

Acronyms

An acronym is a word that is made up of letters from other words. Sometimes acronyms are just words that stand for other words.

For example, tweenie stands for 'children between 5 and 12 years old'. In the 1980s advertisers thought up a lot of acronyms to describe different types of people. Then they made ads that would appeal to one of these groups.

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| Yuppies | Young Urban Professionals |
| Yummies | Young Urban Mother |
| Dinkies | Double Income No Kids |
| Sinkies | Single Income No kids |
| Minkie | Middle Income No kids |
| Poupie | Porsche Owning Urban Professional |
| Swell | Single Woman Earning Lots Of Loot |
| Bobo | Burnt Out But Opulent |
| Woopie | Well Off Older People |
| Jollies | Jet Setting Oldsters With Lots Of Loot |
| Glams | Greying Leisured Affluent Middle Aged |
| Deccie | D.I.Y Decorators Who Drag Stipple and Marble |
| Splappie | Stripped Pine Laura Ashley People |
| Dockney | East Docklands London Yuppie |
| Tweenie | Between 5 And 12 Years Old |

Think up an acronym to describe yourself or someone you know.



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Acronyms

Age range .

- Years 3/4 (SP4/5).
- Years 5/6 (SP6/7).

Resources

Copies of the worksheet.

Using the worksheet

Advertisers gave a whole range of acronyms to groups of consumers in the 1980s. Looking at these acronyms helps us to understand how advertisers identified recognisable groups in society in the consumer-driven world of 1980s marketing. The fact that so many acronyms were developed to describe different groups of consumers tells us that people were consuming a lot in the 1980s, and that advertisers were becoming more sophisticated in their methods and targeting specific groups.

A typical acronym was DINKY, which described an increasing section of society, couples not necessarily married, but who were 'Double Income No Kids Yet.' The Dinky was the type of consumer that might be targeted for spending on fashion and status symbols like perfume, label goods and stylish kitchen items that might never be used. Other labels advertisers favoured include Empty Nesters, Grey Panthers, Ladettes and Tweenies. Each of these groups of people had a great deal of spending power and new products were constantly coming on the market to appeal to them.

You may like to point out that there are many acronyms for people with a lot of spare cash, but few acronyms for people with little money to spend. Of course, if you were an advertiser, you would want to target the groups with money. This is another way that those with little money became further marginalised during the 1980s and made to feel that they needed to spend money in order to achieve status.

Yuppie was a very popular 1980s acronym for 'Young Upwardly Mobile Professional Person'. The word was coined by the advertising industry to capture the essence of a particular type of work hard, play hard, ambitious minded city career person of either sex. The hectic lifestyle of a yuppie meant that after long hours of work, rare free time was spent in a self indulgent way frittering away the cash earned on anything, from expensive make up and perfume, to a bottle of fine champagne. Conspicuous wastage was part of the attitude.

Drag, stipple and marble are all types of speciality paint techniques that were popular in the

1980s. People who decorated their homes in this style were thought to be more concerned with style and lavish furnishings than with how something looked or fitted the style of the house. Laura Ashley style was synonymous with taste and expense and a particular look favoured by those with money and no children.

This activity gives students a chance to think about how advertisers might view them. They should be encouraged to think up only positive acronyms and not insulting ones.

Younger students

You may like to think up some sample acronyms to get the students started. You might also want them to discuss why adverts are usually aimed at groups with money or at children, who influence their parents to buy stuff.

Outcomes

The students can:

- Understand what an acronym is.
- Think about how acronyms are used by advertisers to divide people into groups.
- Understand that in the 1980s more people spent more money, so there was more advertising.

Older students

After thinking up some acronyms, students could devise an advertising campaign to appeal to those people. For example, their acronym could be SKIM (school kids in money) and they could think up an advert to sell a toy to kids with money.

Outcomes

The students can:

- Understand what an acronym is.
- Think about how acronyms are used by advertisers to divide people into groups.
- Learn something about advertising.
- Understand that in the 1980s more people spent more money, so there was more advertising.