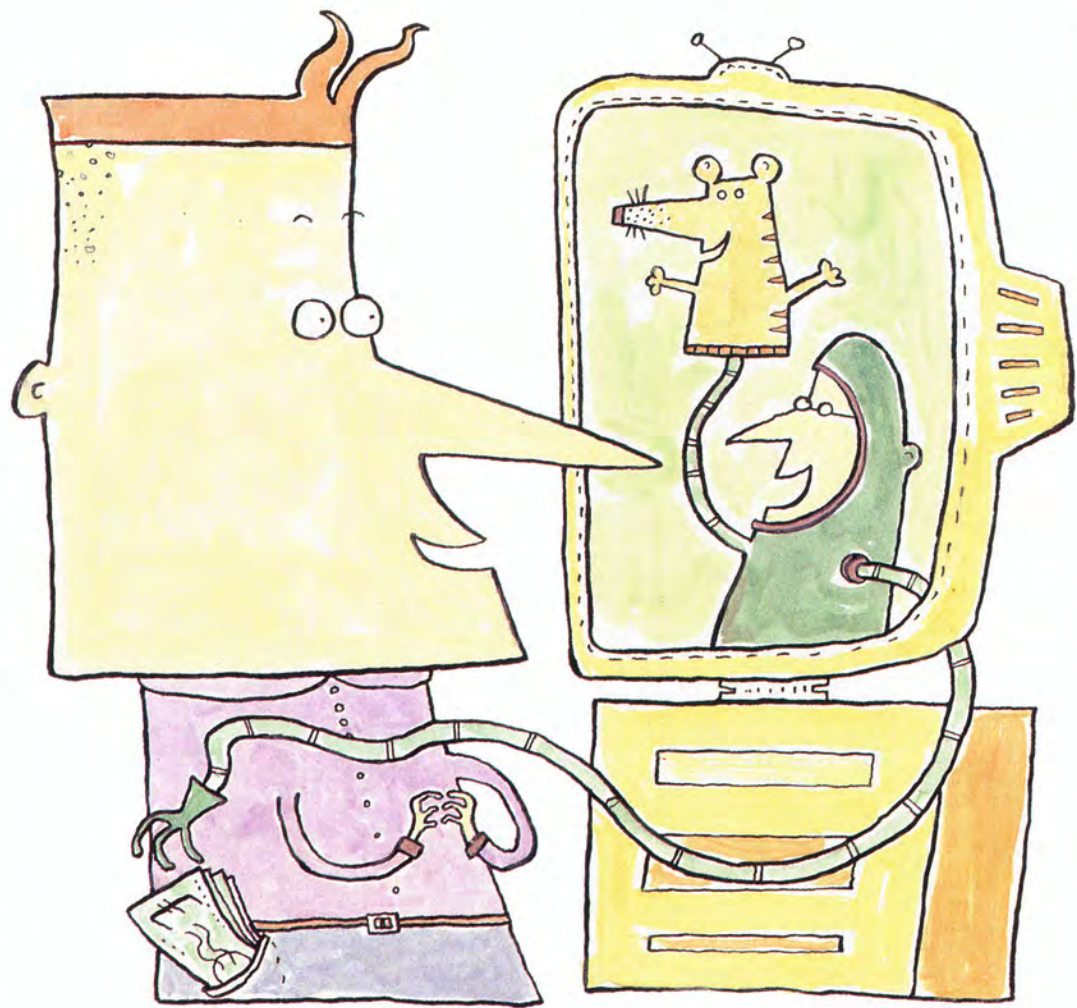
There are 15 television companies which broadcast on Channel 3 (ITV) in different parts of Britain. If you live in London, you see Carlton on Channel 3 during the week and London Weekend Television on

Saturdays and Sundays. If you live in Norwich, you will see Anglia Television, or if you live in north Scotland, you will watch Grampian Television. GMTV broadcasts across the country on Channel 3 at breakfast-time.

When you watch a programme on television, you more or less know what you're going to see. You can read about programmes in magazines, or find out what's going to be in them by watching trailers on television. When a new advert appears on television, you have no idea what you're going to see. Some people argue that we are given a choice about the programmes we watch, but have no choice about the adverts we see.

There are all sorts of rules about adverts, especially for adverts aimed at kids and those shown before 9pm. This time is known as the "watershed" – after 9pm, programmes and adverts might be unsuitable for younger viewers. The general rule is that adverts should be suitable for the audience watching the television. So scary adverts, or adverts for alcohol, for example, should not be shown when large numbers of kids are likely to be watching – early in the morning or after school.

Adverts for toys mustn't make you believe something is bigger or better than it is, and adverts for expensive toys should say how much they are. Adverts should not tell lies or make you think



something that's not true – and people can complain about them if they think they are misleading or have upset or frightened viewers.

The most complaints ever received by the ITC were about an advert for Levi jeans which showed a dead hamster. There were 509 complaints.

Commercial television stations need a "licence" to broadcast, which is given by the Independent Television Commission (ITC). The ITC sets rules for television companies about programmes and adverts.

Adverts are checked before they are broadcast – but if people do complain, the ITC can ask for adverts

to be changed, or to be shown at a more suitable time – when kids are less likely to be watching, for example.

There are similar rules for adverts on radio set by the Radio Authority. There are nearly 200 radio stations across the country that play adverts.

How do you make a TV ad?

Have you seen either of the 2 adverts on TV where kids are reading to grown-ups in all sorts of different places? Have you heard or seen the slogan: "A little reading goes a long way"? Do you remember: "Little Miss Muffet sat on... the subs bench"? If you haven't spotted these adverts yet, look out for them! They will be shown on TV until 4 April.

These 2 adverts were made for the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE), the part of the government in charge of schools and education, because it wanted to get more parents to help their children with reading. At the end of each advert is a 'phone number which adults can ring for a copy of the booklet *A little reading goes a long way* to give them tips on how to help.

The DfEE wanted millions of grown-ups to find out about this booklet, especially dads, uncles and big brothers who, mostly, don't read with kids as much as mums and other women do. So they hired an advertising agency, called DMB&B, to make television adverts, and a production company called Park Village, to do the filming.

DMB&B

TV/Film Script

Page 1

Client: COI
Job No:
Length: 30"
Script Rev. No: 5
Date: 11 September 1998

Title: Little Miss Muffet
Brand: Literacy
Traffic:
Creative Team: RR/CLB
TV Prod:

VISION

Open on a little Afro-Caribbean girl (aged 6) sitting on her dad's lap on a sofa in an ordinary-looking front room. She is wearing pyjamas and reading aloud from a book with her dad looking over her shoulder.

Cut to a boy (aged 7) sitting with his dad at a bus stop, reading with him the back page of *The Sun*.

Cut back to the girl reading the book. She continues with the verse.

Cut to a girl (aged 10) reading a menu in an Indian restaurant. Her mum, dad and brother are sitting with her at the table. The girl and her dad are looking at the same menu.

Cut back to the girl with the book.

Cut to West Indian twin boys (aged 8) and their mum reading from a computer screen in a travel agent.

Cut back to the girl again.

Cut to a girl (aged 6) with her gran on a train. Gran is showing her the ticket.

We dissolve to a black screen with the phone number and title.

Super: Freephone 0808 100 5060

Title: A LITTLE READING GOES A LONG WAY.

Logos: DfEE/Read Me/www.dfec.gov.uk

SOUND

GIRL: Little Miss Muffet sat on...

BOY: ...the subs bench...

GIRL: Eating her...

GIRL: ...chicken korma...

GIRL: Along came a spider...

BOYS: ...Bungee-jumping...

GIRL: ...beside her. And frightened Miss Muffet...

GIRL: Away...day return...

MVO: Books at bedtime are great... but reading doesn't have to stop there.

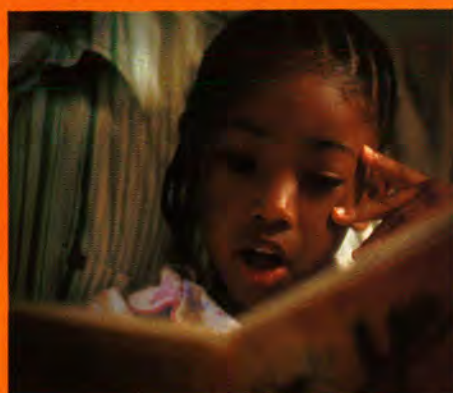
Call for a free leaflet of practical tips.

One of the adverts lasts for just 30 seconds, and the other for 40 seconds – but it took 3 days, about 50 people and 3 hours of filming in at least 12 different places to actually make them! Before that, there were weeks of planning!

The DfEE asked the advertising agency to come up with ideas for adverts. The DfEE said how much money they wanted to spend, that they wanted to show grown-ups how easy it was to help kids with reading, and that their "target" audience was people in C2, D and E groups (see page 7). Research had shown them people in these social groups are less likely to read with their kids.

DMB&B tested different ideas with small groups of parents. The idea these parents liked best was an advert that showed that reading with kids could be done anywhere – and that reading wasn't just about books.

The next stage was to write scripts for the 2 adverts and find a director and production company who would turn the scripts into what you see on television.



The scripts were written by a **creative team** at the agency. The team is 2 people – a **copywriter** and an **art director** who work together to decide what should happen in the adverts and what should be said.

Other people at DMB&B who helped make the adverts included a **planner** who understands target audiences and organised the testing of ideas, and **account managers** who met with the DfEE and made sure everything done by the agency happened on time.

Media planners worked out when would be the best time to show the adverts. They found out when large numbers of people from the target audience were likely to be watching television – and when parents were likely to be watching programmes with their kids. **Media buyers** then began to book time in the commercial breaks between programmes like *Gladiators*, *Coronation Street* and football matches!

Before filming started, a **pre-production meeting** checked everything was ready and that the

About 50 people travelled to 4 locations each day – the kids, their grown-ups, the camera crew, the sound crew, the make-up and hair people and the organisers. They took with them camera equipment, lighting equipment, a van where make-up and hair could be done, a van to carry other things they might need – and even a catering truck to make sure everyone had food and drink!

DfEE were happy with what was planned. The kids who appear in the adverts were found through a theatre school – and the grown-ups are their real parents and grandparents! At the pre-production meeting, people from the agency, the DfEE and the director looked at films of children to decide which ones they wanted to appear in the adverts. They talked about what the children should wear, checked each scene of the scripts and discussed each **location** – where each scene would be filmed.

Park Village began to find the locations and plan the 3 days filming when they saw the scripts for the adverts. Even though it looks as if the children and their parents have been filmed all over the country, every scene in the 2 adverts was shot in the south east of England. One scene was filmed on a train and another on a railway platform which Park Village hired. The company built a sign that said “Warrington” to make it look as if it was in the north of England. Park Village also hired a bus, a restaurant, a supermarket, a travel agents and someone’s living room! Because most people’s bathrooms are too small to hold all the people needed to film, they built a “bathroom” at their studio in Camden, north London.

About 50 minutes of film was shot each day – and then edited down by the director and DMB&B’s creative team to become **rough cuts**. These showed the DfEE what their adverts would look like, so the Secretary of State, David Blunkett, and other ministers in charge, could agree the adverts were right for the target audience.

Finally, a **post-production company** did all sorts of special technical things to the film to make it ready for broadcasting on the television. The DfEE took one last look to make sure they were happy with the 2 adverts and then lots of copies were made and sent out to television companies.

Do the adverts work?

