

Follow me – and buy this!

When you think about online safety or potential threats, secure passwords and hacking are what comes to mind. But have you ever thought about the threat to your wallet? Well, buyer beware ...

Would you choose to buy a particular brand of jeans if your favourite social media star told you how amazing ¹**they** were? A lot of us would probably answer 'yes!' We all love following people on social media sites such as Instagram. It's great to see the fun photos and videos. But how do you know when a social media post is really an advertisement? There are thousands of companies that want to advertise their products to teenagers. The problem ²**they** face is that many young people don't watch TV, and they don't buy magazines either. ³**These** were the traditional ways of advertising to young people in the past. So now companies have started to look for new ways to reach young customers. Social media offers a very effective way to do ⁴**this**. Influencers, due to the large number of followers on social media, can persuade their followers to buy some



products. Companies are willing to pay teen influencers to show their products because they have found it is the best and simplest way for them to advertise to young people. And this kind of advertising works. Take the example of the gaming app Bejeweled. The company paid a few well-known and popular influencers to share photos of themselves playing the game using the hashtag *#shinyplace*. These people encouraged their followers to post similar photos of themselves, and within a month, millions of people had bought the app. So, how can you tell the difference between a simple post and an advertisement? The answer is to look carefully at the hashtags. Influencers should use the hashtags *#ad*, *#sponsored* or *#freebie* if ⁵**they** have received money or free goods in return for their post. You can then use this information to help you decide if you really want to buy the product.

1 Read the article and choose the best summary.

- a The article explains who social media influencers are and suggests some interesting influencers that people should follow.
- b The article discusses how companies use social media influencers to sell products and explains how to know if a social media post is an advertisement.

2 Read the article again and complete the sentences.

- 1 The writer thinks that a lot of people would buy clothes if influencers said they were amazing.
- 2 A lot of young people don't _____ or buy magazines.
- 3 Social media is a good way for companies to _____.
- 4 Influencers are able _____ to buy things.
- 5 Millions of people bought the app Bejeweled because the company _____.
- 6 The article advises people to _____ to find out if a post is an advert.

3 Read the **WATCH OUT | SKILLS** box. Then look at the words in bold 1–5 in the article and match them to the person or thing they refer to.

- a reach young customers
- b social influencers
- c some jeans
- d TV and magazines
- e companies

1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____ 5 _____

WATCH OUT | SKILLS

Odnośniki

Aby zrozumieć, wobec kogo lub do czego zastosowano odnośnik, czyli słowo takie jak: *it, his, she, these, this, that, them, herself, one*, przeczytaj uważnie całe zdanie oraz zdanie je poprzedzające.

4 Answer the questions. For question 3, use your own ideas.

1 Why are people who are popular on social media called 'influencers'?

2 How did the company advertise their new gaming app Bejeweled?

3 Do you think it's important to know if a social media post is an advert? Why/Why not?
