

**Consumer Power**

**Task 1 Look at your labels**

Have a 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

- Have the items travelled a long way to get to your country?
- Now write a few sentences and then tell the rest of the group.  
For example: *“My T-shirt was made in Turkey and my trainers were made in China”.*

**Task 2 Consumer criteria.**

Imagine you're going to buy some of the following items. What do you consider before you decide which one to buy?

- ✓ Price?
- ✓ How it looks?
- ✓ The quality?
- ✓ The brand? Anything else?

	A pair of trainers	A pair of jeans	A bar of chocolate	
<b>Most important factor.</b>				
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> most important factor.</b>				
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> most important factor.</b>				

- Do you and your classmates agree on the important criteria?

### Task 3 Consumer Power – Reading task

You are going to read part of a text entitled:

***Consumer power: Feel good about your shopping experience by going ethical.***

- Before reading the text, guess what it is going to be about.
- Share your ideas with the whole group and think of any vocabulary that may appear in the text.
- Now read your part carefully and check any new vocabulary. Then tell your group about your paragraph.

#### Student A

##### **Fairly traded MP3s**

Coffee, bananas and chocolate are the most popular and commonly known fair-trade goods in the UK, but other items - such as pet food, toothpaste and even MP3 players – are now being assessed by consumers for the impact their manufacture has on the environment and the ethnicity of the companies that produce them. The growing trend in ethical shopping is putting pressure on retailers to provide a wider range of ethical goods.

#### Student B

##### **How can you be sure you are buying ethical products?**

A new website – ethiscore.org – has been set up to give concerned consumers information about products and about the companies behind the brand names. It names and shames brands that do not 'embrace the ideals of the fair-trade movement' whilst rewarding those who do with a place at the top of their ethical league table. Rob Harrison, editor of Ethical Consumer magazine, which runs the website says it 'can act as an easy ethical shopping list, while making sure we keep companies with poor ethical records on their toes'.

#### Student C

##### **Other ways to do your bit**

Not only can the goods you buy be beneficial, but the way you pay for goods can contribute to ethical practices. Many charities now offer credit cards that benefit their cause as they receive funds for every card issued and a percentage of the money spent using the card. Some Internet Service Providers also give money to good causes if you sign up with them. 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 with a guilt-free conscience.

### Task 4 Consumer Quandary cards

You have a favourite brand of trainers that you love. You have asked your parents for a pair of these trainers for your birthday present. Last night you saw a documentary on the television that showed where this brand of trainers are 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?

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?

<p>Every week you go to a hamburger restaurant with your friends. One of your friends has now decided not to go because he thinks 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?</p>	<p><b>Write another quandary here:</b></p>
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**Task 5 The time bank**

- Can you imagine a world without money?
- How did people manage in the past without money?
- Do you think money has become too important in our society?
- What is more important to you, time or money?
- What do you know about time banks?

What could you offer to a time bank?	What would you like to take from a time bank?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓</li> <li>✓</li> <li>✓</li> <li>✓</li> <li>✓</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓</li> <li>✓</li> <li>✓</li> <li>✓</li> <li>✓</li> </ul>

Now speak to your classmates and see if you could exchange your time.

**Task 6 Clean Clothes Campaign**

Imagine a pair of trainers costs €100. How much of that money do you think the person who made the shoes gets?

Have a look at the information below and look at the figures. Try and guess how much of the cost of a pair of brand name trainers goes to each part of the process. Then check with your teacher.

Costs	Amount
• Material –	○ €18
• Production costs -	○ €17
• Labour cost of the worker (paying the person who makes the shoe) –	○ €13
• Profit subcontractor –	○ €12
• Transport and tax –	○ €11
• Labour cost of the retailer (paying the person who sells the shoe) –	○ €8.50
• Publicity for the retailer –	○ €8
• Rent of the retailer –	○ €5
• Profit for the brand name –	○ €3
• Research –	○ €2.50
• Publicity for the brand name –	○ €1.50
• VAT -	○ €0.50

Now discuss these questions with your group:

- Are you surprised by any of this information?
- Do you think the situation will change in the future? If so, how?