

Purchasing (& Consumerism) - Student Activities

Note To Teachers:

*This activity is intended as an introduction to the topic, to be completed **before** any discussion of needs & wants or any other aspects of purchasing (& consumerism). By comparing the plan drawn here with the modifications made in activity 7 (and the reasons for the modifications), the student's understanding of the topic and propensity to change can be assessed.*



Activity 1: "I Want.....!"

Curriculum Links:

T&E (Information, Materials, Enterprise, Technology Skills)

Outcomes: Students will

- consider the key design criteria appropriate to the task
- generate methods and techniques to develop plans
- understand how to read plans
- use formal techniques for documenting and designing plans
- consider how to present the ideas and plans

Preparation:

Copy of activity on overhead, smart board or duplicated for students.

Students require drawing paper, pencils, rulers and erasers

Lesson Procedure:

- 1 Discuss with the students what they would consider the perfect bedroom, and what a designer has to consider in drawing the plan of any room in a house (size, client preferences, budget, particular client requirements. If necessary, have students look at the housing section of a paper (weekend sections are best for this) to see how plans are drawn.
2. Have the students imagine that they are able to design the bedroom for their new home, anyway they want! – any size, any colour, any layout, any furnishings (holding any clothing they want), any accessories, gadgets etc.. There is no limit on their budget!
3. Students draw and fully label a plan and list the contents (or describe and list the contents) for the room they have planned. The plan is to be for someone the same age and sex as themselves. Students could draw a sketch (artist's impression) of how the room would look as well as a formal plan.
Remind students to draw or list everything they would include in their dream room.
4. Have students answer the question, "How did you decide what you 'needed' in your room?"

N.B. Students need to keep their plans for the following lessons.

Needs and Wants:

There is a difference between what we need (must have), and what we want (would like).

Needs are things which keep us healthy and relatively happy (sufficient food, clothing, fresh water, heat, housing, education and medication).

Wants are things which are not essential, but which we would like (holidays, plasma TV, cosmetics, sweets, brand name clothing)

Consumption is simply the act of using goods and services.

When we consume, how do we decide what things we really need, and what is stuff that we just want? These decisions are often influenced by fashion, by how much money we have and by advertising.



Activity 2: Analysing the plans

Curriculum Links:

T&E (Technology Process, Systems)

Outcomes: Students will:

- consider their designs in light of how they meet needs and wants
- review plans according to new criteria
- devise ways to generate plans and ideas based upon needs and wants
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Preparation:

Students will require the plans from the previous lesson and a red, blue, green and black fineline pen or coloured pencil.

Lesson Procedure:

1. Lead the students through the following instructions.

Go back to the bedroom plan you devised in activity 1.

- In **red** circle those items you chose because they were fashionable
- In **green**, circle those things you included because money was no object (you had an unlimited budget)
- In **blue** circle those things you chose because you have seen them advertised

Some items may be circled more than once.

2. Ask the students answer the following questions. If they write the answers, they will be more likely to think about their individual actions rather than follow class responses.

- Did you include any items you really won't ever use – or will use only rarely
- Why?

3. Have students circle those in **black**

Generational Change:

“The luxuries of yesterday became the comforts of today and will become the necessities of tomorrow” (Sustainable Human Development: Young people’s introduction” based on the United Nations Development Programme’s Human Development Reports 1990 -2000)

Electrical goods are an excellent example of how quickly technology has made luxuries accessible and affordable, so that they come to be seen as necessities.

For example,

- your grandparents probably sat around a large cabinet radio or if they were very modern a bakelite mantle radio which provided a limited repertoire of news and music.
- your parents were the proud owners of “transistor radios” which were small and portable and delivered a fairly poor quality sound. Later they may have had larger units which played cassettes as well as the radio and could be both portable or plugged into power
- Today’s teenager “must” have an individual ipod containing an individual music selection downloaded from the internet.



Activity 3: Technology and changing buying patterns

Curriculum Links:

T&E (Technology Process, Materials)

English (Listening & Speaking, Writing)

S & E (Time, Continuity & Change, Natural and Social Systems)

Outcomes: Students will:

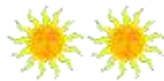
- examine and evaluate technologies in the light of how needs and wants are met
- consider the environmental, functional and social costs and benefits of products created
- understand that needs and wants may impact on the development of new materials and processes.
- consider the questioning formats required for interviews
- consider the language patterns, vocabulary and behaviours required to complete successful interviews and gain the information required.
- demonstrate that listening to others can reveal different points of view
- state an opinion and provide some details and/or examples to support it
- write a logically organised paragraph with a main point followed by elaboration, example and concluding sentence.
- understand that change impacts on people, lifestyles and ideas in various ways and can be positive or negative
- understand that access to goods and services influences people’s well-being and creates varying living standards

Preparation:

Students will require copies of the table and enough time to complete the interviews at home.

