

Explain how gender roles in advertising have changed over recent years

- Use four print adverts as supporting evidence.
- Write a detailed paragraph about each advert (plus an introduction and a conclusion).
- Use the media terms you have already learned.
- Try to include the following terms if they are relevant:

Ideology / ideologies / ideological:

The message given to us by the media. What we are taught to think by what we see.

Patriarchy / patriarchal:

The idea that it is (or was) a man's world and men have the power.

Gender stereotypes / conventional gender roles:

The socially constructed concepts of what it means to be male or female.

Female / male objectification:

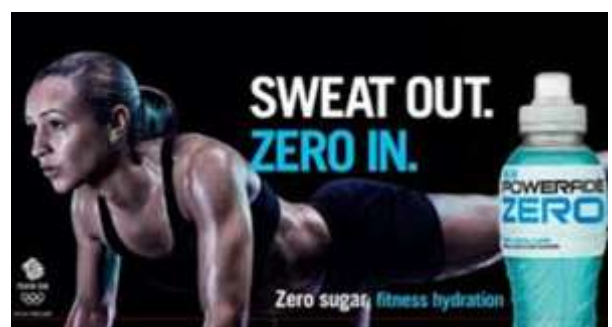
The people in the adverts are shown either as body parts or as sex objects.

Metro-sexuality / metrosexual:

The idea of a modern (less macho) man who takes care of his appearance and has a more sensitive side.

Teacher Model

Explain how gender roles in advertising have changed over recent years



Traditional **gender roles** were created as part of a **patriarchal society** and therefore favoured men. In advertising, men were shown as dominant, powerful and rugged whereas women were depicted in terms of their relationships with men: loving mother to the man's children; hardworking housewife or available sex object. These **ideologies** were socially acceptable until the 1960s when the feminist movement began to question gender stereotyping in its quest for gender equality. Many adverts still **objectify** women but advertising has begun to play with **gender roles**. Old fashioned **stereotypes** are often questioned, making fun

of them or inverting them so that women are represented in a more masculine way or men are shown to be more feminine.

The Nike advert shows a man in a **stereotypical** situation. Sports and battle have long since been linked in the world of advertising and so the slogan "Prepare for combat" does not seem out of place on an advert promoting sporting goods. The man is **denoted** wearing body armour which further supports the slogan. His face is serious and his fists are clenched in anticipation of the "battle" ahead. He sports the traditional manly physique with bulging biceps. Although he is a sportsman, the over-riding **connotation** of the advert is that he is a proud warrior bravely going into combat. This supports the **patriarchal ideology** that man is powerful, courageous and strong. This is a common view promoted by sports advertising as it adds to the drama of events and makes sporting goods seem like vital tools in the quest for victory. This is all hyperbole of course – after all, the man is only going to play a game. He is not really going into battle or even doing a particularly important job.

The Nivea advert shows a contrasting view of what it is to be male. This advert features a **metrosexual** who clearly cares about his appearance and his skin. The man has smooth features (rather than **stereotypical** rugged good looks) and is smiling coyly – not looking at the camera. This smile and lack of **direct address** creates a passive feel to the advert: the audience is looking at the man – he is not looking at us. The **anchorage** goes further towards challenging male **stereotypes** by saying "Who said men can't multi-task?" Here the **slogan** is punning on the fact that it is a double action product: moisturising and giving SPF protection from the sun. The man is shown touching his face presumably feeling how soft and lovely it is thanks to *Nivea Men*. This advert resembles many adverts for women's skin care and cosmetic products. It uses exactly the same **visual codes** and **narrative conventions**: a **medium close-up** of the model is shown with a **close up** of the product and **brand logo** in the bottom left-hand corner.

The Lynx advert **connotes** a very **stereotypical** view of women. The model in the advert is clearly presented as a **sex object**: she is **denoted** in the very unlikely situation of cooking dinner whilst wearing only her underwear. The woman is shown in a **traditional domestic role** and is **stereotypically** attractive with large breasts, long hair and toned legs. The fact that she is in her underwear suggests that she is sexually available and that she could be available to the male reader if he invested in a can of *Lynx Dry*. Using sex to sell a product is an old advertising ploy and here, as in conventional adverts, the **sex object** is female. The old-fashioned cooker and '60s style Bush radio create a retro feel, whilst the **slogan** "Can she make you lose control?" harks back to the **patriarchal** view that men are the ones that are in control. The fact that the woman is giving **direct address** to the camera suggests that she is looking out at a male reader – this gives rise to the idea of the **male gaze**: the girl is looking around because she is being looked at.

The final advert shows a strong female. The woman in question is Jessica Ennis-Hill, a well-known sportswoman and poster girl for the London 2012 Olympics. She is **denoted** in a traditionally masculine way: that look of determination, sported by the American footballer in the Nike advert, is mirrored here. Although her clothing is very similar to that of the girl in the Lynx advert, she is not **objectified** in the same way. The message **connoted** is one of strength, dedication and determination and not one of sexual availability. Ennis-Hill's hair is tied up, she wears no makeup and her body ripples with muscles: she is not dressed for the benefit of male admirers she is dressed for comfort. There is a **stereotypical** saying that "men sweat, women perspire" but here Ennis-Hill is clearly shown sweating as she works out. This fact is highlighted in the **slogan** "Sweat out. Zero in." Just as the Nivea advert follows the **conventions** of female beauty ads, this advert follows the **conventions** of sporting goods adverts and would work equally well with a male athlete.

Despite the fact that attitudes have changed, all of these adverts are fairly new. This suggests that, whilst **gender stereotypes** are being challenged by some ad companies, they are still being reinforced by others. The problem is that **ideologies** surrounding gender are deeply rooted in society and deeply rooted within us as individuals – male or female we grew up with them and we still see them every day in the media.