

Grade 10
20F Geography

Globalization &
Consumerism



Consumers are people who purchase things. We are all consumers. For example, each day we eat food which we have purchased. What we choose to purchase to eat affects others. For example, one reason that the Pepsi Company is so successful is that a lot of people choose to drink Pepsi.

We also purchase other things. For example, clothes. Some of the clothes we purchase may have been made by small children in foreign countries. These children are paid very little and have horrible working conditions, that is why the clothes they make cost us very little to buy. If many people continue to choose to buy these clothes, child labour will have no end. But, if we choose to buy other clothes instead, these children may be spared there suffering.

ALL OUR CONSUMER DECISIONS AFFECT OTHERS! Read through the following pages and answer the questions in order to begin looking at yourself as a consumer.

If the World Were a Village

9.3.1

If the world's population was reduced to a village of 100 inhabitants, with all the ratios remaining the same, it would look like this:

60 Asians (20 Chinese and 17 Indians)

14 Americans (6 from North America and 8 from the South America)

13 Africans, 12 Europeans, and half an Oceanian

52 women, 48 men

70 non-whites and 30 whites

70 non-Christians and 30 Christians

50.5 people live in the village; 49.5 are scattered in the country

6 persons possess 59% of the world's wealth, several of them are Americans

50 of the village inhabitants live on 2 dollars a day

25 live on 1 dollar a day

15 persons produce more than half the CO₂ emissions in the village

25 persons consume 3/4 of all the energy; the other 75 consume the remaining 1/4

17 persons have no access to medical services, decent shelter, or drinking water

50 suffer from malnutrition

70 are illiterate

80 persons live in poor-quality housing

11 persons have a car; this number is growing, and will probably reach 20 in 20 years

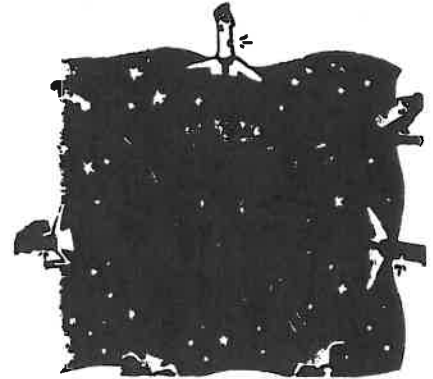
20 persons have 87% of the vehicles at their disposal and 84% of the paper in use

9 have access to the Internet

1 person has a college education

1 person dies and 2 or 3 children are born into the village each year

And the population of the village will be 133 people in 2025



Source: <http://paxhumana.info/article.php3?id_article=481>

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ASSIGNMENT – WHAT CAN I DO?

After reading the previous page “If the World Were a Village” (or watching the video of the same name), make a list of 10 things you could do to positively affect the world we live in (eg. Recycle).

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.

Making More Consumer Choices

BLM
4-7

We all make choices every time we buy a product or service. Once we decide to make a purchase, we might have to make decisions about the product price, quality, colour, or other considerations. Many consumers are also interested in knowing where the product comes from, how and under what conditions it was produced, as well as the environmental, economic and human impact of production. If we purchase a service we may need to make decisions about price, the quality, and from whom we will make the purchase.

Below are several theoretical consumer choice situations for you to think about. Do your choices really matter? What should you do? What are the possible implications of your choices?

Situation 1:

Your family plans to purchase some new furniture made of tropical hardwoods. A family friend reminds you that the purchase of items made from tropical hardwoods is causing the destruction of rain forests, resulting in erosion, increased likelihood of flooding, and reduction in the amount of oxygen released to the atmosphere during photosynthesis. You feel that one coffee table is hardly going to destroy a rainforest, and that the trees have already been cut so you might as well use the products.

What do you think? What are the economic and environmental implications if many families buy just one coffee table? Do our individual consumer choices matter?



MAKING CONSUMER CHOICES

ANSWERS TO SITUATION #1

ANSWERS TO SITUATION #2

ANSWERS TO SITUATION #3

Situation 2:

You are going to a coffee bar with some friends to enjoy a cup of specialty coffee. One of your friends objects to your choice of coffee bar saying that it does not purchase its coffee through the "fair trade" network and that its coffee is produced without giving fair wages to the workers. Another friend says that since there are not coffee plantations in Canada, why should you worry about where and under what conditions the coffee is produced?

