Discover some of the finest examples of commercial art and explore how adverts reflect changing social attitudes over time.

**INVENTIVENESS**
Find an advertising format in the display which would reach:

- Men who smoke  
- Children aged 5–10  
- Keen home cooks

Today what formats would you use to advertise:
- the dangers of smoking to smokers?
- vocational training to young people aged 18–25?

**SHOPPING**
What were the two major developments in how people shopped from 1850–1930?

What is the main shift in retail today?

How does it affect advertising?
SELLING HEALTH
Promising good health has always been good business. Which of these is not a real product on display?

- The anti-pestilential quilt
- Petal dust
- Dr Cobham’s sulphuric corset
- Anthelmintic bonbon children’s worm tablet

Foods like Cadbury’s cocoa were also marketed with surprising health claims. Which foods are linked with the ‘wellness industry’ today?

ADVERTISING THEMES
Advertisers often try to link products to themes or people that they think will appeal to the public. This porridge advert uses Queen Victoria’s Diamond Jubilee to make a pun. What are the two meanings of ‘constitution’ here?

Find examples of products that adverts have linked to:

- The military
- Royalty
- A celebrity
- Britain

Tick the link that seems the most surprising or inappropriate.

How effective would these four associations be for twenty first century audiences?

Which associations and endorsements do modern advertisers use?

SOCIAL ATTITUDES
Most of the items on display are ephemeral: they were designed to last a short time and then be thrown away. Because they have been preserved by the collector John Johnson, these adverts offer us a unique insight into the social attitudes of the time.

Choose some items that tell us about one of these themes:

- The role of women
- Politics
- Social class

What do these adverts reveal about changing social attitudes?