Since the 2 adverts were first shown on TV last Autumn, 800,000 copies of the booklet *A little reading goes a long way* have been sent out.

The success of the adverts was also checked by research companies who asked parents what they thought – most agreed the adverts showed good examples of reading in everyday life and were easy to understand.

People who had rung up and asked for a copy of the booklet were asked if they were now reading more with their children. Nearly half said they were – and many said they were using the games and tips in the booklet. Most of them had first heard about the booklet through the television adverts. NR0



FREEPHONE
0808 100 50 60

A little reading goes a long way.



Even if you answer no to all the questions below, some people still think adverts get inside you, a bit like a medicine. Just like medicine works invisibly inside you, changing the way your body is working, people who believe advertising is a bad thing think the messages from adverts work inside our heads without us even knowing, making us shop in certain places, behave in a certain way or buy certain things.

Others think that's a load of nonsense. They say in a world where it's possible to buy almost anything, adverts help us choose what we want to buy, give us information about all sorts of different products and make shopping easier and simpler.

People that advertise must think it works in some way because otherwise they wouldn't spend so much money doing it. In 1997,

£13 billion was spent on advertising in this country!

And advertising isn't just about adverts. What about those free gifts, the things to collect when you buy something and money-off vouchers? What about notes that come home from school asking your parents to shop in one supermarket to collect tokens to help get equipment, or buy one brand of crisps to get books!? We are surrounded by messages urging us to

In America, Channel One shows 12 minutes of programmes in schools each day, including 2 minutes of adverts. In return for showing the programmes and the adverts, the school gets a satellite dish, televisions and videos.

shop at one place or buy something.

Some people think all these messages

are dangerous for kids like you who might not fully understand that they are trying to persuade you to buy something.

You may choose to watch the adverts on TV because you like them – but don't forget advertisers want you to like them so you will watch them!

Advertising agencies have people working for them who try to work out what sort of things kids like to see on adverts. And what about the adverts you don't choose to look at but you can't help noticing – like the big poster at the end of your road?

Kids have their own money to spend – and they also often have a say in what the grown-ups in the family buy. Do you ever ask your mum or dad to

buy your favourite brand of cereal? Does what comes free inside the packet ever influence you? And do you ever ask your mum to buy you a toy you've seen in adverts – and that all your friends are talking about because they've seen the adverts too?

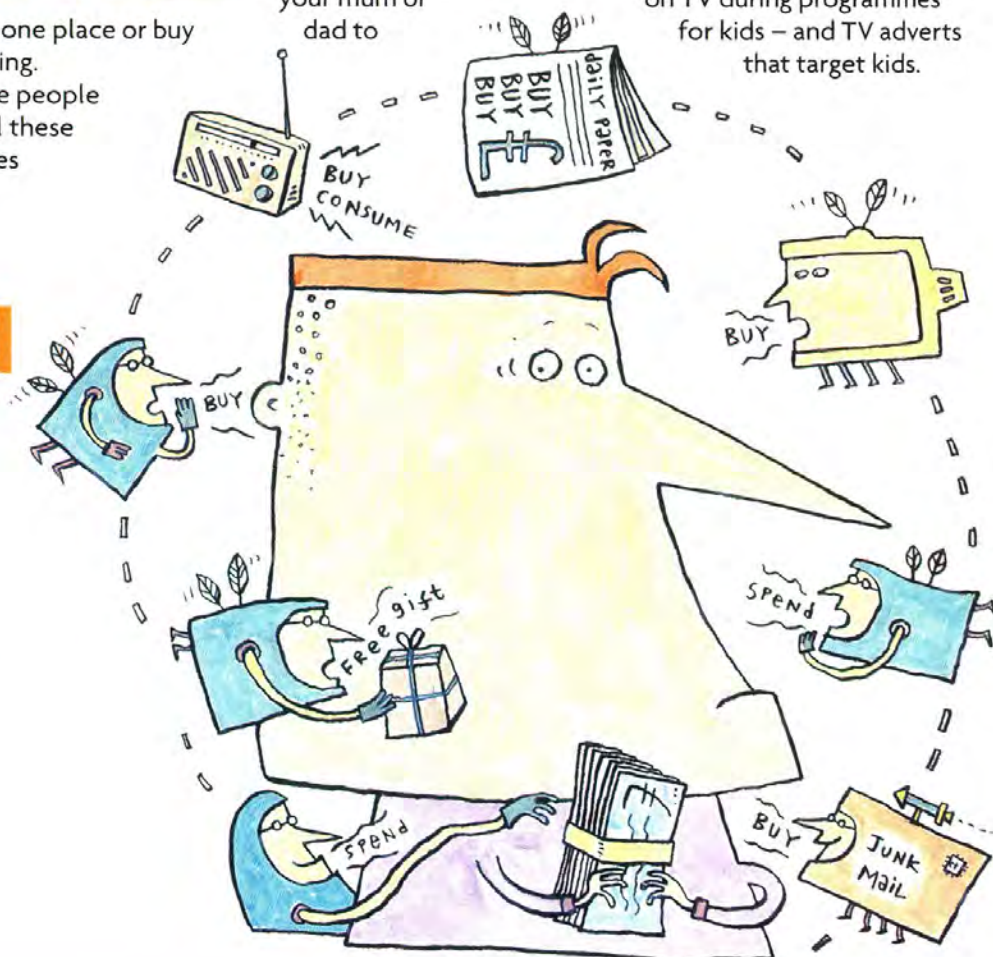
In Sweden, TV adverts aimed at kids aged under 12 aren't allowed. Adverts can't be shown before, during or after any kids' programme. And no kids' TV stars or characters can be used in adverts made for grown-ups.

Sweden says its laws aim to stop parents being pestered, and to stop kids from feeling left out if they do not own the same thing as their friends.

Norway also bans adverts on TV during programmes for kids – and TV adverts that target kids.

Are you brainwashed by adverts?

Do adverts make you dress, talk and behave like them? Do they make you ask your parents to buy you things? Do they make you want things you can't have? Do they help you decide what you want to eat?



If an advert upsets you you can complain!

Austria bans TV adverts during kids' programmes and, in The Netherlands, adverts for sweets must include a picture of a toothbrush.

There have been all sorts of studies done and books written about kids and advertising. Whatever side they take, almost everyone agrees that kids *can* understand the difference between adverts and programmes on television from about the age of 4. (The rules of television in this country say that the difference between adverts and programmes must be made really clear.) But what people disagree about is whether kids understand that adverts only tell one side of a story and are meant to make you want something, do something or buy something.

Other research has shown that even though kids do remember adverts, talk about them in the playground and learn the songs and slogans, they often aren't really interested in the product – or don't think it will be as good as it looks in the advert. Often kids' favourite adverts are for things they can't buy themselves, like cars. And a toy like a yo-yo can become really popular without any advertising at all!

What do you think?

Britain shows more adverts every hour on TV than any other country in Europe. Only America and Australia show more. A survey in 1996 counted 29 adverts an hour in Australia! But Australia doesn't allow television adverts to be shown during programmes for very young kids not yet at school.

Not only can people say what they think about adverts on the television and radio by contacting the Independent Television Commission or Radio Authority, they can complain about any other advert they see – in newspapers, magazines, on posters, in the cinema, even on the internet – by getting in touch with the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA).


But very few people do complain! Is that because they don't mind the adverts, because they don't know how to complain – or because they can't be bothered? In 1997, the ASA got 10,680 complaints – but only 512 were found to break

the ASA's rules. The ASA can ask an advertiser to change the advert or not use it again. But if an advert does break the rules, it often becomes a story in the newspapers – is this more "advertising"?

Most complaints are about adverts which people think are misleading. But a quarter of all complaints received in 1997 were from people who thought adverts were upsetting or offensive. What one person finds upsetting may not upset someone else, so the ASA looks at where the advert is and who is likely to see it. Anyone might see an advert on a poster in the street, while fewer people are likely to see an advert in

a magazine written for people interested in dancing!

So what do people complain about? In 1997, 60 people complained about adverts for cars which showed people driving really fast. And there are often complaints about adverts that show animals, even in a joking way.

What about adverts aimed at kids? Last year, there were only 70 such complaints. The ASA regularly asks people what they think about advertising – they say parents' main worry is adverts not targeted at kids, but seen by kids. Adverts aimed at grown-ups that might be a bad influence... 

Food for thought

Did you ever notice that most adverts shown on kids' TV are for cereals, sweets and snacks? Where are the adverts for fruit and veg?

Most people know that we should all eat something of everything and not too much of one type of food to stay healthy. Yet adverts for kids mostly only show one type of food – food full of sugar, fat and salt.

One survey showed that 7 out of 10 adverts shown on children's television at teatime, and 5 out of 10 on kids' Saturday morning TV, were for sweets, cereals, fast food, ice cream and snacks.

Many food experts think that TV adverts for kids

encourage them to eat too much unhealthy food instead of something of everything.

Even though the rules for adverts say none should make you think it's good to snack throughout the day or not clean your teeth at night, groups keen to get everyone eating healthily, like the National Food Alliance, are worried.

They say if adverts give people choice about what

to buy, then the choice given to kids is between one sweet and another, or between one cereal and another. If you eat lots of fat, sugar and salt and nothing else, you can put on too much weight, have bad teeth and other problems!

Why do you think there are so few adverts for other types of food?



Must have! Must have! Must have!

Trevor Beattie is in charge of the creative department of the advertising agency, TBWA. He comes up with ideas for adverts – like the French Connection posters you may have seen in the street.

But he says there is something out there more persuasive than advertising...



I personally haven't taken a week's holiday abroad for more than 5 years. Most people in the business work 6 or often 7 days a week (and no, we don't get paid any extra for that). And a day in advertising can be a very long time, anything from 7.30am to midnight. But when you do finally crash into that bed, you do so in the knowledge that millions of people will see, and hopefully, talk about what you have worked so hard to produce.

And that's the biggest buzz – hearing people talking about your adverts. Strangers on buses or trains who've actually been fascinated by your work. What a thrill! I was lucky enough to help produce the famous Wonderbra "Hello Boys" adverts, which still get mentioned on TV, in the papers, and by comedians, 6 years after we did them!

I work in advertising. My job title is creative director. At the end of the day, I'm responsible for the look and feel of all the ads produced by our agency. So yes, I get to travel to all the exotic locations, attend photo

shoots with celebrities, pop stars and supermodels and generally lead a very exciting life. What are the downsides? Are there any? Well, yes. What's not widely known about us advertising people is how hard we all work.



Must have! Must have! Must have!

Likewise, seeing someone walking down the street wearing one of my French Connection t-shirts somehow makes all the hard work worthwhile.

A lot of people believe that our adverts make people buy things, create the demand for a product. That no matter how duff a product may be, a great advert will somehow have people queuing up in the shops to tear it from the shelves. Then there are other people who believe our adverts make kids like you nag your parents to buy them new toys.


Because I help make adverts, a lot of people might think that I should know what will be The Next Big Thing, The Must-Have Toy for 1999. That I should know which furry, plastic, squeaking, speaking, singing beast will grip our imaginations (in time for Christmas, of course).

I don't remember any TV adverts for Furbys. Do you? And what about Tamagotchi, Cabbage Patch Dolls and yo-yos? Where were the adverts which made you nag your parents to buy them? No, all those Must-Haves were sold with the help of something more successful than advertising – Word of Mouth. You may have heard about them in the playground, you may have heard on the street that some were on sale in a local shop, you may have read about them in the newspapers. But you certainly didn't hear about them through advertising.

