



## Consumer society

**Aim:** to prepare students to talk about shopping, buying habits and being a consumer

**Level:** Upper intermediate / B2

**Language:** talking about advantages and disadvantages; comparing and contrasting different pictures; negotiating

**Time:** 30 - 45 minutes + 15 - 20 minutes for exam task

**Materials:** one copy of the worksheets and exam task per student

### Activity 1

1. Put the students in pairs or small groups.
2. Ask the students to look at the pictures and discuss the questions (a – c).
3. Monitor and help where necessary. Students may need extra help with question c, as they might not have lots of ideas.
4. Finally, have a short class discussion.

**Suggested answer(s):** *In general, the pictures show that today people often buy far more than they need and throw too much away. We are 'consumers' who always want the newest things.*

### Activity 2

**Note:** We often associate particular people or things with aspects of culture, e.g. Shakespeare with literature, the Beatles with music, the Eiffel Tower with architecture, etc.

1. Put the students into small groups.
2. Ask the students to read the quote and discuss what the person is saying and whether they think it's good advice.
3. Monitor and help where necessary.
4. Finally, have a class discussion.

**Note:** Vivienne Westwood is a famous fashion designer and business woman who is best known for some of her outrageous designs and was closely linked to punk music in the 1970s.

### Activity 3

**Note:** Personalizing material makes it more memorable and gives the students more to talk about. Tasks like this can be very useful as lead-in activities before doing exam style practice tasks.

1. Put the students into small groups.
2. Ask the students discuss the questions in their group.
3. Monitor and help where necessary.
4. Ask one or two students to briefly report back to the whole class about their group discussion.

### Activity 4

1. Divide the class into four small groups: A, B, C and D. If the class is small, have fewer groups.
2. Photocopy the handout and distribute a task card to each group. Students should read the background information on their card.
3. Check student comprehension of the context.
4. Set a time limit of about 30 minutes. Groups discuss the points on their cards, and write their radio commercial.
5. Encourage students to use the language for negotiating and reaching a compromise.

### Useful language

#### Reaching a compromise

We have to come to a decision ...  
 OK, what are we going to go for?  
 On balance, I think the most effective ...  
 All things considered, ...  
 I'm going to go with what I originally thought ...  
 Are we in agreement ...?  
 All in all, I would say that ...  
 In a nutshell, I think the most effective method is ... because ...

6. Monitor and help if necessary. If students have time, ask them to record their advert using a mobile device.
7. Ask a student from each group to play (or read) their advert to the whole group.
8. Ask students to comment on each other's



## Consumer society

commercials and say if they would buy the product, giving reasons why / why not.

### Practice exam question

**Note:** There are two parts to this section: an individual turn and then a pair work discussion activity.

Depending on the number of students you have in the class you could either take the role of examiner yourself or, especially in large classes, get the students to work in groups with one of them taking the role of the examiner.

For example, put the students in groups of three. For the individual activity:

- one student takes the role of 'candidate' and speaks
- one takes the role of 'interlocutor' asking questions and prompting the 'candidate'
- and one student takes the role of 'examiner' using the mark scheme

For the pairwork, two of the students speak to each other while the third student takes the role of examiner.

### Suggested marking scheme

Total mark out of 20 with each criteria worth up to 5 marks.

#### Content – answering the question

- 5 answers the question and all the information included
- 4 answers the question but one or two things missing
- 3 answers the question but a number of things missing
- 2 tried to answer the question, but quite a lot missing
- 1 failed to answer the question

#### Range of vocabulary and grammar

- 5 used a wide range of vocabulary and grammar appropriate to the task
- 4 used a wide range of vocabulary and grammar but not always appropriate to the task
- 3 used a fairly wide range of vocabulary and grammar appropriate to the task
- 2 used a limited range of vocabulary and grammar
- 1 used a very limited range of vocabulary and grammar

#### Accuracy of language (i.e. pronunciation, functional language, etc.)

- 5 minimal errors, well-developed control of language
- 4 errors occur when attempting more complex language
- 3 a number of errors but they do not impede communication
- 2 a lot of errors, distract the reader, difficult understanding
- 1 frequent errors, difficult understanding

