# TOEFL Listening Lesson 20

**Setting**: A college-level Marketing class.

## Questions

**1. What is the main topic of the discussion?**

A) The differences between traditional and online advertising

B) How social media influences purchasing behavior

C) The best platforms for starting a social media business

D) The dangers of social media addiction


**2. What example does the female student give about purchasing something because of social media?**

A) She bought a new phone after watching an unboxing video.

B) She purchased a skincare product after seeing it in a viral TikTok video.

C) She ordered a meal kit service after reading online reviews.

D) She signed up for an online class advertised on Facebook.


**3. According to the professor, what term describes the one-sided relationships people form with influencers?**

A) Influencer marketing

B) Emotional branding

C) Parasocial interaction

D) User-generated content

**4. Why does the professor mention user-generated content?**

A) To explain how brands use customer posts to advertise

B) To show how companies create fake reviews

C) To suggest that influencers are losing credibility

D) To criticize brands that don't invest in professional marketing

**5. Why does the professor ask about algorithms?**

A) To show that companies misuse customer data

B) To explain how personalized feeds influence buying decisions

C) To argue that social media marketing is ineffective

D) To suggest that algorithms are harming small businesses

<u>Script</u>

**Professor:** Today we're going to talk about the influence of social media on purchasing decisions. Let's start with a simple question—how many of you have bought something recently because you saw it on social media?

**Female Student:** Definitely. I bought a skincare product after seeing it in a TikTok video that went viral.

**Male Student:** Same here, but for me it was sneakers. I kept seeing ads and influencer reviews on Instagram, and eventually I caved.

**Professor:** Good examples. Social media has become a powerful marketing tool because it combines advertising with peer influence. Why do you think that's so effective?

**Female Student:** It feels more genuine, I think. Like, when an influencer you trust recommends something, it's not like a regular commercial.

**Professor:** Exactly. This is called parasocial interaction—it's a kind of one-sided relationship where consumers feel personally connected to influencers. Even though the influencer doesn't know them, consumers trust their recommendations almost like they would a friend's.

**Male Student:** But aren't some of those reviews paid for? How do consumers know what's real?

**Professor:** That's a great point. Transparency is a big issue. That's why many countries now require influencers to disclose when a post is sponsored. Yet, studies show that even when people know a post is an ad, the emotional connection often still has an effect.

**Female Student:** I guess it's the story behind the product that matters. Like when they share how they use it in their everyday life.

**Professor:** Exactly. Storytelling is crucial in social media marketing. Rather than just listing features, influencers and brands create narratives that make products relatable. Now, besides influencers, what other social media strategies affect purchasing?

**Male Student:** Flash sales and limited-time offers? Like those countdown timers you see?

**Professor:** Right—creating a sense of urgency is very effective. Another strategy is user-generated content—encouraging customers to post about a product themselves. Can anyone think of an example?

**Female Student:** Maybe those coffee shops that have Instagrammable drinks and spaces? They basically get free advertising when people post pictures.

**Professor:** Exactly. The aesthetic appeal prompts people to share their experience, spreading brand awareness organically. Now, what about algorithms? How do they play a role?

**Male Student:** They keep showing you similar products once you click on one, so you're constantly reminded about it.

**Professor:** Yes. Algorithms personalize your feed to show you content and products you are most likely to engage with. This not only increases exposure but also subtly nudges purchasing behavior. In the next class, we'll look at some specific case studies where these strategies have led to viral success—and sometimes, backlash.

<u>Answers</u>

1. What is the main topic of the discussion?

**Correct Answer:** B) How social media influences purchasing behavior

2. What example does the female student give about purchasing something because of social media?

**Correct Answer:** B) She purchased a skincare product after seeing it in a viral TikTok video.

3. According to the professor, what term describes the one-sided relationships people form with influencers?

**Correct Answer:** C) Parasocial interaction

4. Why does the professor mention user-generated content? **Correct Answer:** A) To explain how brands use customer posts to advertise

5. Why does the professor ask about algorithms?

**Correct Answer:** B) To explain how personalized feeds influence buying decisions