

TeachingEnglish lesson

Consumer Power

Consumer Power

Task 1: Look at the labels on your clothes, bags, pencil cases etc. Find out where they were made and fill in the table with the origin of five items.

ITEM	ORIGIN

Consumer Power

Task 2: Imagine you are going to buy the following items. What do you consider before you decide what to buy?

- price?
- how it looks?
- the quality?
- the brand?
- anything else?

	a pair of trainers	a pair of jeans	a bar of chocolate
most important factor				
2 nd most important factor				
3 rd most important factor				

Consumer Power

Task 3: Read the first part of the article.

Ethical shopping

Shoppers in the UK are spending more than ever on ethical products, and the demand for plant-based foods, second-hand clothes and furniture, and greener gadgets grows. This trend reflects consumers' growing concerns about the environment, animal welfare and social justice. Some supermarkets and stores now provide an ethical label on goods such as bananas, coffee, tea, sugar, clothing and beauty products. The labels guarantee fairer pricing for producers and workers, reduced environmental impact and more equality. They also offer greater choice to shoppers.

Consumer Power

Task 3: Read the second part of the article.

How can you be sure you are buying ethical products?

These days there are many websites which give concerned consumers information about products and about the companies behind the brand names. Some sites review all kinds of products – from pet food to paint - and give scores for criteria such as impact on the climate or the environment, the treatment of people and animals, tax credentials and the company ethos. Other websites compare companies in one industry, such as the beauty or clothes industry. The sites help consumers to make decisions, and they also persuade companies to behave more ethically.

Consumer Power

Task 3: Read the final part of the article.

Other ways to do your bit

It is easier nowadays for consumers to make ethical choices about the goods they buy. They can also make ethical decisions about the services they use. For example, people can choose to use green energy or internet service providers. They can pay for goods and services using credit cards from banks with ethical policies. They can invest in community schemes or lend money to entrepreneurs with business ideas that will help them escape poverty. Although there is still a long way to go before ethical consumption dominates the way we shop, it is a trend that looks set to continue. You too could shop and spend money with a guilt-free conscience.

Consumer Power

Task 4: Read the consumer quandary and discuss in your group.

You have a favourite brand of trainers that you love. You have included a pair of these trainers on your birthday present list. Last night you saw a documentary on the TV that showed where this brand of trainers is made and you saw that they are made in huge factories by children who have to work 14 hours per day and are treated badly. What do you do? Do you still want a pair of these trainers for your birthday?

Consumer Power

Task 4: Read the consumer quandary and discuss in your group.

You love chocolate and have a favourite chocolate bar that you eat quite often. You just looked on the internet and saw an article about the company that makes your favourite chocolate bar. It declared that they pay very little to the workers who produce the cocoa in South America. In some cases, the producers can't survive and their families are suffering. What do you do? Do you decide the article isn't true and try to forget you saw it? Do you write a letter to the company? Do you stop buying the chocolate bar?

Consumer Power

Task 4: Read the consumer quandary and discuss in your group.

Every week you go to a hamburger restaurant with your friends. One of your friends has now decided not to go because the way the hamburgers are produced is unethical. He says that they cut down trees from the rainforest to make space to keep cows, the workers have lots of accidents as they have to work very long hours and the pay is ridiculously low. He asks you to stop going there. What do you do? Do you join your friend and boycott the hamburger restaurant? Do you still go but eat something else? Do you turn vegetarian?

Consumer Power

Task 5: Imagine that a pair of trainers costs €100. Where does the money go? Match the money with where it goes.

€18	€17	€13	€12	€11	€8.50	€8	€5	€3	€2.50	€1.50	€0.50
-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-------	----	----	----	-------	-------	-------

- Material –
- Production costs -
- Labour cost of the worker (paying the person who makes the shoe) –
- Profit subcontractor –
- Transport and tax –
- Labour cost of the retailer (paying the person who sells the shoe) –

- Publicity for the retailer –
- Rent of the retailer –
- Profit for the brand name –
- Research –
- Publicity for the brand name –
- VAT –

Teaching English lessons

Consumer Power

Thanks for attending the lesson