

## READING A Magazine Article

### Reading Strategy Scanning for Information

Scanning helps you find specific information in a text. Pay attention to the type of information you are searching for. Looking for capital letters and numbers can help you find information such as dates, places and names.

#### 1 Scan the magazine article and find:

- 1 Diderot's first name
- 2 the name of a country
- 3 the year Diderot wrote an essay
- 4 the name of a famous company

#### 2 Read the magazine article and choose the correct answer.

- 1 How did the Russian ruler help Diderot?
  - a She bought him new clothing.
  - b She gave him his first encyclopedia.
  - c She loaned him money.
  - d She purchased his books.
- 2 Diderot's essay describes ...
  - a why he bought new items
  - b his difficulties with money
  - c his new dressing gown
  - d his new purchases
- 3 Which of the following is an example of a Diderot Unity?
  - a Displaying items individually.
  - b Putting items in a catalogue.
  - c Displays that group particular items together.
  - d Selling more than one item.
- 4 The writer advises readers ...
  - a not to regret purchases they make
  - b to buy as little as possible
  - c to have realistic expectations about purchases
  - d to buy things that they don't have

### TIP

When answering open questions, first find the keywords in the questions and identify the type of information you are looking for. Remember to use your own words to answer the questions.

#### 3 Answer the questions.

- 1 According to the first paragraph, when might the Diderot Effect influence people?
- 2 What effect did Diderot's new dressing gown have on him?
- 3 When might the Diderot Effect discourage us from buying an item?

# The Diderot Effect

Does this sound familiar? You buy a new shirt, but it doesn't match the clothes that you already own, so then you buy trousers or a skirt. This is called the Diderot Effect, and it's one reason we buy more than we need or can afford.

5 Denis Diderot was a well-known French philosopher, and the man who created one of the first encyclopedias. He was also quite poor. Actually, his only valuable possessions were books. In 1765, Russia's ruler, Catherine the Great, purchased these for a large sum when Diderot was short of money. He immediately bought a beautiful red  
10 dressing gown. This had a huge effect on his life, which Diderot wrote about in 1769. In his essay, he explains that the new dressing gown made his other belongings seem old and unattractive, so he began replacing them.

Why did this happen? According to many social scientists, it resulted  
15 from a psychological need for our possessions to go together and to reflect our self-image. In 1988, anthropologist Grant McCracken invented the term "the Diderot Effect" to describe this need and its influence on consumerism.

Marketers exploit this need by displaying products in what  
20 McCracken calls Diderot Unities. Think of chain stores where displays present complete outfits and accessories. An example is the Swedish furniture company IKEA, whose marketing uses two kinds of Diderot Unities in its shops, website and catalogues. One is dividing items like lamps and rugs into various furniture  
25 "families". The other is displaying items in fully furnished rooms. Shops count on all of these to create the Diderot Effect, making the buyer want the entire package.





WORDS FROM THE TEXT

4 Find words or expressions in the text that mean:

- 1 worth a lot of money (lines 5-11)
- 2 rely on (lines 21-27)
- 3 whole or complete (lines 21-27)
- 4 refuse to accept a thing or idea (lines 28-34)
- 5 feel sorry about something (lines 28-34)

5 Complete the sentences with the words below.

**afford | chain stores | sum | outfit | prevent social status**

- 1 She received a small ... of money for participating in the survey.
- 2 I can't ... to buy anything at that shop!
- 3 He doesn't care that his old car doesn't suit his ...
- 4 Security cameras help shops ... shoplifting.
- 5 Are you buying a new ... to wear to the party?
- 6 ... usually have better prices than speciality shops.

COMPOUND WORDS

Compounds are formed when two words are put together to form a new word. They can be written as one or two words. Sometimes they are hyphenated.

He is a **well-known** man.

Have you seen the **showroom**?

6 Complete the sentences with the compound words below.

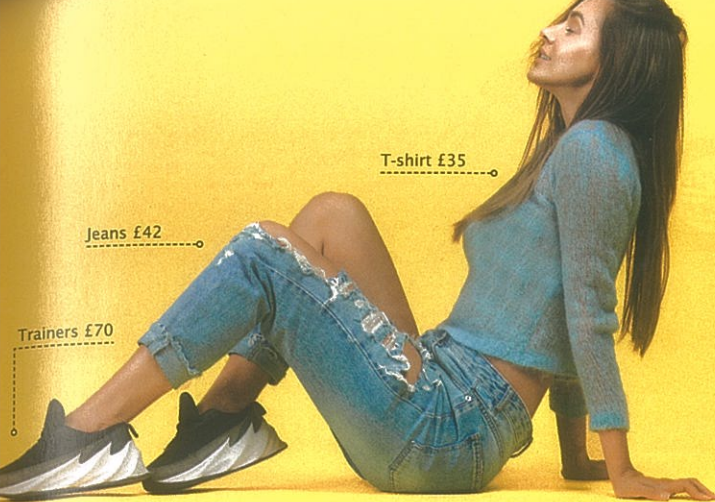
**homemade | price tags | self-made | credit card billboards | short-sleeved**

- 1 I used my ... to pay for my bicycle.
- 2 Our ... bread is better than the bread we can buy.
- 3 These jackets haven't got ... I wonder what they cost.
- 4 It's warm enough to wear a ... shirt.
- 5 ... people have none of the advantages of family money.
- 6 Several ... in town have got adverts for the latest iPhone.



YOUR OUTLOOK  
CRITICAL THINKING

Have you ever been affected by the Diderot Effect? What did you do?



According to McCracken, the Diderot Effect works in the opposite way, too. It can prevent us from buying something that doesn't reflect or suit our identity and social status. For example, a teen may reject less trendy brands, even if they're good value.

We may occasionally give in to the Diderot Effect, but knowing it exists can help us resist it so we don't regret our purchases. Before buying something, ask yourself, is it necessary? Then, buy items that match what you already have – so don't get those boots if you'll also need new jeans. And remind yourself that a new chair won't transform your bedroom into a showroom!

LOOKING AT  
LANGUAGE

- 1 Look at the false friend underlined in the text. How do you say it in your language?
- 2 Homonyms are words that have the same spelling or pronunciation, but different meanings. Look at the homonyms from the text. How many meanings do you know for each word?  
suit | match

PRONUNCIATION

- 3 Listen and repeat the words from the text.  
**sound** /aʊ/ | **well-known** /əʊ/
- 4 Listen and repeat the words below. Match the **bolded** letters in each word to the correct phonetic symbol /aʊ/ or /əʊ/.  
trousers | gown | **owner** | **our** | **old** | wrote

Pronunciation Practice page 133

