

Activity 19

Rally Around Your Rights

As a consumer, you have both rights and responsibilities. For example, you have the *right* to receive accurate product information, and you have the *responsibility* to be honest when complaining to a store or a product manufacturer about a purchase that dissatisfies you.

Directions: Analyze the situations described below. For each situation, identify the consumer’s right and the consumer’s responsibility, and state what the consumer should do.

1. The plug on a brand-new hair dryer is cracked.

Consumer’s right: _____

Consumer’s responsibility: _____

Action to take: _____

2. The label on a new shirt says that the shirt must be washed in cold water to prevent shrinkage. You wash it in cold water, but it shrinks.

Consumer’s right: _____

Consumer’s responsibility: _____

Action to take: _____

3. Your aunt recently bought a personal computer at a local “superstore,” and she has asked you to come over and help her learn how to use her new word processing software. While you are typing on the computer, you notice that some of the keys stick. You also notice that the computer manual contains a warranty.

Consumer’s right: _____

Consumer’s responsibility: _____

Action to take: _____

Activity 20

Ads: Fact or Fantasy

Every day you see hundreds of advertisements. Television and radio commercials, billboards, the Internet, and magazine and newspaper ads contain powerful messages that attempt to persuade you to buy something. It takes a smart consumer to get through the “glitter” and get to the facts.

Directions:

1. Bring to class a variety of magazine and newspaper ads. With your teacher’s permission, form small groups and study the ads you have all collected. Look for these standard features of advertising, which are explained in your textbook on page 239:
 - **Emotional appeals.** Advertisers that use this technique imply that you will be happier, healthier, or more popular if you use their products. The people in the advertisements are using the product and are happy or popular. Advertisers hope that consumers will buy the product thinking that it will make them happy or popular, too.
 - **Product characters.** Cartoon characters that promote products get consumers’ attention. They don’t, however, tell you whether a product is really any good.
 - **Slogans.** Slogans or jingles—slogans set to music—help to keep advertisers’ products in people’s minds. They do not, however, give detailed facts about the product.
 - **Endorsements.** Some ads feature a famous person who recommends the product. Advertisers hope that the popularity of the person will make people want to buy the product. Consumers must remember that such people are *paid* to appear in the ads.
2. Once group members have studied the ads, choose a variety of ads to present to the class, and determine who will make the presentations. For each ad, the presenter should:
 - a. point out which of the above techniques the advertiser is using.
 - b. tell why the advertiser chose to use it.
 - c. tell how it attempts to make the product sound appealing.
 - d. point out any other techniques that the advertiser is using to persuade consumers to buy the product.
3. For each ad that is presented, have a brief class discussion on how effective it is. Does the ad work? Does it make students want to buy the product? Why or why not?

Activity 21

Compare and Save

Noah saved his money to buy a mountain bike. He examined three different brands of bikes in two stores and read about each bike in a consumer magazine. Noah made a chart that would summarize the differences among the bikes.

Directions: Study Noah's chart. Then answer the questions that follow.

Name of Bicycle	Price at Store 1	Price at Store 2	Pluses	Minuses
Grizzly Bear	\$325.99	\$329.00	Holds 2 water bottles; gearing better than most for downhills; shifts more smoothly than most	Handlebar grips less comfortable than most; rear wheel may lift during hard braking
Mountain Lion	\$319.99	\$309.99 (on sale!)	Rear-wheel quick release; gearing better than most for steep uphill; streamlined look	Seat post hard to remove; holds only 1 water bottle
Rattler	\$319.99	\$329.99	Holds 2 water bottles; tire traction on pavement better than most; gearing better than most; seat post easy to remove	Brake levers not adjustable for small hands

1. Noah lives in a large city where it is hot and muggy for several months of the school year. He depends on good braking and good traction to remain safe in traffic. Noah wants to be able to secure the bike at school by removing the seat and putting it in his locker, then removing the front wheel and chaining it to the rear wheel. With those wants and needs in mind, what features should Noah's bike have?

2. Which bike do you think that Noah should buy? Explain why. _____

3. At which store should Noah buy the bike? Explain why. _____

Activity 22

Buying Choices

What influences your buying choices? Do your friends and peers influence your buying decisions? Do you shop for the best price? Do you look for items that you've seen in advertisements?

Directions: In the chart below, list seven products or services that you purchased recently. For example, you might list a haircut, a new pair of jeans, and a backpack. For each item, explain the reason you chose that particular product or service. Then answer the questions that follow.

Product or Service	Reason

1. How many items did you purchase in order to be like your peers? _____
2. How many items were impulse purchases? _____
3. How many choices were influenced by advertising? _____
4. For how many items did you compare prices before making a purchasing decision? _____
5. What do you think is the biggest influence on your buying choices? _____

6. Overall, how would you rate yourself as a consumer? _____