So as a professional adman, am I jealous of the success of a product which for some reason didn't "need" advertising? Gosh no, I love it. Far from being jealous of Furby for not needing my adverts, I enjoy every minute of his success.

I'm usually at the front of the queue to get my hands on the latest toy in order that I may first show it off to my friends and second, send it to my god daughter – whether she wants it or not.

And this is my point. More often than not, it's the parents who say their children Must Have these toys. I always have a giggle at adults who pretend they have grown out of fads and trends, while at the same time making sure they're dressed from head to toe in chocolate brown, grey, or whatever other colour is this season's "new black."

You see, adults just love to boast of how they battled to get hold of the latest toy. They may complain that their children nag them because of adverts, but when it comes to Must Haves, they still queue up outside toy shops to be sure to get hold of a toy that's never been advertised... 



How to sell

There is a brand new cake on sale. Crazy Cakes, from Lyons, are the 3rd sort of cake in a range specially made for kids called Crazy Corner. Each packet contains 4 chocolate cup cakes and a tube of icing so you can decorate them any way you like before eating them.

You won't have seen any adverts for them though. Lyons first had to try to persuade supermarkets, not shoppers, to buy them. Not all the big supermarkets have agreed to stock Crazy Cakes on their shelves – so there is no point putting adverts on TV or in newspapers if families can't buy them!

You will find the new cakes in Safeway supermarkets, at Sainsbury

SavaCentres and at Somerfield stores, as well as in lots of smaller supermarkets and shops. Lyons will be trying to persuade shoppers to put Crazy Cakes in their trolleys by "promoting" them inside the stores – things like putting the cakes on a separate shelf at the end of an aisle, asking shoppers if they would like to taste them and having a write-up in the supermarket magazine.

Most people don't plan to buy cakes – they don't add them to their shopping list. Mostly, they buy them because they see them and like the look of them. Catching shoppers' attention while they're inside the shop is therefore better than paying for an advert for a cake which you might not be able to find in your local supermarket. ^{NR}

What's "Corner" got to do with cakes?

Lyons started making cakes in 1908. The company also ran famous tea shops and Lyons Corner House restaurants. Ask older members of your family if they remember them!

The last London Corner House closed in the 1970s but lots of older people have good memories of eating in these restaurants.

The waitresses wore a smart uniform and were called "Nippies" because they worked so quickly!

That's why Lyons put a picture of the the Corner Houses and a nippy on their cake packets – and called their range for kids Crazy Corner.



a new cake (without advertising)

Lyons knew their cakes were mostly bought by older people, so they started the Crazy Corner range to try to encourage families and younger people to buy the brand. But how do Lyons know the age of people who buy their cakes?

There is a company that collects information about what sort of people are buying what sort of things in supermarkets. Thousands of people living in different sorts of families in different areas around the country have a scanner in their home, a bit like the one in the supermarket that reads the bar code on everything you buy. When these people get home from their supermarket shop, they scan their shopping again – and their shopping is fed into a central computer. This means the company can tell what sort of people are buying Lyons cakes – and how often they buy them! 


Traffic Lights – orange, red and green jam tarts, and Cakeholes, ring-shaped sponges covered with icing – were the first 2 Crazy Corner cakes. They were selling quite well so Lyons decided to launch a 3rd cake in the range. They came up with about a dozen ideas for different cakes especially for children – and then asked groups of mums and groups of kids which idea they preferred. The most popular was a cake which you could spend time decorating yourself.

Lyons asked a design company to come up with a name for the new cake and a design for the box. At the same time, a “packaging technologist” at the bakery was asked to make a plastic tray which would hold 4 cakes and a tube of icing and fit into the box.

Lyons also had to decide whether to buy the tubes of icing from another company or make their own. In the end, they bought the

tube from one company and the icing from another!

When Cakeholes were first made, Lyons mixed up lots of different flavours of icing and visited a junior school where they asked the kids to test them all and say which they liked best. The kids’ views meant instead of vanilla, chocolate and blackcurrant, there are now strawberry, orange and chocolate flavours in a box!

Because Lyons already make cup cakes, it was quite easy for them to start making Crazy Cakes. But sometimes when they make a brand new type of cake, they have to buy new machines to make them and new tins in which to bake them! If they need to do this, they ask a lot of people what they think about the idea for the new cake before they decide to go ahead. 



Energize is a new 10 part television show for kids about sport. You can watch it on Children's ITV, every Wednesday at teatime, from 5 May.

Get stuck into sport by watching television!



Athlete Darren Campbell, speed skater Nick Gooch, Arsenal footballer Dennis Bergkamp, rower Greg Searle and Wasps rugby player Andy Gomersall all appear in the series – as well as all sorts of young people who could be tomorrow's sports stars!

Sport England has paid some of the money needed to make *Energize* to show kids like you some of the many

Presented by Jamie Baulch, the 400 metre athlete and Olympic silver medal winner, *Energize* tells you about all sorts of sports you can do, both indoors and outdoors – from 10 pin bowling to snowboarding,

from ice-skating to hurdling. If you watch *Energize*, you can find out how to play each sport, how to get started, what kit you need and how much it all costs. In each programme, Jamie

also finds out how teams of schools kids from across the UK are doing in the *Energize* Challenge Course, a tough outdoors contest with water jumps, rope slides and archery.

different sports you can play. Sport England is the brand name of the English Sports Council – it wants to make sure people of all ages play more sport and that there are more places where they can play. If you start playing now, you might be a future medal winner!



A little reading goes a long way

All parents want their children to be able to read and write. To be able to read a road sign, to be able to write a shopping list, to enjoy a good book.

As part of the National Year of Reading, parents are being encouraged to help their children to enjoy reading and writing. *A little reading goes a long way* is a simple, step by step leaflet to help parents and children discover the joys of reading and writing together.

A little reading goes a long way is aimed at parents and grandparents, aunts and uncles, guardians and carers... in fact anyone who wishes to take an active role in a child's development. It offers tips and

advice on how to get the most out of reading and writing, and is a must for anyone involved in helping children to help themselves with words.

Look out for the adverts on national television from 15 February and get your copy of *A little reading goes a long way* by telephoning the campaign order line on 0808 100 50 60.

Website address: www.yearofreading.org.uk



COUNTDOWN TO THE 21ST CENTURY 7

What happened during the 7th decade of the 20th century—1960-1969

Exploring space

Yuri Gagarin was the first man to travel in space and return safely home. In April 1961, the Russian cosmonaut, a dad with 2 children, flew around the earth and told how it felt outside our atmosphere. A few weeks later, Alan Shepard became the first American in space – he spent about 15 minutes out there. John Glenn was the first American astronaut to orbit the earth – in 1962 he went round 3 times! And in 1963, Russian Valentina Tereshkova became the first woman in space.

As the 1960s went on, both the Americans and Russians did more exciting things in space.

Then, in July 1969, American astronaut Neil Armstrong became the first man to walk on the moon. There were 3 astronauts on board the spacecraft Apollo 11 – Armstrong, Edwin “Buzz” Aldrin and Michael Collins. Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin landed on the moon in a small spacecraft called Eagle while Collins stayed on board Apollo 11, circling the moon.

In America

People in America were trying to make the country a better place for black people who were treated badly and



unfairly – sent to different schools, made to live in different areas and even made

to sit in different places on buses. In the southern states of America, black people were attacked and had their houses and churches bombed and set on fire by white people who did not want change. In August 1963, hundreds of thousands of people marched through the capital, Washington DC, calling for laws to end discrimination against black people. Reverend Martin Luther King spoke to the crowd. His speech is very

famous and it started with the words: “I have a dream.” He spoke about a world where black people and white people would be treated equally.

Many people hoped that the new president, John F. Kennedy, would make laws to give black people the same rights as white people. Kennedy had become president in January 1961. He was 43 and the youngest person ever to become leader of America.

But in November 1963, Kennedy was shot as he drove through Dallas in Texas in an open top car. His wife Jacqueline was in the car with him and she cuddled him as they raced to hospital.





When Kennedy died, people all over America were very upset. There were lots of rumours about the president's death. Police arrested Lee Harvey Oswald – but then Oswald himself was murdered as police were taking him to prison. Millions of people saw the murder on television – a man stepped from the crowd, stuck a gun in Oswald's ribs and pulled the trigger. The man was Jack Rubenstein, known as Jack Ruby. Some thought Ruby had killed him because the people who planned the president's death did not want Oswald to tell their names to the police.

The vice-president, Lyndon Johnson, became America's leader. In July 1964, he made a new law, the Civil Rights Act, to start to end discrimination against black people. In the same year, Martin Luther King was given the Nobel Peace Prize.

Then in 1968, Martin Luther King was killed in Memphis. People across America went crazy when they heard about his death. He was shot by James Earl Ray who was later arrested and sent to prison.

In the same year, John Kennedy's brother Robert was also shot dead. Bobby Kennedy had been going to try to get people to vote for him to be president. The man who killed him was called Sirhan Sirhan.

People in America voted for a new president in 1968. He was Richard Nixon.

The Berlin Wall

Berlin in Germany had been split into 2 parts at the end of World War II. The east half of the city was controlled by

Communist Russia. At the beginning of the 1960s, lots and lots of people living in east Germany started going to live in west Berlin because they didn't like the way east Germany was being run by the Communists. In 1961, east Germany blocked the way through to west Berlin with barbed wire. Then very quickly, soldiers built a huge concrete wall to stop people escaping from east Germany. People still tried to find a way out – but if they were caught, they might be shot.

Threat of war

Countries in the "West" – like America and Britain – and countries in the "East" – like Communist Russia (the USSR) were very fearful of each other. America didn't like the Communists who ran the USSR, east Germany and other countries and Russia didn't like the way America and other western countries were run.

Both America and the USSR built more and more nuclear weapons which could have destroyed much of the world if ever used. Other countries had nuclear weapons too. Many people were very frightened at the thought of a nuclear war and throughout the 1960s, there were many marches and campaigns against the bomb.

In 1961, many people thought there would be a war between America and the USSR. President John Kennedy said American planes had spotted Russian nuclear weapons on Communist Cuba, just 145km away from the east coast of the USA. Kennedy threatened war unless the Russians took the weapons

away. Many people were very scared and thought there would be a war – then the Russians agreed to take the weapons back to the Soviet Union.

In 1963, a "hotline" was set up between the leaders of America and the USSR. This telephone line was only to be used in an emergency but would help cut the risk of war if the leaders could talk to each other quickly.

Nikita Khrushchev was leader of the USSR until 1964 when he was replaced by Leonid Brezhnev.

Vietnam

Vietnam was split into 2: the northern part was controlled by Communists. The Communists, the Viet Cong, were at war with south Vietnam. At the beginning of 1965, the USA sent soldiers and 'planes to help the south Vietnamese. Over the next few years, president Lyndon Johnson sent hundreds of thousands of American soldiers to help south Vietnam fight against the Communists.

It was a vicious war and much of it was fought in the jungle. Thousands of American soldiers were killed or badly wounded. Thousands of innocent Vietnamese families were killed and badly wounded.

People around the world were shocked by the war and believed America should not be helping the south Vietnamese fight against the Viet Cong. There were marches and demonstrations against the war all over the USA and Europe. Despite this, it wasn't until 1973 that American soldiers were sent home from Vietnam.

In Britain

13 years of Conservative government came to an end in 1964 when people voted for Harold Wilson's Labour government. The Labour party was in control of the country until the end of the decade.

