



## SUN VAMPIRES

### Possible Questions

#### Who is this piece written for?

Notice the name of the publication in which the article appeared – “The Big Issue.” Unlike most magazines it is not readily available from newsagents’ shops. Where is it available? Who buys it? What assumptions do the publishers make about their readers? Is there anything about the writer’s tone or use of language which suggests how she sees a typical reader? The fact that she refers to Luke and Matt Goss and Peter Andre is significant and might indicate something about her anticipated readership.

#### What is the writer trying to do or say to the reader?

What is Cayte Williams's attitude towards sunbeds? What conclusion does she want us to come to?

#### How does the writer achieve her purpose?

- 1 Taken as a whole, what is the overall tone of the piece? Is it, for example, sombre and entirely serious, convincing us by the weight of the argument, or is it lighter, appealing more to our sense of humour? Does it have elements of both of these approaches? (Later questions approach this in more detail.)
- 2 What is striking about the headline – “Sun vampires” - which might attract the attention of someone browsing through the magazine?
- 3 The sub-heading bombards the reader with a variety of images - at least three. Can you identify them and explain the pictures Williams is trying to put into our heads? How do you feel about the new word she uses – “tanorexics”?
- 4 What purpose is served by including the illustration?
- 5 How does Williams try to get the reader personally involved in the first paragraph?
- 6 How does the opening paragraph establish the tone which will tend to dominate throughout? How is this reinforced by the image – “walking raisins” - used in the final sentence of the second paragraph?
- 7 A rather different approach is used when Williams refers to the experience of Jane Horwood, later in the first column. What effect are the following intended to have: “It’s like smoking”; “when I got pregnant my doctor told me I couldn’t go on the sunbed”; “like anorexia”? Are there any other words or phrases in the two paragraphs referring to Jane Horwood which reinforce the tone?



8 Why does Williams introduce the opinions of Doctor Julia Newton Bishop, making sure that we are aware of the fact that she is the “consultant dermatologist at St James' University Hospital in Leeds”? What is the point and the effect of the scientific jargon, such as “UVA and UVB rays”, “epidermis”, “melanocyte cells”, “elastin”, “collagen” - only some of which are explained in everyday terms?

9 In the fourth column Williams turns to the “suntanning industry” (any significance in “industry”?). Why, do you think, does she place the following in inverted commas: “controlled tanning” and “consultation”?

10 Williams now introduces us to Victoria Williams. How does she ensure that our feelings towards her are much more negative than towards Jane Horwood in the previous example?

11 What does Williams seek to do in the final four paragraphs, in which she gives us more examples of sunbed users? This is the climax of the piece, underlining her overall message. Try to find examples of how she chooses phrases deliberately to manipulate her readers' feelings and convince them of her point of view. Consider, for example, the following:

“Here models and media people pop in for a top-up on a regular basis”;

“Who says tanning isn't trendy?”;

“secretive”;

“It seemed his rugged outdoor tan was of the indoor variety”;

“It makes you look wealthier, like you can afford regular holidays”;

“Essex Man with his perennial tandoori tan.”

12 Is it coincidental that the last establishment referred to, Tanning Trends, is in Barking?

### **So what?**

Have you learned anything you didn't know about sunbeds? Is Cayte Williams's article fair in its treatment of what she calls the “suntanning industry”? Will you ever use a sunbed in the future?