

CONSUMER LAB—TEACHER INFORMATION

This lab should be set up in different locations around the room. Students will move from product to product, completing their evaluation sheets. The items on the student handout can be exchanged for other items if you wish, but the charts would need to be changed to better evaluate the product that is to be evaluated.

You will need to buy four different brands of each item. One brand should be a national brand name, one store brand, and one generic brand. The fourth can be a brand of your choice.

List each product on the board and list the brand names which have been purchased under the product in random order.

Place each product into an unlabeled container numbered one, two, three, or four. (Be sure you know which brand corresponds to which number.)

A bowl of water should be placed by the paper towels so students can test for absorbency. Fabric scraps need to be pre-stained so that the students can test the stain removers. A bowl of water and some toothbrushes should be available to apply the stain remover and with which to scrub the fabric.

Explain to the students that they will be testing the products set up around the room and then trying to decide which brand is which. Have them put their guesses in the column marked Brand. The column marked Rating is for them to rate the product (the preferred product would be 1 in the column, the next preferred, a 2, and so on).

The columns which are labeled Price, Size, and Price per ounce will be completed later.

The remaining columns are for students to use in testing each product. They can either write in descriptive words or rate each item from 1-5.

Allow ample time to evaluate each item. After the class has completed the activity, identify which brand is which. Have them write the name of the correct brand in the left margin of their lab sheets.

Tell students the size and price of the product. The price per ounce can be calculated either as a class or individually.

Finally, have the students answer the questions below each chart before handing the lab sheet in.

Discuss:

1. Tell me why you think price is usually a sign of quality.
2. When is the least expensive item not the best buy?
3. Do you think name brand items or generic items are better? Why?
4. How can quality best be judged?