The new Labour government promised to make life more equal for rich and poor people. Many more council houses were built and "slums" – bad and cramped houses – were pulled down. Both men and women were given the right to vote for a government when they were aged 18. The government got rid of the "death penalty" – it decided that criminals could no longer be killed as punishment for terrible crimes like murder.

For a while, everyone had higher wages and worked shorter hours. People bought their own homes and spent money going on holiday and buying nice things.

But soon, the Labour government got into trouble with money. At the end of 1966, Harold Wilson said people would have no pay increases for 12 months and said everyone should make an effort to help the country sort out its money problems.

In 1968, 5 typists from Surbiton in Surrey promised to work an extra half an hour every day for no pay to help the country. It was called the "I'm Backing Britain" campaign and soon everyone was being encouraged to "back Britain" and help the country get back on its feet. There was even a record released called "I'm Backing Britain", sung by Bruce Forsythe.



Winston Churchill dies

In January 1965, Sir Winston Churchill died. He had been prime minister of Britain during the Second World War, from 1940-45, and again from 1951-55. He was 90 years old and people from more than 100 countries came to his state funeral service at St Paul's Cathedral.

Northern Ireland

Southern Ireland, or Eire, had become independent after World War II but Northern Ireland had stayed part of the United Kingdom. In northern Ireland, people who were Protestant did not want to join with the south. But the Roman Catholics in northern Ireland, and Irish people in the south, wanted the 2 parts to become one independent country. The IRA – the Irish Republican Army – started to use violence to try to force the British government to let the north and south of the island be united. Northern Irish Protestants hit back and there was street fighting. In 1969, British soldiers were sent to northern Ireland to stop the street fights turning into war.

South Africa

Black people in South Africa began to fight back against the system of apartheid which meant they were treated as being worth less than white people, had fewer rights and worse jobs.

In 1961, black leaders called for a country-wide strike – they wanted all black people to stop work to show the government how strongly they felt. The police arrested many of the leaders, including Nelson Mandela.

In 1962, Mandela was sent to prison for 5 years for organising the strike.

While he was in prison, the police found his diary and read all about Mandela's plans to try to end apartheid. In 1964, Nelson Mandela was brought from prison to court, this time accused of trying to overthrow the South African government by making black people rise up against it. He was sent to an escape-proof prison for the rest of his life.

Rest of Africa

Many African states that had been ruled by Britain as part of the British Empire, or ruled by other countries, became independent during the 1960s – Nigeria, Algeria, and Kenya, for example.

Toward the end of 1965, Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe), Britain's last colony in Africa announced independence – but with white people in charge, not black people. Prime minister Ian Smith's "White Rhodesian UDI" (Unilateral Declaration of Independence) angered world leaders and many took action to support black people in Rhodesia. British prime minister Harold Wilson said Britain and other countries should not buy things from Rhodesia, or lend Ian Smith's government any money.

Biafra

At the end of the decade, people living in Biafra in the south eastern part of Nigeria tried to set up their own country, separate from Nigeria, and fought with the Nigerian government. The war meant many people in Biafra were starving, homeless and ill.

Six day war

In June 1967, Israel seized control of land from neighbouring Arab countries and increased its size. The war lasted just 6 days. Israeli soldiers took land from Egypt and land from Jordan.

Agadir destroyed

In March 1960, a huge earthquake, tidal wave and then fire completely destroyed Agadir in Morocco, killing thousands of people. Thousands more were injured and made homeless.

Aberfan

In 1966, the world was shocked by a terrible accident in Aberfan in Wales. A school was buried underneath a heap of coal slag, the waste from the nearby coal mine, which fell like an avalanche. More than 100 children were killed.

Women prime ministers

The first woman prime minister was elected in 1960 in Ceylon (now Sri Lanka). She was Mrs Sirimavo Bandaranaike. The second woman prime minister was Indira Gandhi who became leader of India in 1966. In 1969, Golda Meir became leader of Israel.

Fashionable London

In the 1960s, skirts got shorter and hair got longer! By 1966, London was said to be the "fashion capital" of the world. There were trendy streets where young people shopped like the King's Road in Chelsea, Kensington Church Street and Carnaby Street. At the end of the '60s, the new "maxi-skirt" reached to the ground.

Beatlemania

The Beatles from Liverpool, John Lennon, Ringo Starr, Paul McCartney and George Harrison, were followed by thousands of screaming fans wherever they went.

World Cup win

England beat Germany at Wembley in the 1966 World Cup final. The score was 4-2.

Olympic Games

There were 3 sets of Olympic Games in this decade – in 1960 in Rome in 1964 in Tokyo, and in 1968 in Mexico.

Around the world in a yacht

In 1967, Francis Chichester sailed from England to Australia and back again by himself in his yacht called Gypsy Moth IV.

Great train robbers

A gang of men stole millions of pounds from a train in 1963. The train was carrying bank notes which were meant to be destroyed. It took the police ages to catch the "great train robbers".

Films and TV

Films made in the 1960s included *Mary Poppins*, *The Jungle Book* and *The Sound of Music*. *Star Trek* and *Sesame Street* started on television.

Changing money

The British government announced plans to change the country's money from pounds which had 20 shillings to pounds which contained 100 new pence. "Decimalisation" was to start in the 1970s. The first "decimal" coins – 5p, 10p and 50p came out at the end of the 1960s so people could get used to the new money. 

20th century interview

In 1967, Susan Clarke was 8

“If you wanted to go to the toilet during lunchtime at school, you had to ask the dinner lady for toilet paper! The toilets were in the playground and the school wouldn't leave paper inside them because they thought the kids would use too much and waste it or block the toilets up! It was a bit embarrassing because the dinner ladies would ask you how much paper you needed! And it was horrible hard paper!

“At home, we shared a toilet with the family that lived downstairs. We lived on the first and second floors of the house, and the family below lived on the ground floor and in the basement. The one toilet was on the ground floor!

“We didn't have a bathroom either. There were 2 tin baths, 1 big and 1 little, that were kept in a cupboard on the first floor landing and every night my parents would fill the small bath with water in front of the fire. For ages, my mum didn't have a fridge. She used to go shopping every day and would keep the milk in a bowl of water to keep it cold. She couldn't buy ice cream because we didn't have a freezer. We used to buy ice cream from the corner shop and eat it straight away, or from the ice cream van.

“Most mums were at home all day, very few women worked once they had children. My mum had a lot to do at home because she didn't have any machines to help her – as well as going shopping, she used to have to wash by hand, or later go to the launderette, because she didn't have a washing

machine. You called all your friends' mums 'Mrs', never by their first name. Even my mum called all the neighbours 'Mrs'.

“My mum was quite ill and had to be taken to hospital when I was little. I remember her being carried down the stairs on a stretcher and taken away in an ambulance. She was in hospital for weeks and weeks and my grandmother came to help look after us. My brother and I weren't allowed to go to see my mum in hospital for the whole time she was away.

The hospital wouldn't let children visit because they thought they would bring colds and infections in with them. Even my dad was only allowed to see my mum for a short time each day because the hospital was really strict about visitors.

“On Saturday mornings, my brother and I would go together, without my mum and dad, to the cinema with loads of other kids. They would show films just for kids.

“On Saturday evenings, we would watch *Dr Who* and get scared by the Daleks. I also used to watch *The Monkees*, a television series about a pop group, and *The Man from Uncle*, a series about spies, and when we got bigger we were allowed

to stay up a bit and watch *The Avengers*.

“I went to Brownies – our uniform was a brown dress with a yellow tie and I had brown knickers to match!

We didn't have a car, but my dad had a motorbike and sidecar. My mum would sit on the bike behind my dad and my brother and I would get into the sidecar which had 2 seats, one behind the other.

“When my brother got bigger, when he was about 11 or 12, he sat on the back of the motorbike behind my dad and my mum would go in the sidecar with me.

“When I was 7, we moved to a council house and our old home was pulled down. The house we moved to had its own toilet and bathroom, and it had a garden! Hardly anyone had central heating then, and we used to make a fire from coal. In the back garden, there was a 'coal bunker' where the coal was stored. A man used to deliver it in a big sack down a back alleyway. There were no fitted carpets – there was lino on the floor in all the rooms, and a carpet in the middle or a mat.

“My new junior school was for girls only and my brother went to a boys only school nearby. I didn't like school very much and used to cry on the way. I came home for lunch every day until everyone got fed up

with me crying twice a day and then I had to stay at school!

“My mum said she was really frightened when the Americans and Russians were arguing about Russian weapons in Cuba when I was little. She seriously thought there would be a nuclear war and that would be the end of the world.

“I remember the most exciting thing of all being when Neil Armstrong landed on the moon. We were allowed to stay up late and watch it on the television. It was amazing, seeing 2 men so far away, actually walking on the moon. It was almost unbelievable! 



Forget Deutsch marks, French francs, Italian lire and Spanish pesetas!



By the summer of 2002, this sort of money will be a thing of the past. The same money – euros and cents – will be used in 11 countries which are members of the European Union.

Even though you can't actually touch the new notes and coins yet, banks and businesses have been buying and selling things using the euro since January, thanks to computers, credit cards and cheques.

By the beginning of 2002, however, people living in Austria, Belgium,

Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, The Netherlands, Spain and



Portugal will be able to buy things with newly printed notes and newly minted coins. For a while, shops will show prices in both euros and the old currencies so people can get used to the new money. But by July


One euro is worth about 70p – but the value can go up or down.

2002, the countries' old currencies will be scrapped and people will only use

Each country using the euro will make their own coins and notes. There will be 7 notes – worth 500 euros, 200 euros, 100 euros, 50 euros, 20 euros, 10 euros and 5 euros.

the euro. If people living in Spain go on holiday to France, for example, they will just take their money with them instead of having to change their cash or buy travellers' cheques.

Only 4 of the 15 countries

in the European Union are keeping their old money – Denmark, Sweden, Greece and Britain. Britain's government decided to wait and see how the new system works before getting rid of our pounds and pence. And before any decision is taken, people who live in Britain will be asked to vote yes or no to the euro. 

There are 100 cents in each euro and there will be coins worth 50, 20, 10, 5, 2 cents and 1 cent. There will also be coins worth 2 euros and 1 euro. Each country will decorate 1 side of each coin with its own design, but you will be able to use any coin in any of the 11 countries.

There are so many stories, films, poems and books about King Arthur and the adventures of his knights of the Round Table. For hundreds of years, people have been fascinated by the idea of a king who ruled Britain fairly and honestly, standing up to bullies and facing danger. The help given to Arthur by magician Merlin makes the stories even more interesting.

Who hasn't heard of King Arthur?

Scott Garrett



No-one knows if the stories are just stories or whether there was a real King Arthur. If such a ruler did exist, some historians think he probably lived in the last part of the 5th century, sometime between 470 and 500. This is the time known as the Dark Ages and there is not much written down to help historians find out what really happened then.

Some do think, however, from reports written down a bit later, that there was a famous war leader at the time, a real life British hero who went into battle against Anglo-Saxon invaders from Germany and Denmark. These invaders tried to

All the stories say that Camelot where Arthur lived was a great and good place – until the end when the knights of the Round Table started to fight each other. Some stories say **Morgan le Fay**, Arthur's half-sister, and **Sir Mordred**, his son, made it look as if the queen **Guinevere** was trying to poison Arthur. Although she was his wife, Arthur said Guinevere should be killed.

gain control after the Romans left Britain in the early 400s. This war leader could have been the “real” Arthur.

