This is the homepage of Slate.com. Some of the things that appear here are news stories/editorial content created by Slate’s staff writers, while other items are paid advertisements. For the three marked sections, evaluate whether each item is or is not a piece of advertising. Be clear as you explain the evidence and reasoning that helped you reach your conclusion. If you run out of room, please continue your answers on the back of this sheet.

1. This is / is not (circle one) an advertisement because

2. This is / is not (circle one) an advertisement because

3. This is / is not (circle one) an advertisement because

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Percentage of female computer science graduates

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Should California Stop Growing Almonds?

The nut has been vilified for drinking up the state’s water supply. It doesn’t deserve such a bad rap.

By Eric Holthaus

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When Is Cheryl’s Birthday?

A simple chart that explains the logic problem that quickly spread around the world.

By Laura Bradley and Marie Lindemann

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Slate

MOST RECENT

SEE ALL

24M AGO - JORDAN WEISSMAN - 1M TO READ

Forget Steak and Seafood: Here’s How Welfare Recipients Actually Spend Their Money

30M AGO - BEN MATHIS-LILLEY

Buckingham Palace Guard Falls Over (Video)

45M AGO - L. BRADLEY & A.M. LINDEMANN - 2M TO READ

When is Cheryl’s Birthday? Solving a Logic Problem That Quickly Spread Around the World.
1. This is **not** an advertisement because

A top-scoring answer will mention all of the following:
- There is a “save $20” marker, “limited time only” phrase, and a coupon code placed on the graphic. News articles do not include such items, so we should conclude that we are being sold something here.
- There is a small blue icon in the upper right corner, where a reader can cancel the appearance of the ad. These are the “Ad Choices” and “Stop seeing this ad” buttons regularly placed on online advertising.

2. This is **not** an advertisement because

A top-scoring answer will mention all of the following:
- It includes the writer’s name, and we can search the Slate site to determine whether he is a regular staff writer.
- There is no ad-type wording, such as “sponsored by,” coupon codes, or the blue “Ad Choices” box placed on the graphic.
- While it seems the piece will present an argument in favor of California’s almond industry, there doesn’t appear to be any sponsorship involved. Some articles are created for the opinion page of publications, and this is probably one of those. We’d need to further evaluate the information presented and the sources cited by Holthaus to determine whether we should give his article credibility as a fair news source.

3. This is **not** an advertisement because

A top-scoring answer will mention all of the following:
- This graphic is clearly labelled as “Sponsored Content,” meaning someone has paid Slate to place this graphic on the website. Whenever money is involved in presenting information, we should be skeptical and read with a wary eye.
- Advertising disguised as editorial content is a savvy (sneaky?) way for companies to grab a reader’s attention. Often, these “stories” are nothing more than click bait, a tool to drive traffic to a commercial site.