UPPER-INTERMEDIATE (B2/C1)

Lesson on Cosmetics & Branding

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WARM-UP

1) What beauty or self-care products are you currently wearing?
2) What makes a brand successful in the beauty industry?
3) Who do you think are the three most followed people on Instagram? (answer in page's footer)
4) Are you familiar with Selena Gomez or her make-up brand Rare Beauty?

READING PASSAGE

The Success of Rare Beauty[1]

Selena Gomez is now a billionaire. Though she achieved **fame** through acting and music, the majority of her wealth (95%) comes from *Rare Beauty*, her make-up and **cosmetics** company. In 2023, the brand made $350 million in sales, making it one of the hottest brands today.

Gomez is a *self-made* billionaire. Raised in a tough neighborhood in Grand Prairie, Texas, Gomez had a **modest** upbringing. She became **inspired** to become an actress after seeing her mother perform at a local theater. She began acting as a child, which led her to a major role on Disney's *Wizards of Waverly Place*.

Rare Beauty was **launched** during the pandemic in 2020. It quickly became popular with Gen-Z consumers and social media users. Gomez rejects the idea that makeup should be about achieving perfection. She states, "Makeup is something to enjoy. It's not something you need. I want every person to feel beautiful exactly as they are." She believes her products celebrate people's **individuality**, i.e. what makes them unique (or rare). The brand also aims to be **inclusive** by providing products for all types of skin **tones** and types and it also features many different looking models in its **campaigns**. Gomez has also successfully **associated** the brand with mental health by sharing her own mental health **struggles** publicly. The brand **donates** 1% of its sales to the Rare Impact Fund, which supports mental health services.

At the *Time 100* Summit event in 2024, Gomez commented: "I think that we've been able to do something that, at least in cosmetics, no one has ever done. That's what makes me happy every night when I go to sleep."

COMPREHENSION & FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS

1) **Recall & Retell:** Summarize the passage to a partner in your own words.
2) How has Gomez made most of her money?
3) The passage describes Gomez a "self-made billionaire." In your own words, how would you define *self-made*?
4) What inspired Selena Gomez to start acting?
5) What values does Rare Beauty try to promote?
6) Gomez says she wants "every person to feel beautiful exactly as they are", yet she makes money by promoting makeup products to young audiences. Is there a problem in this?
7) Gomez believes that she's been able to "do something that, at least is cosmetics, no one has ever done." What does she believe that is?

VOCABULARY Match the **bold** words in the passage with their meanings below.

1)	fame (n)	**a)**	including people from all backgrounds or with different characteristics
2)	cosmetics (n)	**b)**	to connect something with something else in one's mind
3)	modest (adj)	**c)**	products used to change the appearance of the face or body
4)	inspired (adj)	**d)**	a particular color of skin, or a shade of a color
5)	launch (v)	**e)**	being known or recognized by many people
6)	individuality (n)	**f)**	a difficult challenge that requires effort to overcome
7)	inclusive (adj)	**g)**	simple; humble; not large in size, amount, or quality
8)	tone (n)	**h)**	to give money to a person or organization, often for a cause
9)	campaign (n)	**i)**	several actions or events intended to achieve a goal, often in marketing
10)	associate (v)	**j)**	motivated by someone to do something creative or positive
11)	struggle (n)	**k)**	the qualities that make someone unique or different from others
12)	donate (v)	**l)**	to introduce a new product or company

Pronunciation: Pronounce the above phrases with your teacher, stressing the underlined syllable.

PRACTICE Paraphrase each question using the word(s) in parentheses. Then ask the questions to your partner.

1) If the beauty industry didn't exist, would the world be better or worse? (cosmetics)
2) Did you grow up without a lot of luxury or extra spending? (modest)
3) When was the last time you gave money to a cause? (donate)
4) What made you want to start learning English? (inspired)
5) Describe a time when you went through something really difficult. (struggle)
6) What is your favorite brand? What values do you connect with it? (associate)
7) How do you show the world what makes you different from everyone else? (individuality)

DEBATE (Pick a Topic)

- *Testing cosmetics on animals is necessary to make sure they are safe for people to use.*
- *The products with the best quality tend to be the most successful.*

Pick a side (FOR or AGAINST). Spend a few minutes preparing. The FOR side will present first.

ROLEPLAY (Pick a Role)

Situation: Jose and Paula are dating.

Jose: Paula wears a lot of makeup in your opinion. Sometimes it takes her 45 minutes to get ready to go out. You think she's beautiful, naturally, and want her to wear less makeup (or not wear any at all). Try to discuss this topic with her.

Note: Last week you made a comment about her haircut, which hurt her feelings, so try to discuss this topic in a sensitive way. You will start the conversation.

