

Teacher's Toothache Drop Advertisement from 1885



Advertisement for medicinal drops to relieve toothache, Lloyd Manufacturing Co., 1885. Courtesy National Library of Medicine

Answer the following questions:

1. When you look at this advertisement from 1885, what can you infer about some uses of cocaine at that time?
 - a. Whom did the advertisement target? (who would buy the product?)
Adults, parents
 - b. What was the cocaine used to treat? And for whom?
Children's toothache
 - c. Who endorsed the cocaine product/medicine?
"druggists" (pharmacists)
2. What legal status of cocaine in 1885, can you infer based on the advertisement?
Cocaine was used in treating children's toothache, from which students can infer that its use was not tightly regulated—not illegal.
3. What do you think is the legal status of using cocaine as medicine today?
Cocaine is illegal for common use. It may be used in some medicine that requires doctor's prescriptions.
4. Why do you think the use of cocaine differ between then and now?
Students may answer differently, and may include different medical knowledge about cocaine then and now.