Lesson procedure:

1. Have students complete the table below by interviewing their parents and grandparents or other people of the relevant age group. They should leave the last column blank for now.
- N.B. If the class has a number of students from other countries, this could generate very interesting discussions, especially about which products were in common use, and when deciding whether the items are necessities or not.
2. As a class or in groups, students should discuss the differences for each product across the three generations, and decide whether this item is a need or a want today.
3. If students decide that it is a need, they should then determine which generation of the product best meets the need, and write G(Grandparent's), P(Parent's) or M(MY) in the last box.. If they decide it's not required at all, they should put a cross in the box.
4. Ask the students if there were any products where you are able to make an environmentally better choice today than in the past.
5. Students list these and write a short explanation about why today's model is the best choice.



Extension:

1. Have students consider the examples below of past luxuries which are considered "necessities" today.

Each decade has had its indulgences and aspirational luxuries which have gone on to become everyday necessities. Here are some examples from the United States

- 50's: Television, room air conditioner
- 60's: Air conditioned car, color TV
- 70's; Microwave oven, personal music player (Walkman), calculator
- 80's cell phone (in a bag), terminal and modem (PC towards the end of the decade)
- 90's: PC (early), Digital Camera, stock broker
- 00's: Daily Starbucks \$4.00 latte (took less than a decade to become necessity), mobile web browsing device (also rapidly becoming a necessity)

Reference: <http://nextup.wordpress.com/2007/12/07/todays-indulgences-are-tomorrows-necessities/>

2. As a class or in groups, ask students to discuss
 - a) If the same applies to Western Australia. You might like to rearrange the list as to when they became common "needs" here (talk to your parents and grandparents again)
 - b) What things, considered to be aspirational or indulgences today, do they think will be necessities in the future?
 - c) How long do they think it will take to get to that point?

Visit http://www.ibuydifferent.org/takeaction/action_center.asp# to use an online calculator to see how your purchasing choices can make a difference.

Worksheet for Activity 3.

Appliance	Grandparent	Parent	My Choice	Need or Want Today
TV	Black and white set in 1956 (WA)	Colour sets	Plasma/high definition / flatscreen	
Electric Lights				
Refrigerator				
Dishwasher				
Electric Toaster				
Electric Iron				
CD Player				
Tumble Dryer				
Microwave				
Washing Machine				

Background information for discussing the concepts in the following activities

Impacts of consumerism

There are many positives associated with Purchasing including the provision of essential goods and services to people, but consumerism may be defined in the negative as the chronic purchasing of new goods and services, with little attention to their true need, durability, product origin or the environmental consequences of manufacture and disposal. The impact on the lives and the environment of people in developing countries is one of the biggest problems of the sort of consumerism which is typical of societies like Australia and the United States.

“Today’s consumption is undermining the environmental resource base.... (and) if the trends continue without change.....today’s problems of consumption and human development will worsen” (*Behind Consumption and Consumerism*” by Anup Shah

The inequality between rich and poor consumers is stark. Globally, the 20% of the world’s people in the highest income countries consume 86% of total private consumption expenditures. The poorest 20% consume 1.3%.

This is illustrated in the following table

Commodity	Consumption by wealthiest 20%(1/5 th) of the world’s people	Consumption by poorest 20% (1/5 th) of world’s people
Meat and Fish	45%	5%
Total energy	58%	< 4%
Total number of telephone lines	74%	1.5%
paper	84%	1.1%
World’s vehicle ownership	87%	< 1%

Information derived from *Human Development Report 1998 Overview – United Nations Development programme (UNDP)*

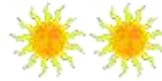
Consumption growth in the last 60 years is impacting on the environment like never before, and data from the world bank in 2003 would indicate that the figures above have changed little. (*Anup Shah*)

Another comparison which highlights the stark differences between wealthy and poor countries and the priorities of consumerism is as follows:

Current spending on these commodities is shown in Col 2.	\$US b spent	To provide the following, would require extra spending of the amount shown in Col. 4....	\$US b Extra required
Cosmetics in USA	8	Basic education for all	6
Cigarettes in Europe	50	Water and Sanitation for all	9
Narcotics worldwide	400	Reproductive health for all women	12
Military spending worldwide	780	Basic Health and nutrition	13

As consumers, we often don’t think about where the raw materials used to produce the things we buy come from, or whether that resources use disadvantages another community or the environment.