What do you think? Is it worth the trouble of looking for another place to go? What are the economic and social implications if you purchase coffee made by workers getting low wages and living in poor conditions?



Situation 3:

You are showing off some imported clothes you just bought. Your friend responds by telling you that you should not purchase items produced in that country because of its poor human rights record. People are being jailed without being charged and those who protest often disappear. She tells you that your purchase helps support a government that disregards human rights. Your sister, however, says young people cannot do anything about this situation, so why worry about your consumer choices.

What do you think? Should you refuse to purchase products from countries with poor human rights records? What difference can you make?



MAKING CONSUMER CHOICES

ANSWERS TO SITUATION #1

ANSWERS TO SITUATION #2

ANSWERS TO SITUATION #3

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Below are several theoretical consumer choice situations for you to think about. Do your choices really matter? What should you do? What are the possible implications of your choices?

Situation #1:

You want to go the United States for a weekend shopping trip. You have heard that clothes might be more fashionable and are a better price than in Manitoba. A member of your family, however, suggests that you should shop in Manitoba to support the Canadian economy and to help the clothing industry at home to become better.

What do you think? What are the economic implications if many Canadians go the United States for major shopping trips? Why should you not be able to save some money and shop elsewhere if you want? Does your decision make any difference to anyone?

Situation #2:

You purchase your shirts and jeans at a particular store because the clothes they carry are durable and cost less than at many other stores. Later you learn, however, that these garments are cheaper at this store because they are made with 'sweatshop labour' in developing countries.

What do you think? What might be the economic implications for Canada if much of our clothing comes from these factories? What might be the social and economic implications for developing countries if you purchase or do not purchase products made there? Will your choice make any difference?

Situation #3:

A major grocery chain in your town refuses to carry locally produced seasonal fruit such as strawberries and raspberries because it says that the supply is too small and unreliable. You have to purchase imported fruits unless you take the time and effort to drive to a smaller independent store or a roadside fruit stand to purchase the Canadian-produced product.



What do you think? Is it worth your time and effort to go to another store to buy local produce? What are the possible economic and social implications if many families purchase imported fruit rather than locally grown fruit? Does your decision make a difference to anyone?

Daily Food Consumption Log

Name: _____

Time Period of Log: _____

Day/Date:	Foods Consumed	Factors Influencing Choices (Check as many as apply)										
		Family choices	Friends' influence	Health factors	Convenience	Cost	Culture or Religion	Advertising	Seasonal availability	Other	Possible Actions You Can Take	
Breakfast												
Morning snack												
Lunch												
Afternoon snack												
Dinner (supper)												
Evening snack												Possible Actions You Can Take
Potential Environmental Consequences (specify)												

The Story of Stuff worksheet

Watch the video download "The Story of Stuff" with Annie Leonard and answer the following questions to check your listening and understanding:

1. Copy the sketches of the 5 stages of the materials economy

Extraction	Production	Distribution	Consumption	Disposal

2. How much of our natural resources have been trashed in the last few decades?
3. How many planets are needed to support current rates of consumption in the US and Australia?
4. How many trees are being lost in the Amazon each minute?
5. What is being added to the production system that is created dangerous waste products?
6. What food is at the top of the food chain and threatening the health of future generations?
7. What is meant by "externalising costs of production"?
- 8 Who is paying for the real cost of cheap electronic equipment (i.e. the \$4.99 radio)? List three groups at least.
- 9a. How much material is still in the system after 6 months? _____%.
- 9b. Where have the remaining materials gone?
10. When did the modern consumer economy come into being? Why?

11. According to Annie Leonard, what are some of the social and community interests being neglected while we are busy consuming "stuff"?

12. What do these terms mean? Give an example of each.

• "planned obsolescence" _____

For example _____

• "perceived obsolescence" _____

For example _____

13a. What is happening to the levels of measured happiness?

13b. What reasons are given?

14. Draw or summarise the steps in the treadmill.

15. One solution which many countries use to deal with increasing waste is to burn it. What problem is associated with burning rubbish?

16. How does recycling help?

17. Why is recycling not enough? (Clue: How many rubbish bins are needed to produce one bin of recycled materials?)