There were many battles between the Britons and the Anglo-Saxons in the second half of the 5th century. Stories written 50 years later tell of one famous battle at “Badon Hill” when the Anglo-Saxons were so badly beaten that there was then 50 years of peace. No-one knows where Badon Hill was, but some historians think the leader of the Britons in this battle could have been “Arthur”.

When the Romans left after ruling the country for some 350 years, many Britons

But Sir Lancelot came to rescue her. As he fought to escape with the queen, he killed the brothers of his best friend **Sir Gawaine**.

Gawaine demanded Arthur fight Lancelot. They followed Lancelot to France, leaving Mordred in charge of Camelot. While they were away, Mordred made himself king.

Arthur hurried back to Britain – but when he and his knights landed, they found Mordred waiting for them with a huge army, including Anglo-Saxon soldiers. In the final battle, Arthur killed

Mordred but was wounded badly himself. One of his knights threw Arthur's sword, Excalibur into the water. An arm reached up to catch it. The dying Arthur was taken by boat to Avalon, a magical place far away. 

● **Excalibur** was Arthur's sword, given to him by the magical Lady of the Lake.

who had lived in their cities went back to the countryside and tried to defend their patch of land, not only against Anglo-Saxons but also against other Britons. They fought amongst themselves for power and control. If there was a real Arthur, he might not only have fought the Anglo-Saxons – he might also have gone to war against his neighbours. After the Romans went, Britain was eventually divided up into different kingdoms with different rulers. This way of running the country lasted until the 9th century and different kingdoms were often fighting with each other.

According to the stories, Arthur was supposed to be just 16 when he became king. He was brought up by a knight, Sir Hector, who had a son called Kay. Arthur was really the child of King Uther Pendragon and his wife Igraine, but they gave him to the magician Merlin to look after when he was just a baby. Merlin handed him over to Sir Hector.

The way Arthur became king is one of the most famous stories of all – he came to London with Sir Hector and Kay for a tournament, a competition for knights, after King Uther had died.

All the knights were talking about who should now be in charge: a sword stuck in a stone had magically appeared and it was written on the stone that the next king would be the person who could pull the sword out. All the knights had tried


Whether real or not, Arthur has been a bit of a hero since the 9th century when stories about him were first told. Over the years, characters and places have been added to the stories by different poets, authors and, more recently, film-makers. There are all sorts of different versions of the stories and Camelot, Arthur's court, is the starting point for many adventures told about Arthur's knights. We often think of these knights wearing shining armour – but in real life, those sort of knights were around at least 500 years after a "real" Arthur might have lived! 

to take the sword out of the stone to prove they were the next king but none of them could do it. On Christmas Day, Arthur pulled the sword out and Merlin came and told all the knights that Arthur was really the son of King Uther.

The stories say Arthur built Camelot on top of a hill in the centre of his kingdom, called Logres. A French poet first made



up the name Camelot – but for years, people have looked for the home of a "real" Arthur. Some people believe it may have been in Somerset, others think it may have been in South Wales, some think it was in Winchester.

Another famous part of the stories is the Round Table – Arthur's brave knights sat around it. Some stories say there were 150 chairs! 

The Bridgeman Art Library



A 15th century picture of the Round Table.

● **Sir Lancelot** is one of the most famous knights. Some stories say he was from France and the son of a king. He fought bravely, rescued ladies who were in trouble and loved Guinevere.

● **Sir Galahad** was the son of Lancelot – he was supposed to be the perfect knight.

● **Sir Mordred** is the baddie – cruel and nasty and eager to be king himself. Mordred was the son of Arthur and many tales tell of how he plots to get rid of Arthur and take control himself.

The new video, *The Magic Sword, Quest for Camelot*, tells of the adventures of Kayley, daughter of one of Arthur's knights of the Round Table, and Garrett, a young man who wants to be a knight. Like all the Arthur adventures, the film tells of the struggle of good against evil. With stunning animation and sensational songs, some sung by Andrea Corr of The Corrs and Celine Dion, *The Magic Sword, Quest for Camelot* gives a fresh lease of life to legend of King Arthur.

The Magic Sword, Quest for Camelot, is available to buy from all good video stockists from 15 March. The RRP is £12.99.



Bogies are made from a sticky slimy stuff called mucus which coats the inside of your nose. Mucus has an important job – it cleans the air you breathe in through your nose by trapping dust and germs.

Stuff inside the mucus called


lysozyme even kills some germs! Mucus also helps warm the air up and make it a little moist before it reaches your lungs.

Your nose makes a lot of mucus – the mucous membranes which cover the insides of a grown-up's nose churn out about 1 litre each day! The mucous membranes inside a smaller person's nose make slightly less each day. Mostly, the mucus is swept along to the back of your throat, carrying germs and dirt with it, down the tubes that lead into your stomach.

There it is turned into waste material which you pass out of your body.

Millions of tiny hairs called cilia inside your nose "beat" about 12 to 15 times every second, pushing the mucus towards your throat where it can be swallowed and start its journey towards your stomach. But if mucus

hangs about in your nose for a long time, it dries into bogies. If you find hard bogies up your nostrils in the morning, it could be because you haven't swallowed as much in the night as you do in the day. Dust and dirt trapped in the mucus makes the bogies look dark!

But if you find green bogies, your body is likely to be trying to get rid of a cold. When cold germs get inside your body, they are attacked by white blood cells. These cells rush towards the mucous membranes to fight the germs. During the battle, both germs and white blood cells die and end up inside the mucus. Your bogies might also be green if you have an allergy to something. An allergy is when your body sends white blood cells to go into battle with something that is really harmless – like pollen that causes hayfever. Your nose feels like it is stuffed with gunge because the mucus is full of dead white blood cells and, if you've got a cold, dead germs. The mucus may become thick and then the cilia find it hard to move all this gungy stuff towards your throat. Unless you blow your nose a lot to clear out the mucus, it may dry up and you could end up with a nose full of green bogies! 

Colds and **allergies** are usually to blame for extra mucus in the nose. Some children however have swollen **adenoids**, little pads at the back of the nose. If they are swollen, the adenoids can block the path to your stomach and trap mucus inside your nose. Some doctors also think cold air going up your nose in the winter almost "freezes" the cilia and stops them doing their job properly. If this is the case, you're likely to have more gunge in your nose in the colder months.

Nose picking can spread colds! If you poke your finger about in a nostril stuffed with mucus full of germs and then touch your friend's hand, you can pass on the germs. If your friend then touches their nose or mouth, the germs will pass into their body.

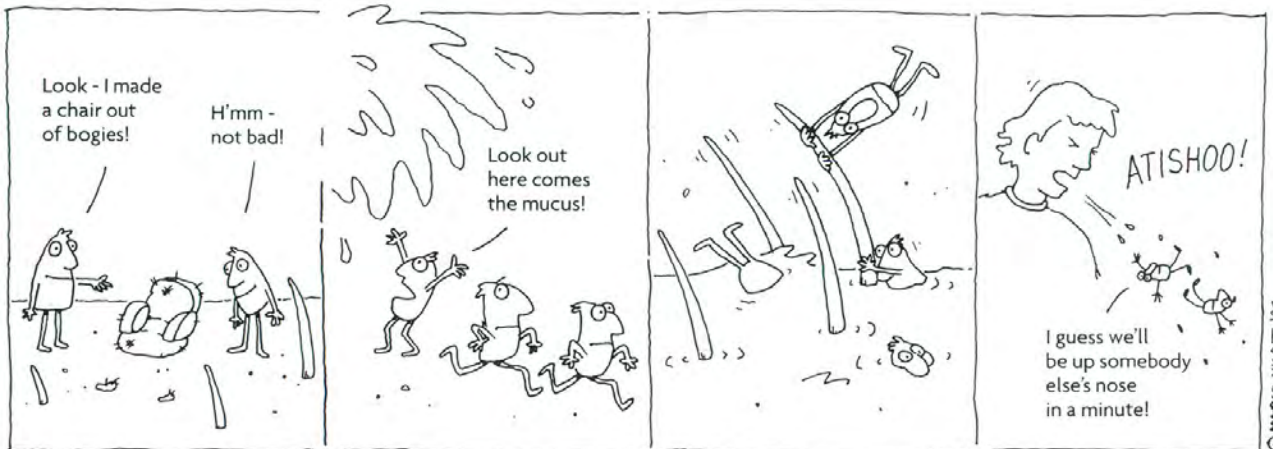


Nose picking has a scientific name – rhinotillexomania. If you pick your nose a lot, you can damage it. You can make it bleed or even put a hole in the septum, the wall which keeps your 2 nostrils apart. The septum is made of a thick rubbery stuff called cartilage.

If it's green ...s'not healthy!

If your bogies are green,
your body is probably
busy fighting germs!

**TWO
GERMS
UP
SOME
BODY'S
NOSE**



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Wordsearch

Eating 5 portions of fruit and vegetables a day helps you stay healthy. Fruit and veg are full of vitamins which your body needs to look after itself and fight illness and disease.

See if you can find the fruit and vegetables listed here. Their names run vertically, diagonally or horizontally, from right to left, or from left to right!

Is your favourite here?

- | | | | | |
|----------------|-------------|------------|-----------|------------|
| ASPARAGUS | BEETROOT | GOOSEBERRY | OKRA | RASPBERRY |
| APRICOT | CABBAGE | KUMQUAT | PINEAPPLE | SWEETCORN |
| AUBERGINE | CUCUMBER | KIWI | PEACH | SPINACH |
| APPLE | CAULIFLOWER | KOHLRABI | PEAR | STRAWBERRY |
| AVOCADO | CARROT | LEEK | PLUM | SWEDE |
| BLACKBERRY | COURGETTE | MANGO | PEA | SATSUMA |
| BANANA | CELERY | MANGE TOUT | PARSNIP | TURNIP |
| BRUSSEL SPROUT | CHERRY | MUSHROOM | PAWPAW | TOMATO |
| BEAN | GRAPE | NECTARINE | POTATO | YAM |
| BROCCOLI | GRAPEFRUIT | ORANGE | PERSIMMON | |

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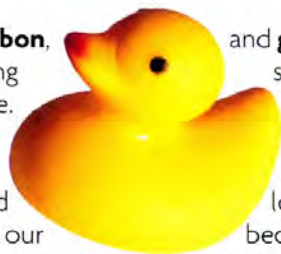
What have fizzy drinks... the gas on the cooker...plastic... diamonds and petrol got in common with *you*?



Carbon atoms!

Everything we breathe, touch, eat, drink and smell is made up of **atoms**. The tiniest amount of anything is stuffed full of more atoms than there are stars in the universe! Substances like gold and oxygen are made of just one type of atom and are called **elements**. Everything else we see and use in the world is made up of mixtures of different sorts of atoms. When 2 or more atoms join together, they make a **molecule**. The atoms are held together by "bonds" – different sorts of atoms and different sorts of bonds make up the millions of different molecules that make millions of different substances. These substances made of different elements joined together are called **compounds**. One compound makes sugar sweet, another makes soap soapy. When you read No Kidding! you are touching other sorts of compounds.

Without **carbon**, no living thing could survive. We all have carbon inside us, and add more to our bodies every day when we eat because most foods also contain carbon atoms.



The carbon inside us "burns" to give us energy to do things, to think and make heat to keep our bodies warm. The oxygen we breathe in from the air helps the carbon to "burn". Each carbon atom then joins up with 2 oxygen atoms and becomes a carbon dioxide molecule which we breathe out. Plants breathe in the carbon dioxide from the air and use the carbon inside it as food.

