



# 9A | Celebrity endorsements



## SPEAKING

1 Work in pairs. Discuss the questions.

- Who are the most popular film, music and sports stars in your country?
- Who (eg young/older people, women/men, working/middle class) are these stars especially popular with?
- Which of these stars appear in TV commercials or printed advertisements? Describe and evaluate these adverts.
- What sort of products do you think these stars could successfully promote? Why?

## READING

1 Read the article and choose the best title, 1, 2 or 3.

- 1 Disastrous commercials
- 2 George Clooney's favourite coffee
- 3 Like me, like the product

2 Match the paragraphs 1–4 to the paragraph headings a–d.

- a Problems with endorsements
- b Do endorsements work?
- c Celebrities, products and money
- d A well-known example of celebrity endorsement

3 Find the following words in the article and explain them in your own words. If you have not seen these words before, you should be able to guess the meaning from the context.

- 1 shot up (paragraph 1)
- 2 swigging (paragraph 2)
- 3 ubiquitous (paragraph 2)
- 4 varnishes (paragraph 2)
- 5 lucrative (paragraph 3)
- 6 likelihood (paragraph 4)
- 7 soar (paragraph 4)

4 Work in pairs. Discuss the questions.

- What advertising slogans can you remember? What makes these slogans memorable?
- Do you know anyone who is probably influenced by celebrity endorsements? Who and how?
- What kind of advertisements appeal most to you?
- Do you think your spending decisions are influenced by advertisements? Give examples.



## GRAMMAR: adjective order

When you have two or more adjectives together, adjectives of opinion come before adjectives of description.

*a handsome silver-haired American film star glamorous young women*

- Use adjectives of description in the following order: size / age / colour / origin / material  
*expensive Swiss watches*  
*low-cost, colourful nail varnishes*

Other descriptive adjectives come immediately before the noun.

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**1** A handsome silver-haired American film star walks into a room with a coffee machine and a series of glamorous young women fail to recognize him. They are more interested in the coffee. If you haven't seen one of the George Clooney adverts for Nespresso™, you probably live on another planet. As a result of the advertising campaign, sales of Nespresso™ shot up by over 20% in one year, making this one of the most successful celebrity endorsements of all time.

**2** Ever since the 1930s, when US billboards showed baseball legend, Babe Ruth, swigging a bottle of cola, celebrities have become ubiquitous in advertising. The teenage Canadian heart-throb, Justin Bieber, promotes skin-cleaning products and low-cost, colourful nail varnishes for impressionable young girls. Blonde Russian tennis star, Maria Sharapova, endorses everything from smartphones and expensive Swiss watches, to deodorants and bottled water. Stars like these can make millions out of such deals. Sharapova's earnings from endorsements are many times greater than what she makes out of tennis.

### Glossary

billboard *n* a large board for advertising in a public place  
heart-throb *n* a man who is very attractive, especially a young actor or pop star  
impressionable *adj* easily influenced by other people  
wit *n* ability to make people laugh

**1** Rearrange the words to make phrases.

- 1 a / an all-natural cheap deodorant
- 2 cleaning organic products
- 3 coffee Colombian delicious
- 4 a chain French huge supermarket
- 5 a brilliant Chinese golfer young
- 6 an entertaining commercial one-minute TV
- 7 regulation-sized golf balls American
- 8 an Australian celebrity elderly
- 9 a gold miniature coffee machine

Listen to your teacher to check your answers.

**2** Think of three well-known film, music or sports stars. You have three minutes to write as many adjectives as possible that you can use to describe these people.

**3** Work in small groups. Describe the celebrities to the other students in your group but do not mention their names.

*He's a short, ageing, bald British rock star.*  
*She's a fantastic young blonde tennis player.*

The other students in your group must guess the name of the person you are describing.

**3** It is now estimated that between 20 and 25% of all commercials employ stars of one kind or another. Sometimes, however, the celebrity campaigns can go disastrously wrong. In recent years, there have been the well-known cases of the golfer Tiger Woods and the lovable British chef, Jamie Oliver. Woods was forced to admit that he did not use the golf balls he was paid to promote and Oliver revealed that he did not do his shopping in the supermarket that was using his image to promote their products. More damaging still are the highly lucrative contracts awarded to celebrities who, in the weeks or months after the launch of a campaign, find themselves in the scandal pages of the press.

**4** Despite the risks, there is no likelihood that advertisers will stop using celebrities. The markets approve and stock prices can soar when a company employs a high-profile star in its ads. Research into the effectiveness of celebrity use, however, is less than convincing. There is no question that sports stars are one of the best ways to promote sports equipment, but do people really buy Nespresso™ machines because of George Clooney? The success of the campaign is more likely due to the cleverness and wit of the commercials themselves.