The next activity is based on one in “Making a Difference” by David Brinn, Claire Fowler and Cathering Hester – Oxfam 2001.



Activity 4: Impacts of Consumerism

Transporting raw materials uses up fuel, which creates pollution and contributes to climate change (global warming). Mining and quarrying raw materials can adversely affect the environment in the country of origin. Every time we buy something we are affecting people many miles away.

It might be a positive influence (providing jobs and income) or a negative one (impacting negatively on the environment, society or economy).

Consider the Light Globe:

“The contacts at the base of the globe are made from **tin** – the ore is mined in **Malaysia**.

The contacts are embedded in a **plastic** which is made from oil which is probably obtained from a Middle East oil well – say from **Saudi Arabia**.

The cap at the bottom of the bulb is made from **aluminium** – the ore is mined in **Jamaica**.

The stiff wires which hold the filament are metal alloy which contain **nickel** – the ore is mined in **Canada** – and **lead** – the ore is mined in Australia. The filament is made from **tungsten** – the ore is mined in South Africa.

The glass is made from quartz sand, limestone and salt – these are mined or quarried in

Curriculum Links:

S&E (Place and Space, Resources)

Science (Science in Society)

English (Listening & Speaking)

Outcomes: Students will:

- be able to locate places on a map and understand the basic elements of a map.
- appreciate the sustainability factors associated with production and consumption (transport and packaging)
- understand that the global distribution of resources is uneven
- recognise that resource use can have a negative impact on the environment
- understand that people need sources of materials and energy
- demonstrate that listening to others can reveal different points of view

Preparation:

- Each group requires a clear electric light globe and an atlas.
- Each student requires a worksheet
- Screen or group copies of component materials and origins

Lesson procedure:

1. With the class, study the light globe and make a list on the board of the components used in its manufacture.
2. Put up an overhead or smart board copy of component information, or have one member of the group read from the supplied sheet.

3. .Students should work through each item on the list and locate each country in the atlas as they are mentioned. Do not continue reading until the country has been located.
4. Students complete the worksheet by labelling each of the countries mentioned above neatly on the map. (remember to print, use guidelines and label on straight horizontal lines. Rule a neat line from each part of the light globe to its relevant country of origin.
5. In your group, discuss the implications of this. What do you think the economic and environmental impacts are on:
 - a) the countries which supply the components
 - b) globally (consider the amount of transport and fuel consumption involved).

Notes for Teachers:

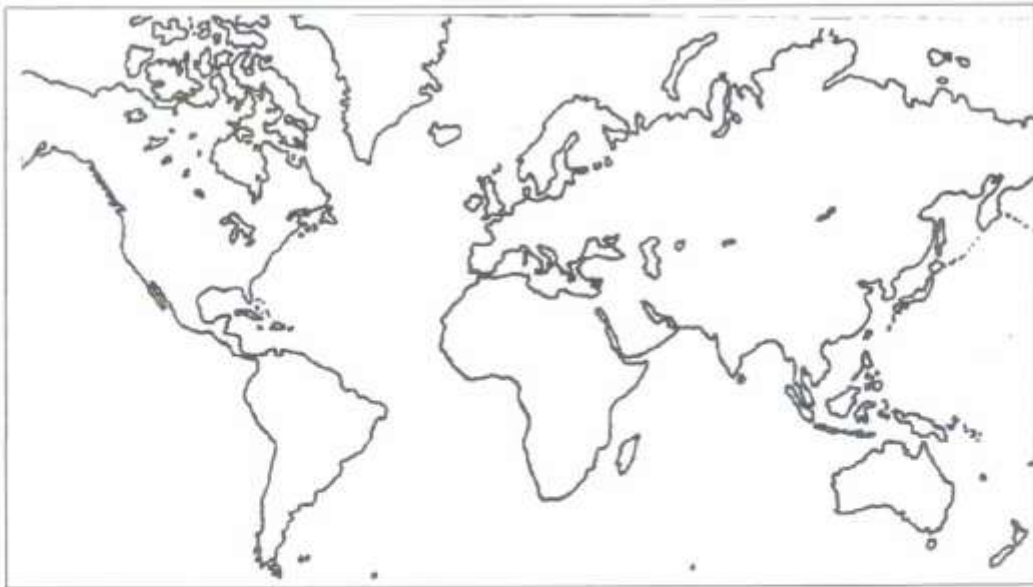
- Ensure the students understand that it is not being suggested that they do not buy light bulbs – however students should be encouraged to consider if they might use less light bulbs if they were more careful about turning off all lights not being used – at home (in the bedroom and bathroom for example) and at school (at break times, in store rooms for example).
- The light globe is a very good example of a simple everyday product which we take for granted but which involves numerous products from many different countries, and consequently numerous transport sectors and constant packaging and repackaging to complete production.
- Students should also be encouraged to consider whether each component returns a fair outcome to the people/nation producing it. This is a complex issue and can be extended according to the interest and ability of the students. If students in the class come from different countries, anecdotal information and extension is encouraged.
- When the electric bulb was first invented in the United States, it was such a luxury that only government bodies could afford to use it.
- Visit <http://www.ibuydifferent.org/whatsthedeal/lightbulbTB.asp> for the life cycle story of a light bulb and other products.
- This could also be an opportune time to consider the concept of fair trade – where workers in poorer countries are guaranteed a fair wage for their effort or product Refer to the following websites: <http://www.oxfam.org.au/shop/>
<http://www.fairtrade.com.au/>
<http://www.fairtrade.com.au/FLO/System?PHPSESSID=aed2589f05>



Extension:

- Today, we are encouraged to use energy saving compact fluorescent globes which are good for the planet by using less energy. Students should use the internet to find out what the components of these globes are, what they are made of and from where they are supplied.
- Students should then share their findings with the class or in groups.

Worksheet for activity 4 to be something like this



Advertising

A big part of the current over - consumption is the expectation that we will update, replace or upgrade items purchased on a regular basis, due to technological improvement, fashion or whim. Advertising plays a big part in driving this mindset.

In many countries like Australia, people are surrounded by shops selling exciting things and by advertisements encouraging them to BUY BUY BUY! These influences and other social pressures such as fashion, the ease of accessing cash(ATMs) and credit cards, the existence of large, specialist shopping centres and internet shopping all makes spending money easier.-

A child watching commercial TV sees up to 15 minutes an hour of advertising. A child watching 2 hours and 34 minutes a day (the current Australian average) will see 75 ads a day, 525 ads a week or 273 000 ads a year according to Young Media Australia.

Young children (under 6) have difficulty distinguishing between programs and advertisements and this is compounded by the current trend for cartoon series to “bring to life” toy versions of the series’ characters. Toys are particularly advertised in the lead up to Christmas. In the non-toy season, the majority of ads will be for food products of low nutritional value.

Children under eight, have difficulty evaluating product claims and do not easily discern the selling intent of the advertisements. Children between eight and 10 can be made anxious by ads, as they are becoming aware that ads don’t always tell the whole truth, but are unsure how to tell the difference.

See website reference for regulations re children’s programs and advertising in Australia

Ad Techniques

Nostalgia: Ordinary folk, back to nature, just like grandma used to make/do, back in the good old days

Bandwagon: Everyone who is anyone is buying this product. Don’t be the only one without it. Don’t be left out.

Transfer/Fantasy Superheroes, white knights, green giants, super athletes, beautiful people, rich people are featured. Advertisers hope that the consumer (you) will tend to transfer these qualities to the products and themselves(yourself), and so purchase them.

Humour: People may tend to remember an ad if it makes them laugh and may even purchase the product because of the positive association with it.

Sense Appeal: Sounds or pictures which appeal to the senses are featured.

Statistics: People tend to be impressed with “facts” and statistics even if they have little or no meaning.

Testimonial: Important or well known people testify that they use the product and so should you.

Activity 5 and 6 : Advertising

Curriculum Links:

S&E (Natural and Social systems)
Science

English

Outcomes: Students will

- recognise that businesses and consumers need each other.