Carbon is an element. There are 2 things made entirely of carbon atoms – **diamond**

and **graphite**. Graphite is the stuff inside your pencil.

Diamonds are hard and clear while graphite is soft and grey: they look and feel different because the carbon atoms inside them are joined together in a different way.

There are hundreds and thousands of things with carbon inside them – from chalk to baking powder which you add to cakes, from eggs to fizzy drinks (carbon dioxide makes the "fizz").

Coal that we burn to make electricity is made almost entirely of carbon.

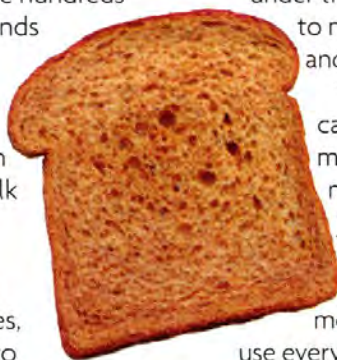
Coal is a fossil fuel, made millions of years ago from dead plants which slowly broke down into

the elements that made them.

Carbon atoms are also inside the molecules of the gas we burn on cookers and to heat our homes. And they are in crude oil, a sticky dark liquid pumped from under the ground or from under the sea. Oil is used to make petrol, paraffin and plastics.

What's more, carbon is used to make steel and manufacture iron – just think of all the things around you made from these metals that you use every day! 

Every compound has a chemical formula which shows the elements it contains. Chalk, for example, is CaCO_3 . Every molecule of chalk is made of one atom of calcium (Ca), one atom of carbon (C) and 3 atoms of oxygen (O).



**What's huge,
looks like
a dinosaur
and sometimes
eats humans
for dinner?**

The giant Komodo Dragon!

The Komodo Dragon can be as big as a car – the largest lizards ever can grow up to 3 metres long and weigh as much as 150 kilos!

They only live on a handful of islands in Indonesia – including Komodo island – and are related to a meat-eating dinosaur that lived there 130 million years ago. These fierce creatures are very strong, can climb trees and run really quickly – up to 30 kilometres an hour!

Their tongues are long – and so are their tails! One flick can easily knock down a person or a deer. They use their sharp teeth to cut their dinner into bits before eating it and swallow almost every bit of the animal they have killed – including horns, antlers and hooves. What's more, they are cannibals!

Older Komodo Dragons sometimes like to eat smaller, younger ones.

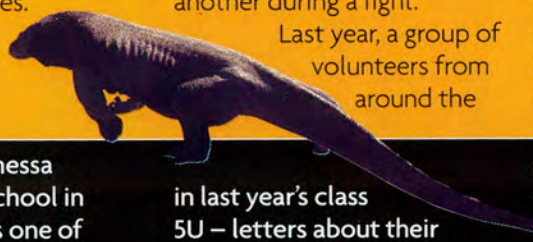
They live for about 50 years but there are only about 5,000 dragons left. Many are dying because they have no food – the deer they feed on are being killed by poachers. People who live on the islands also sometimes kill the dragons – and every now and then one dragon will kill another during a fight.

Last year, a group of volunteers from around the

world went to Indonesia to try to make sure the fierce animals don't die out. They found dragons, trapped them and tied them down so they could take samples of blood, weigh them and measure them. Information they collected will help research scientists

take action so Komodo Dragons don't disappear forever.

Sybil Sassoon/Fauna & Flora International




Teacher Jane Canessa from Trafalgar School in Twickenham was one of the volunteers who came face to face with these scary reptiles. She spent nearly a month in Indonesia helping to hunt Komodo Dragons, using jugs of goats' blood and goats' heads as bait!

While she was there, she visited schools and met children the same age as kids at Trafalgar. She took with her letters written by kids

in last year's class 5U – letters about their lives in Twickenham, what they do in the classroom, what they do out of school, about England's weather, football and the Queen! Jane gave the letters, and photographs of 5U, to children who go to school in Wae Wuul, a small village on Flores Island in Indonesia. Some children in Wae Wuul walk for an hour and a half to

school each day! Jane also took toys, presents from children in 5U and her 2 sons. "The letters were translated and the children loved the toys – they did not have any of their own. Some had never seen photographs before," said Jane.

The Wae Wuul children wrote letters back to Trafalgar and Jane took lots of photographs to show how different school in Indonesia is to school in Twickenham. 



Indonesia, in south-east Asia, is made up of 5 main islands which are surrounded by hundreds of small and tiny islands. Its capital city is Jakarta.



Jane Canessa

Could you help someone in an emergency

All over the world, people who are members of Red Cross or Red Crescent societies know how to help each other.


If you watch the news, you may have seen people with red crosses on their arms, helping people whose homes have been destroyed by volcanoes or hurricanes, helping other people who are starving because there has been no rain and their crops have not grown. Members of the Red Cross give their time to nurse people hurt in war, to carry medicine across the world, to raise money to help give food and warmth to people in an emergency.

In this country, people who are members of the British Red Cross have been trained to help others in their own neighbourhood, not only when there are accidents and emergencies – like train crashes and flooding – but all year round. If you go to a big sports event, a summer fair or a firework display, you might see Red Cross volunteers there, ready to give first aid in case there is an accident. Up and down the country, Red Cross

members help and support elderly neighbours and people with disabilities who live in their neighbourhood. Working with 184 other Red Cross or Red Crescent societies in countries across the world, they help find family members who have been separated because of war or natural disaster. And when there is a disaster in another part of the world – like a war or an earthquake – the British Red Cross helps, by sending either money, medical supplies or people.

Now the British Red Cross is thinking about kids like you. There are already youth groups and groups for younger children run by the Red Cross in this country where kids aged from 5 years can learn first aid, how to look after themselves – and have fun! But the organisers want to know how to get things exactly right. Will you help them by filling in the questionnaire and telling them what you think?

The Red Cross was the idea of Henry Dunant who was brought up in Geneva in Switzerland during the last century. He was on his way through Italy in 1859 and was shocked to see thousands of soldiers wounded and dying after a terrible 15 hour battle in Solferino. He stopped to help look after them. When he left the battlefield, he started to get in touch with important people because he was so horrified by what he had seen – he believed everyone should be looked after when they were hurt in war, no matter what side they were on. In 1864, 16 countries met and agreed a set of rules for making sure soldiers wounded in battle were given proper medical care and looked after.



This was called The Geneva Convention.

The Red Cross offers help to anyone in an emergency, whatever they believe, wherever they come from.

The Red Crescent is the same as the Red Cross but is used in Islamic countries.

What do you think?

Fill in this questionnaire – then send it back to **No Kidding!** Freepost London 6868 PO Box 10427 London N8 8BR by Friday 30 April 1999.

Your views will help the British Red Cross plan clubs and activities for kids your age.



1. Had you ever heard of the Red Cross before you read about it in No Kidding!?

Yes No

1a. If the answer is yes, please tell us how you know about it.

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2. What do you like to do best outside school?

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3. Do you do anything after school each week, like a club or a class?

Yes No

3a. If the answer is yes, please tell us what you do?

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4. Do you think a weekend club or course is better than one in the week?

Yes No

5. Would you be interested in a club run during the school holidays?

Yes No

6. Do you think it's a good idea to wear a uniform at after-school or weekend clubs?

Yes No

7. Do you think it's a good idea to work for badges or certificates at after-school or weekend clubs?

Yes No

8. Do you think young people can do something useful to help others?

Yes No

9. Would you like to learn how to help other people?

Yes No

10. What would make you want to join a local British Red Cross club for kids?

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Name

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Address

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Age

School

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If you live in London, what borough do you live in?

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If you live outside London, what county do you live in?

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What do *you* like to read?

We asked kids in year 4 (Amber Class) at Northend Primary in Erith, Kent, what they like to read...

Puppy Patrol Series

by Jenny Dale
"I like this series about a family who have kennels for dogs. The books are about all the adventures the dogs have."

Happy Days! Mr Twiddle

by Enid Blyton
"There are different stories about Mr Twiddle doing silly things."

The Busy Baker and other Silly Stories

by Nicola Baxter
"These are good short stories."

The Ultimate Ocean Book

by Maria Mudd-Ruth
"You can read about all sorts of sea creatures, like

an octopus and a lobster. It's a pop-up book with really good pictures."



Christabel Crocodile

by Helga Knüppel
"It's about a crocodile who wants to have some fun and goes into the sewers and plays with some mice."

Say Cheese and Die

by R.L. Stine
"It's about an evil camera – if you take a picture with it, something bad happens."

Good books to borrow from your local library

These books were chosen by librarians who work in children's libraries. Some libraries also have CD ROMs which your parent or carer can borrow for you. You might even be able to test the CD ROM at the library!

D Day! A tale of wartime adventure

by Dennis Hamley
This is an exciting story about life during the Second World War. While Philip is staying with his Aunt Edie in Suffolk, he discovers a terrible secret at the nearby RAF camp and is sure wartime plans will fail.

Published by Franklin Watts

Switchers

by Kate Thompson
Kevin and Tess are Switchers – that means they can take on the shape of any animal they choose and can think, feel and live as that creature. Can they use this power to save the world?

Published by Bodley Head/Random House

Perseus and the Gorgon Medusa

by Geraldine McCaughrean
A brave young man called Perseus is dared to cut off the head of the monster Gorgon Medusa who has snakes for hair and can turn people to stone just by looking at them.

Published by Orchard

Living Proof (Animal Alert series)

by Jenny Oldfield
A greyhound found in the local shopping centre is starving and injured and taken to the Beech Hill Animal Rescue Centre. Carly and her friend Hoody want to find her owners and make them pay for their cruelty.

Published by Hodder





Oxford Reading Tree books

"I like all the different adventures the children have in these books and I like Kipper and Chip, 2 of the children, best."

"**Football Magic** is a new magazine which teaches you the rules of football and things like how to referee."

"I read the **back of food packets** because if the food has too much sugar in it, I'm not allowed to eat it."



"I read the **junkmail** that comes through the door if it says anything about money!"

"I like reading **cookbooks** because they make me hungry and I ask my mum to make me the cakes."



"My nan's sister goes to Paris sometimes and I like reading the **postcards** she sends us which have Minnie and Mickey Mouse on the front of them."

"I read the **back of shampoo bottles** when I wash my hair to see what the shampoo is made of."

"I like reading the **targets that my teacher sets me**. They tell me about what I have got to learn."

"I like reading **letters from my penpal Sandy** who lives in Scotland. When she writes to me, she tells me about her friends and her school, and what she has been doing over the last few weeks."