Possible expression: You don't need these products to look beautiful.

Paula: You love wearing make-up; it helps you feel confident when going out. Your boyfriend, Jose, would like to talk to you about something.

Note: Last week, he made a rude comment to you about your haircut. You have finally forgotten about it. Listen to what he has to say today.

SAMPLE

SPEAKING ACTIVITY: Launching A Brand (Group Work)

Step 1: You work for a marketing company. Several companies want to be your clients. Pick a client to work with from the list below.

A. **Crush-It Sports Drink**: A new sports drink for athletes and fit people

B. **Bellagio Beneathwear**: A high-quality underwear brand from Italy

C. **HayaRuma**: A new Japanese electric vehicle brand

D. Other: …..

Step 2: The client wants to advertise in print magazines and on television. Your company believes it should advertise on social media and hire a celebrity or influencer to promote its brand. Spend 5-10 minutes planning this strategy. Think about:

- *Which social media platforms should it advertise on and why?*
- *What celebrity or influencer(s) would be a good fit for its products?*
- *How do the qualities or values of the celebrity/influencer fit the brand's image?*
- *Other: ….*

Prepare a brief **pitch** (sales presentation) on the benefits of your plan. When ready, pitch it to your teacher, who will play the role of the client.

Step 3: The client wants to feature only slim, fit, and traditionally attractive models and heterosexual couples in its first advertisement. Your firm believes the ad should be *inclusive* and show a diverse (differing) group of people. Spend a few minutes preparing the following:

- A strong **argument** for why being inclusive and having a diverse people is important today
- specific **examples** of how they could promote these values in their ad

When ready, present your suggestion to the client (your teacher).

(Optional Step: Create an outline of the advertisement and then explain it to the company.)

FAMOUS QUOTATIONS Marketing & Branding

- *"If you are going to be two-faced, at least make one of them pretty." – Marilyn Monroe*
- *"The most beautiful makeup of a woman is passion. But cosmetics are easier to buy." – Yves Saint Laurent*
- *"Marketing is no longer about the stuff you make, but the stories you tell." – Seth Godin*
- *"Your brand is what other people say about you when you're not in the room." – Jeff Bezos*

COLLOCATION REVIEW Match the beginnings of the collocations with their endings.

1)	one of the hottest	**a)**	made billionaire
2)	a self-	**b)**	neighborhood
3)	a tough	**c)**	brands today.
4)	Gen-Z	**d)**	perfection
5)	achieving	**e)**	consumers

VOCABULARY REVIEW

Insert a word from today's lesson into the appropriate blank from memory. If you get stuck, the word bank is below.

1) *Though she achieved _____ through acting and music, the majority of her wealth (95%) comes from Rare Beauty, her make-up and _____ company.*
2) *Raised in a tough neighbourhood in Grand Prairie, Texas, Gomez had a _____ upbringing.*
3) *She became _____ to become an actress after seeing her mother perform at a local theater.*
4) *Rare Beauty was _____ during the pandemic in 2020.*
5) *She believes her products celebrate people's _____, i.e. what makes them unique (or rare).*
6) *The brand also aims to be _____ by providing products for all types of skin _____ and types and it also features many different looking models in its _____.*
7) *Gomez has also successfully _____ the brand with mental health by sharing her own mental health _____ publicly.*
8) *The brand _____ 1% of its sales to the Rare Impact Fund*

fame / tone / individuality / cosmetics / inclusive / launch / associate
modest / inspired / campaign / donate / struggle

FINAL DISCUSSION

1) What kind of brands do you try to support?
2) Do you know men who wear makeup? Will this become more common in the future?
3) Do you think Rare Beauty's success is more due to Selena's brand or the quality of its products? Why?
4) Some people argue that beauty and health products for women are much more expensive than those for men. This is called the "Pink Tax". Do you think this tax exists?
5) Can beauty products reverse aging?
6) What did you learn from today's lesson?

SAMPLE

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ANSWER KEY

Comprehension Questions

1. ..
2. Gomez made most of her money from her cosmetics company, Rare Beauty, which generated 95% of her wealth.
3. ….
4. Selena Gomez was inspired to act by watching her mother perform in local theater.
5. Rare Beauty promotes individuality, inclusivity, and mental health awareness.
6. …
7. Gomez believes she has achieved something unique in cosmetics by combining beauty with a strong focus on mental health and inclusivity.

Vocabulary Answer Key

1-e, 2-c, 3-g, 4-j, 5-l, 6-k, 7-a, 8-d, 9-i, 10-b, 11-f, 12-h

Collocation Answer Key

1-c, 2-a, 3-b, 4-e, 5-d

[1] Source: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BLOXQCRYft4

SAMPLE