#### Fluency

- 5 speaks well with only natural pauses (i.e. to collect thoughts)
- 4 sometimes hesitates when trying to think of a word or what they want to say next
- 3 often pauses to think about what they want to say, but can use fairly complex language at times
- 2 struggles to put together full sentences and pauses frequently
- 1 only uses a few words and can't fully talk about the task



## Consumer society

## Activity 1

1. Look at the pictures and answer the questions.
  - a) What does each picture show?
  - b) What do you think of the people in each picture?
  - c) 'Waste not, want not' – what does this phrase mean to you?



## Activity 2

Look at the quote. What do you think the person is trying to say to people?

**WHAT I'M ALWAYS TRYING TO SAY TO THE CONSUMER IS: BUY LESS, CHOOSE WELL, MAKE IT LAST.**

– Vivienne Westwood (fashion designer)

## Activity 3

Work in groups and discuss the questions.

- a) What was the last thing you bought?
- b) Did you need it?
- c) Why did you buy it?
- d) Did you shop around to get the best deal?
- e) Do you ever waste your money? If yes, what on and why?



## Consumer society

### Activity 4

#### Group A

You are part of a team designing an advertising campaign for a new perfume. In your group, come up with ideas and make decisions about the following things:



- a name for the product
- your target market
- a slogan for the advertising campaign
- what the poster should feature

You will also have to write a short radio commercial for the product. Decide on the information it should include, whether you want a jingle etc.

#### Useful language

##### Negotiating

OK. I accept that, but ...  
 Realistically, don't you think ...  
 If we do that, then we could also ...  
 How about we meet halfway?  
 I think there's a way of using both ideas ...

#### Group B

You are part of a team designing an advertising campaign for a new dog food. In your group, come up with ideas and make decisions about the following things:



- a name for the product
- your target market
- a slogan for the advertising campaign
- what the poster should feature

You will also have to write a short radio commercial for the product. Decide on the information it should include, whether you want a jingle etc.

#### Useful language

##### Negotiating

OK. I accept that, but ...  
 Realistically, don't you think ...  
 If we do that, then we could also ...  
 How about we meet halfway?  
 I think there's a way of using both ideas ...

#### Group C

You are part of a team designing an advertising campaign for a new washing powder. In your group, come up with ideas and make decisions about the following things:



- a name for the product
- your target market
- a slogan for the advertising campaign
- what the poster should feature

You will also have to write a short radio commercial for the product. Decide on the information it should include, whether you want a jingle etc.

#### Useful language

##### Negotiating

OK. I accept that, but ...  
 Realistically, don't you think ...  
 If we do that, then we could also ...  
 How about we meet halfway?  
 I think there's a way of using both ideas ...

#### Group D

You are part of a team designing an advertising campaign for a new box of chocolates. In your group, come up with ideas and make decisions about the following things:



- a name for the product
- your target market
- a slogan for the advertising campaign
- what the poster should feature

You will also have to write a short radio commercial for the product. Decide on the information it should include, whether you want a jingle etc.

#### Useful language

##### Negotiating

OK. I accept that, but ...  
 Realistically, don't you think ...  
 If we do that, then we could also ...  
 How about we meet halfway?  
 I think there's a way of using both ideas ...





## Consumer society

### 1 Individual activity



Practice Exam Question

- Compare and contrast the pictures.
- Describe the clothes you buy and the shops you would usually buy your clothes in.
- Nowadays, people are buying more things online. What are / would be the advantages and disadvantages of buying your clothes online?

### 2 Paired activity

Your local sports club has decided it needs to get sponsorship in order to help improve the facilities and expand what it can offer, i.e. buying new equipment for different sports. The club wants ideas from you.

#### Discuss the following:

- the type of companies that might sponsor a sports club for teenagers
- how you could approach them to ask for sponsorship
- how much money you would ask for
- what the sponsors would get in return, i.e. their name on the kits, a poster in the clubhouse, etc
- what restrictions there might be in terms of sponsorship

**You should agree on three key ideas.**