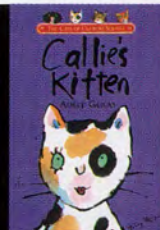


The Strollers

by Lesley Beake
The Strollers are children and adults who have no home in South Africa. This book is an account of several days in their lives. Keen, older readers will like it.
Published by Bodley Head

Fangs

by Malorie Blackman
Nathan's mum hates spiders and won't let him buy a tarantula. But Nathan has already bought Fangs. And his mum changes her mind about spiders when Fangs saves Nathan's baby sister. This is an action-packed story with lots of illustrations.
Published by Orchard



Callie's Kitten

by Adele Geras
Callie the cat lives with the Anderson family. But no-one has any time for her any more when Mrs Anderson comes home with a new baby so Callie runs away. Find out what happens to her before and after she is found!
Published by Young Corgi

Wilma Unlimited: How Wilma Rudolph became the world's fastest woman

by Kathleen Krull
This is the true story of Wilma Rudolph who, when she was a child, caught a disease called polio which meant she was no longer able to walk properly. Through courage and determination,



she recovered and became an Olympic athlete, winning a gold medal in the 100 metres race.
Published by Harcourt Brace

Me and My Electric
edited by Elizabeth Laird
7 stories and a poem about everyday life written by disabled young people with the help of children's authors. The stories are about living with a step family, entering a short story competition, joining a mum on a honeymoon holiday....
Published by Mammoth

Do you know me?
by Nancy Farmer
Tapiwa's Uncle Selca comes to stay with her family in a



town in Zimbabwe from a small village in Mozambique. Uncle Selca always looks on the bright side of life, even when other people would think about giving up. By the end of the story, Tapiwa has learnt to stand up for herself.
Published by Dolphin

Boys are Us
by Shoo Rayner
When David Angelo wins a singing competition, he is heard by the manager of a pop group who signs him up for a boys band. Find out how the band becomes famous and gets to number 2 in the charts – and how Janet and Julie beat him to number 1!
Published by Black (Colour Jets)



Ever heard of a vegetarian piranha?

Even though there are many scary stories about flesh-eating piranhas gobbling up animals and people, 3 types of the small fish actually prefer mangoes to meat!

There are more than 30 different types of piranha – and all the rest eat meat, though quite a few also like the odd nibble on fruit and seeds. Mostly they kill and eat other fish, or sometimes just snap off bits of bodies to chew on rather than swallowing the lot. But when other fish are hard to find, groups of piranhas will tuck into much larger animals. These animals however, are

probably already dead. Despite the tales of gangs of piranhas killing people by nibbling away at their flesh, people in South America often swim and wash their clothes in rivers where the fish live – without being harmed.

Piranhas live in the rivers of eastern and central South America, including the Amazon, the world's longest river. They have

In the Tupi language spoken by people living near the Amazon, pira means fish and ranha means tooth.

fierce snapping teeth inside strong jaws – their teeth are razor sharp, triangular shaped and can be more than 1cm long. Their teeth and mouths are perfectly made

to take bites out of other fish and animals – their faces are flat so they can get really close before they sink their teeth in. The red-bellied piranha is the fiercest sort of all – groups of them can strip the flesh off some animals within minutes.

Piranhas swim around in gangs and the red-bellied type get very excited when they're starving hungry and find something to eat for

Female piranhas lay their eggs on the bottom of rivers or around underwater plants. The male piranha is a good dad and guards the eggs for the few weeks it takes for them to hatch. The fish can live for up to 15 years.

Piranhas can grow to about 60cm long, but most are much smaller. Although short-sighted, the fish can smell and hear very well. A special part of its body called the lateral line helps the piranha to sense vibrations in the water made by another fish or animal that could become its next meal.

Have you heard the story about...


The pet piranha who is supposed to have taken a bite out of its owner's finger while the owner was feeding it bits of meat.

Percy the Piranha who electrocuted himself when he bit a chunk out of a wire that helped to heat his tank.

Precious the Piranha who was used by a shop in Southend to look after precious jewellery while the shop was closed. The owners put the jewellery into Precious' tank!

The 30cm piranha who turned round and bit a chunk from a fisherman's tongue – fishermen in the Amazon kill piranhas by biting them on the back of their heads.

dinner. This is called a "feeding frenzy" – they get so carried away that they sometimes bite a bit out of their friends, as the picture shows!

But the piranha can often become someone else's dinner. Crocodiles and birds living near rivers like to eat them and even people find them tasty – piranha soup is supposed to be delicious and very good for you! 

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Grow-your-own pets

Kaye kept watering the special earth that had come in the orange and gold packet of “pets” she had been given for her birthday. Her best friend Freda who lived 2 doors away had them – you simply put the earth in the plastic dish and then “planted” the tiny eggs in the soil. According to the instructions, the eggs would hatch and turn into easy-to-look-after tiny pets. All you had to do was to give them water twice a day and the pets would be born within 5 weeks. They were called soilings.

Kaye’s younger brother John was fascinated. He kept watching her every time she watered the earth. She had to be very careful, said the instructions. Too much water would kill them, too little would kill them too. The 5 weeks passed really slowly, especially when Kaye’s friend Freda asked her round to see her newly hatched soilings. Freda had been given a packet of grow-your-own pets just after Christmas, so she had started earlier than Kaye. Kaye couldn’t wait for the day when her special soil would contain the tiny white specks which would, said the instructions, get bigger and bigger as long as you gave them the right amount of water. Finally, that day arrived.

John noticed them first. As usual, he was peering into the plastic dish and suddenly he shouted: “Kaye! Kaye! Look, they’re here!” Kaye was drawing: she dropped her pencil and rushed to his side. Together, they stared at the tiny white things which were zigzagging quite quickly across the soil. “You’re right,” said Kaye in awe. “They’re here.”

Kaye had at least 20 soilings. It was hard to count them properly because they moved so quickly. It was hard too to give them names because they all looked the same. But she loved them anyway – they were her pets and she was going

to look after them properly. She read the instructions carefully. “After hatching, water the soil 3 times a day,” they said. Every day, Kaye carefully poured water over the soil, making sure all was moistened. The baby soilings disappeared underneath the earth when she was adding water and then resurfaced afterwards, staying still for a short time. It was as though they had stuffed themselves so full of water, they had to have a rest, just like when Kaye sometimes ate so much cake that her hurting stomach stopped her moving.

After a couple of weeks the soilings were noticeably longer and fatter. After a month, they were at least 1cm long. Within the next 2 weeks, they had doubled in size and each began to develop a “head” – one end of their bodies began to swell like a balloon when the first puffs of breath get inside it. John was delighted. “They’re going to have faces,” he kept saying. “Then we’ll be able to name them because they’ll all look different!”

He was right about the faces, but not about them all looking different. As soon as the heads were fully blown up, an eye appeared on each of them. Just one, a round thing in the centre, the same off-white colour as the rest of their worm-like bodies, but obviously an eye. By this time, the soilings were each about 5cm long and getting too big to all live in the plastic dish together. The instructions didn’t say anything about this and Kaye thought it might be cruel to keep them in such cramped conditions. She was worried, not only by this, but also because she secretly thought they were rather ugly and was ever so slightly scared by them. Nevertheless, as a good pet owner, it was her job and her duty to look after them, so she did. She kept giving them the water, like the instructions said.

And then one day, the soilings disappeared.

“John, what have you done with my pets?” screamed Kaye. Their mum came to see what all the noise was about. “I didn’t touch them, honest,” said John, tears pricking his eyes. “Where are they then?” asked his mum. “Are you sure you didn’t knock them over by mistake?” They all looked on the floor. “There would be earth spilt if that had happened,” sobbed John.

"Perhaps they've all died and sunk into the earth," said their mum. John ran to get a teaspoon and their mum dug about in the soil. "There's nothing," she said, "just dry old earth. I'm sorry Kaye, I don't know what's happened to them. It's a mystery."

It certainly was. In between weeping, Kaye thought and thought about what could have happened to the soilings. She just couldn't come up with an answer that made sense. And the mystery deepened when she called round at Freda's house. Her red-eyed friend said: "They just disappeared...."

Weeks and weeks went by and everyone forgot about the soilings. There were other things to do – the summer break would be here soon and there were holidays to be planned. The days were getting longer and warmer and Kaye and John spent a lot of time outdoors.

One teatime, their mum told them to stay out of her way for a while. Friends of hers were coming round that evening and she had to clear up and get food ready. "I need to go down to the cellar," she said. "I need more plates and I'm sure I've got a box of old ones stored down there."

Some time later, Kaye and John were playing "it" in the garden when they heard a frightened scream from the house. They ran towards the back door, their hearts pounding as fear filled every centimetre of their body. What had happened to their mum?

They found her, at the shut cellar door, her back pressed against it as if she was using all her strength to keep it shut. "They're down there," she whispered. "Who are?" Kaye almost screamed. She had never seen her mother like this, frozen with fear. It made her feel unsafe, like her world was collapsing in around her. "Those things, your pets," her mother hissed. "They're huge."

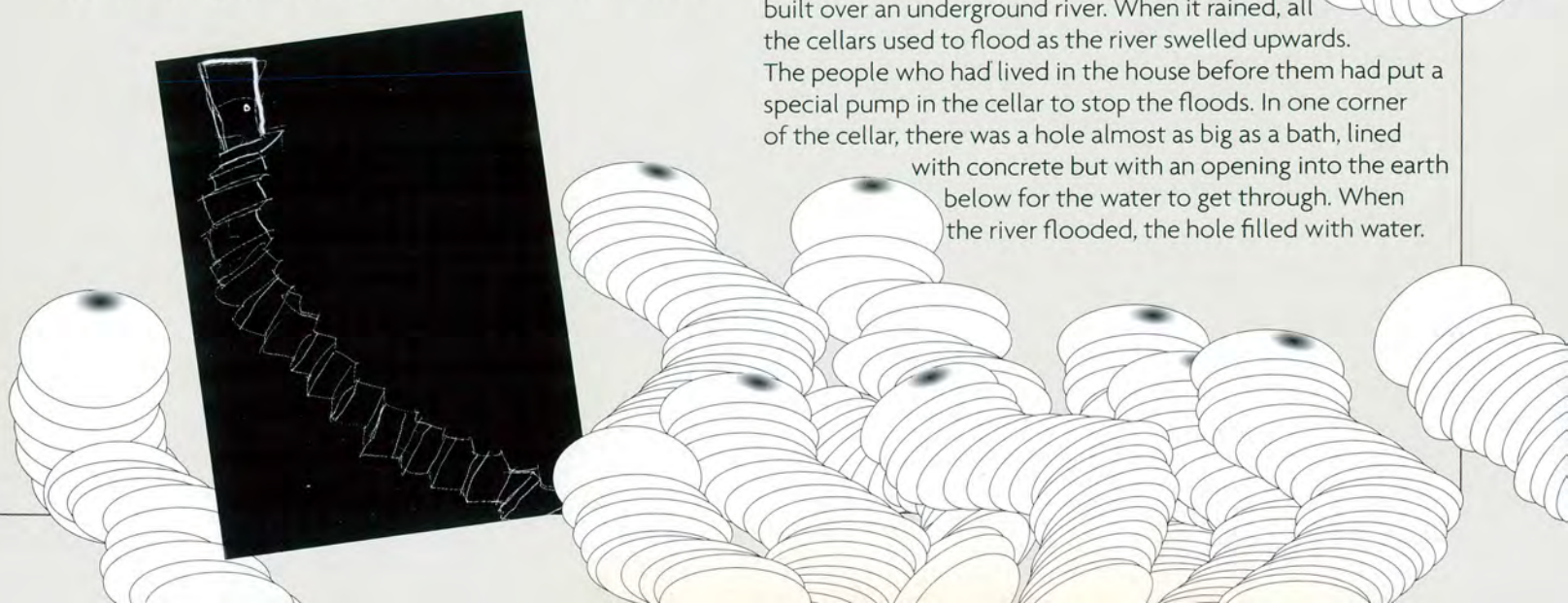
"Let me see," shouted Kaye, and, almost pushing her mum out of the way, turned the catch and yanked the cellar door

open. Her mother had already flicked the light switch at the top of the stairs and the bare bulb lit a mass of quivering, moist, off-white coils, rapidly moving in and out of each other. Every now and then, a round head with a single eye would pop up. There was no doubt these were her soilings, but grown so fat and huge – at least 2 metres long each one, Kaye reckoned. They filled the whole of the cellar at the bottom of the stairs – a great pile of slithering worm-like bodies, squashed in together and darting in and out of each other as they had darted in and out across the soil. Kaye stared, open mouthed, fascinated, horrified.

