

Consumerism

Summary

Students will be able to identify image and information ads, define consumer goods and services, explain teen consumer spending impacts.

Main Core Tie

FCS Exploration

[Strand 4 \(Note: Start of FCS explorations part B\) Standard 2](#)

Additional Core Ties

FCS Exploration

[Strand 5 Standard 1](#)

Time Frame

4 class periods of 45 minutes each

Life Skills

Thinking & Reasoning

Materials

Worksheets, teen magazines, product to test, labels for two similar products, ads.

Background for Teachers

Read completely through the information and be prepared with the appropriate ads, examples, experiences, etc.

Intended Learning Outcomes

Students will realize the amount of money they are spending and learn how to spend their money more wisely.

Instructional Procedures

DAY ONE

Give the students the worksheet "Being A Wise Consumer" and have students complete it at the appropriate times during the discussion.

Define and explain the following terms:

GOODS: products made for sale such as in-line skates, computer games, jeans, etc.

SERVICES: work performed by one person for others such as repair work, tutoring, teaching karate, styling hair, etc.

CONSUMER: a person who buys goods and services

ADVERTISEMENT: a message to persuade consumers to buy something

Have students list all the goods and services they purchased in the past week. Tally the amount the class spent in that time period. Figure an average for the class. Multiply that by the school population to find what the school spent the past week. Record the results on the worksheet.

Discuss three reasons we buy what we do:

1. PEERS--Because friends are an important part in the lives of most teens; their ideas and tastes can be influential. Sometimes just one or two popular students can start a fad. What really matters is

what is best for you.

2. HABIT--Many buying decisions are influenced by habits. Most students eat the same lunch everyday just out of habit. If you always shop at the same store, you may be passing up a good price at another store.

3. ADVERTISING--This is another influence on what you buy. Advertising is everywhere. The major advantage of advertising is that it lets you know what is available. The disadvantage is that it sometimes persuades people to buy things they don't need.

Show students a teen magazine. Discuss what percentage of the magazine is advertising (count the ads and divide by the total pages).

Have students match ad slogans with the companies they represent. (These become outdated very quickly, so just list 10 current slogans that can be remembered.)

DAY TWO

Show examples, discuss, and define the following:

1. INFORMATIONAL ADS--ads that describe the features of a product or service and give facts about its price and quality. Information ads appeal to the practical side of people. They send the message that an item price is a good value for the money or that an item is a good buy because of its high quality.

2. IMAGE ADS--ads that connect a product or service to a lifestyle that consumers would like to have. Image ads often use actors, sports stars, or other celebrities to endorse or recommend a product. They send the message that consumers will be more attractive, popular, or perhaps smarter or healthier if they use the product or service.

Discuss types of media ads:

PRINT--newspaper and magazines

ELECTRONIC--radio, TV, internet

DIRECT MAIL--catalogs, store circulars, coupons

20-40% of the cost of a product is for advertising.

Discuss how to evaluate media messages:

*Ads mention only the best features of a product.

*Separate emotional appeals from facts.

*Don't trust endorsements--they are paid to say what they say.

*Beware of slogans--they are not a guarantee of quality.

Compare labels of two like products.

DAY THREE

Discuss consumer testing. Consumer tests are performed by companies to determine features that are important to consumers. Consumer tests are also done by consumer groups to evaluate products.

Perform a consumer test. As a class discuss what you want to determine by your test and how you are going to go about gathering the information. (I often compare two food products like Nabisco versus General Mills products. We decide as a class whether we want to compare flavor, texture, color, size, smell, etc.) Test and discuss the results. What did you learn?

Discuss various types of stores:

*Department stores--carry a wide variety of merchandise and offer services

*Specialty stores--carry only specific merchandise and prices are higher

*Chain stores--both department and specialty stores can be chain stores. They offer lower prices.

*Factory outlets--a store that carries only one manufacturer's product

*Discount stores--have a limited selection

DAY FOUR

Discuss the rights of consumers:

The right to safety

The right to be informed (ads and labels)

The right to choose

The right to be heard

The right to redress (action to correct a wrong)

The right to consumer education

Discuss the responsibilities of a consumer:

To be courteous

To behave responsibly

To be honest

To know the store's policies on refunds

To keep proof of your purchase

To be ready to process your claim

Have students write to a company of their choice. They need to tell the company something and then ask a question.

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