Activity 5



Preparation:

Lesson Procedure:

1. Ask students to think of one or two of their favourite advertisements (TV, radio or magazines).
2. In groups, have students identify their favourite ad and discuss what it is that makes the ad appealing. What is it that makes you want to buy the product?
3. Groups make a list of all the reasons they can suggest for the appeal of their favourite ads.
4. They then write another list of the items advertised. Alongside each, the students should decide if it is a need or a want being advertised.
5. The groups then share their lists with the class, and add to list of persuasive techniques as others mention something they did not have.
6. In the box below are seven techniques used by advertisers to persuade people to buy things they think they need. Students should read the descriptions of the appeals used by each technique carefully and then match these ad descriptions to the technique being used.

• “Lose weight the way 3 million Australians have. It’s the method 3 out of 4 doctors recommend.” _____

• A cool sparkling soft drink sits next to a hot sizzling cheeseburger. _____

• A famous actor says that he buys a product and that he recommends it to everyone _____

• Lemonade is served on the back porch of a house situated close by a big old gum tree with a rope swing. _____

• Buy your next car at Crazy Joe’s where everyone gets the best deal around. _____

• A person falls down a flight of stairs and says, “It’s the kind of deal you could fall for” _____

• A woman driving in her new convertible runs her hands through her beautiful blonde hair to show how great Shimmer Shampoo works. _____

<p>A. Humour B. Sense Appeal C. Transfer / Fantasy D. Testimonial E. Statistics F. Nostalgia G. Bandwagon</p>
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Activity 6:



Task 1.

It is Christmas.

Design an ad intended for a child less than 10 years old. You can use any / all the techniques you found that make ads appealing, but you are going to “sell” the idea of giving a gift which does not require manufacturing, (unless you make something yourself from recycled materials, using products already in the home, but not requiring energy use) is lasting (if only in the memory of the recipient), is desirable from the recipients point of view and does not cost money

You may design and produce your ad for any medium you choose –TV, radio or print. Use photo shop, construct a story board, write a script or design the graphic layout of a print ad or anything else appropriate.



Task 2:

Give the students these questions or work through them with the class:

Think about the last item you personally bought where your decision was influenced by advertising.

1. Which of the advertising techniques above were used to advertise the product
2. Were there cheaper alternatives to the brand / style you bought?
3. Was advertising the major influence on your decision? If not, what was?
4. What is the main barrier to you deciding to purchase a cheaper (or more lasting or more environmentally friendly) alternative?
5. How do you think you could be convinced to purchase a cheaper (non-brand) option.
6. Design an ad to convince your peers to purchase No Name brand jeans from a discount store such as Target. Use any of the techniques discussed above as well as layout, colour, graphics etc.
7. You may design and produce your ad for any medium you choose –TV, radio or print. –You may use photo shop, construct a story board, write a script or design the graphic layout of a print ad or anything else appropriate



Activity 7: Re – Evaluation and re-design

Curriculum Links:

S&E (Active Citizenship)
Science
English

Outcomes: students will

- be involved in a critical reflection cycle
- act on the basis of informed decisions to minimise the environmental impact of their choices.

Preparation:

Copy of activity on overhead, smart board or duplicated for students.

Students require drawing paper, pencils, rulers and erasers

Activity:

Note to Teacher:

Comparing the drawing done at this point with the one done at activity one and checking the written answers to questions 1 – 4 will enable the teacher to make an assessment as to the understanding of consumerism gained by the student and their attitude towards changing their attitudes and/or behaviour.

1. Read the verse below to the students (if they have not seen the film, a brief explanation only is all that is required here to aid meaning).

Eliza Doolittle in the musical, “My Fair Lady”, sings these lines

“All I want is a room somewhere, Far away from the cold night air. With one enormous chair, Aow, wouldn't it be lovely? Lots of choc'lates for me to eat, Lots of coal makin' lots of 'eat. Warm face, warm 'ands, warm feet, Aow, wouldn't it be lovely?”	(Oh wouldn't it be lovely) (Lots of chocolates for me to eat) (Lots of coal making lots of heat) (warm face, warm hands, warm feet) (Oh wouldn't it be lovely)
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2. We all know that our expectations are somewhat more than that of a working class, cockney girl of the nineteenth century. However, in the light of the discussions you have had in this unit, return to the plan you drew for your room in activity one.

1. What things would you now change?
2. What items would you keep, but modify?
3. What items remain unchanged?
4. Do you need as much of everything as you thought in activity one?
5. Draw your amended plan. Outside the frame, note the changes made and link the caption and drawing by ruling a line. Inside the frame, label the items as for activity.