Then all of a sudden, the heap of bodies went still, as they had done in the dish when she used to "feed" them water. Kaye's mind cleared. "It's the water down there," she shouted. She turned in the open doorway to tell her mum and John what she had realised. They were huddled together against the opposite wall, clinging to each other, unable to move or speak. Then John's face changed. "It's seen you, Kaye, it's coming up the stairs," he blurted out. "It's coming after you. Kaye shut the door, quick, quick, SHUT THE DOOR!"

Kaye turned in an instant and saw one of the soilings slowly, but surely, climbing the stairs, its single eye fixed on her. And in the same instant, she saw about 20 heads pop up, about 20 eyes turn towards her. Then all the heads started moving to the bottom of the stairs and upwards, a slimy, threatening, scary bunch of heads. She slammed the door, turned the catch and put her back against it as her mother had done.

"It's the water down there," she said again. "Water makes them grow. Remember the pump, mum, in the cellar?" Their row of houses was built over an underground river. When it rained, all the cellars used to flood as the river swelled upwards. The people who had lived in the house before them had put a special pump in the cellar to stop the floods. In one corner of the cellar, there was a hole almost as big as a bath, lined with concrete but with an opening into the earth below for the water to get through. When the river flooded, the hole filled with water.



Then the pump would automatically start and clear the water away, into the sewers.

"They must have been drinking the underwater river. They can get to it through the pump," said Kaye. "That's why they stopped moving just now – they had all ducked down to suck up some water. That's why they've got so big."

"But how are we going to get rid of them?" wailed John. "Remember what the instructions said," said Kaye. "Too little water will kill them, too much water will kill them. John, go and get the hose – pull it in from the garden."

The little boy smiled briefly when he realised Kaye's plan, then he ran quickly out the back door, made sure the hose was firmly attached to the tap outside and turned the tap on fully. By the time he reached the other end of the hose, stretched out across the garden where his mum had been watering the evening before, the water was already pouring out. He soaked himself as he picked up the end and ran with it inside, saturating everything as he made his way to the cellar door.

"Ready," he said.

"Mum, come and help me," pleaded Kaye. Her mother, still speechless, stood up. "Take the hose," said Kaye. "John, you open the door on the count of 3." John put his back against the door and Kaye and her mum held the hose together so the water poured out all over John as well as the cellar door. "I can feel them pressing against it," squeaked John. "They're trying to force it down, they're trying to get out!"

"Ready," said Kaye. "1,2,3!"

John turned the catch and pulled the door open, leaping behind it and out of the way of the water. The soilings spilled out, over the carpet, towards Kaye and her mum, a big bundle of flesh trying to force itself through the doorway. Kaye's mum screamed and jumped back but Kaye took a step towards them, aiming the water at the head of the soiling leader. A strange wail, almost like a human sigh, came from the creatures and they began to twist and writhe as the strong stream of water hit them and became a waterfall, cascading down the stairs, over the bodies. The wail became louder and stronger and for a minute nothing seemed to be happening and then, the leader began to change colour. Its body started to become greyish and smaller. As it slowly shrunk under the force of the water, so did the soiling behind, and the one behind, and the one behind. The mass of bodies got smaller, disappearing back down the stairs, and the wailing began to get quieter. Kaye and her mum stepped into the doorway, directing the hose to make sure the water kept pouring down the stairs onto the soilings, down, down, down, until all that was left was about 20 baggy bits of grey skin that looked a bit like empty balloons that had once been stuffed full of air, floating about in a flooded cellar.

Freda's mum bought Kaye a huge box of her favourite chocolates and an enormous bunch of flowers to thank her for what she had done next. Freda's family had been really cross when Kaye first burst into their house, ran into the back garden and dragged the



hose inside, squirting water all over the cellar door. "Now I don't know how to thank you enough," said Freda's mum.

Kaye's mum had rung the police who said perhaps she ought to go and see a doctor. "They thought I was mad," she said. Freda's mum had rang the council who put her through to Pest Control. There she was told she couldn't have an appointment for 4 months. None of them knew who they could tell, who would take them seriously, who would believe them. Then Kaye suggested they visit the toy shop where the soilings had been bought. But when they searched the shelves for the orange and gold packets, they could find none.

They asked the lady behind the counter. "Soilings? I don't know what you're talking about dear. Hold on, let me ask my colleague. Maeve, do we stock anything called 'soilings'?" she shouted to the other end of the shop. Maeve appeared through a door marked "Staff Only" which had been half open. "Had a few packs if I remember, some time ago," she said. "They sold really well, then we couldn't get anymore. I think the manufacturers had some sort of problem. Think they may have been withdrawn from the shops. Shame, they were so popular."

Back at home, Kaye searched until she found the crumpled instruction leaflet which had come in the pack. On it was printed the manufacturers' name with an address in Wales somewhere, but no 'phone number. Kaye's mum rang directory enquiries. "Sorry madam, we have no listing under that name," said the man at the end of the 'phone. "What about writing?" said John. "I don't know why, but I don't think we should send our address," said Kaye, "and without that, how would they reply?"

They thought about ringing the newspapers, but decided people might not believe them. Kaye's mum said even if they did, she didn't want lots of people staring at them and coming round to have a look at the house where it had all happened. "The only thing to do is to forget about the soilings and get on with our lives," said her mum. "Yes, they've gone now," said Kaye. "Good job too," said John.

"Did you know that humans are 70 per cent water?"

A few years later, when Kaye had become a teenager, she went shopping just before Christmas. Stopping in the toy department of a big store to look for something for her younger brother John, she noticed a boy about his age standing at the cash till, holding a familiar orange and gold packet. By the time she pushed through the shoppers, he had gone, disappeared into the busy crowd.

"Soilings," Kaye hissed at the shop assistant. "Do you have soilings?" "We did have," said the lady. "Loads and loads and loads of them. But they've been ever so popular this Christmas and I'm really sorry, I just sold the last packet of them...."

The end

A problem shared

Thank you for sending so much advice to the 2 readers whose problems we printed last time.

Here are some of the things you said.

"When I do my work, my friends come and copy me. I tell the teacher and they get told off. Then when we go out to play, my friends tell me to go away and to play with someone else. I feel left out."

"Don't feel left out, play with some other people and just ignore them. These 'friends' are just using you because they can copy your work."

Scymone, age 9.

"I suggest you make new friends – you don't need friends like this."

Priscilla, age 11.

"Stand up to these 'friends', tell them not to copy your work and ask them if they are truly your friends or not."

Azimah, age 10.

"My friends usually copy me, but I never tell the teacher. Instead, I help them. Friends always stick together."

Toyin, age 11.

"If they continue to copy you in class, they will fail in a test. You will go far and they will stay behind, so let them copy you."

Muniba, age 8.

"When your friends copy you, they don't expect you to grass on them. When you tell the teacher, they feel upset so then they don't want to play with you. Try talking to them and asking them to stop copying you."

Joanna, age 10.

"When your friends try to copy you, tell them the wrong answer. Your friends will lose out because they do not do their own work. If they don't play with you, they're not friends anyway."

Ashley, age 9.

"I know how you feel because my friends sometimes copy me. I do tell the teacher, but sometimes she tells me to stop telling tales. My advice is ask your friends why they copy you, and ask them to stop."

Stephanie, age 10.

Can you help these 2 readers?

"I'm in year 6 and everyone in my class has started going out on dates. I really like a girl but I don't know how to ask her out and my mum says we're too young to go on dates anyway."

Send your advice to
**No Kidding! Freepost
London 6868, PO Box 10427,
London N8 8BR.**

If you've got a problem to share,
write to us at the same address.

"Find some new friends who are as smart as you are and sit with them so they won't copy you."

Judith, age 10.

"Don't worry, when it comes to a test, they will have no-one to copy."

Chinelle, age 9.

"Let them copy your work. It will be their fault if they grow up and haven't learnt anything."

William, age 8.

"If they copy you and tell you to go away, they are not your friends. Play with your other friends in the playground"

Declan, age 10.

"I want to be a news writer for our school magazine. All my friends are news writers but the editor does not pick me."

"Write an interesting article or a short story and show it to your friends and to your teachers. Maybe they will see how talented you are and ask you to be part of the school magazine team."

Nathan, age 10.

"I think you should be polite and respectful, especially to teachers. When they have meetings, they might say how good you've been and the editor might pick you."

Kwabena, age 12.

"You should ask the editor why you aren't picked."

Natasha, age 11.

"You could start your own magazine – that's what I did."

Holly, age 10.

"Write something that everyone finds interesting. That way the editor will be impressed and might choose you to be a news writer."

Masuma, age 10.

"Show how good your stories are. Make sure your spelling is good too. If you keep writing things and giving them to the magazine team, you will prove how serious you are."

Jack, age 7.

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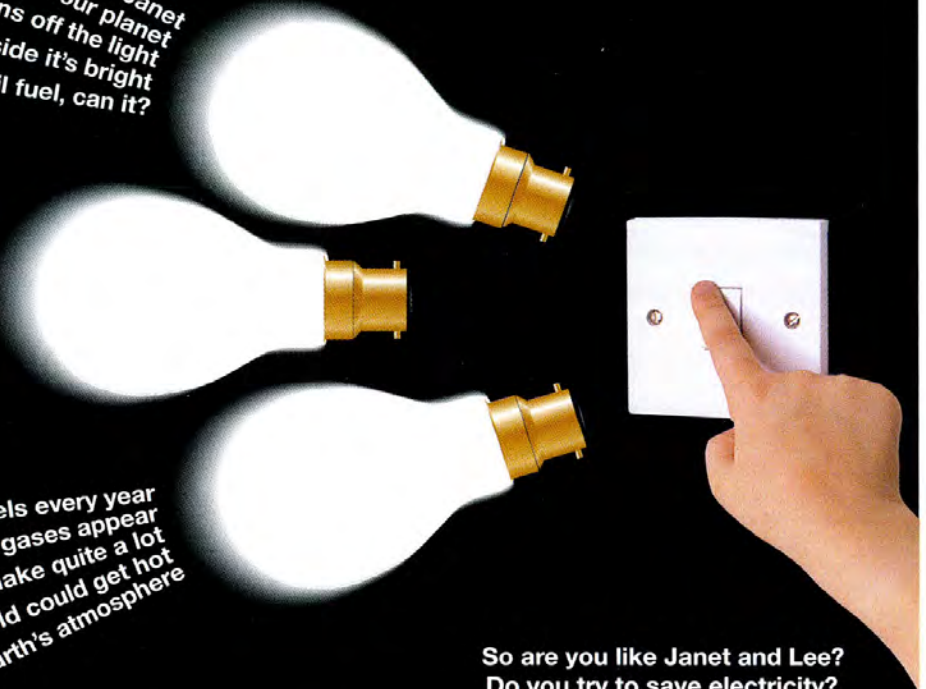
To find out more and get an enrolment form ask a grown-up to contact Barbara Bate, telephone/fax **01304 611 428**. You *must* enter by **30 April 1999**.

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- They're a blanket on earth's atmosphere



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