

Consumerism WS

1. You are going to see a short video about how commercials make you buy things. What kind of things do you expect to see?
2. Discuss
3. What kind of commercials do you like / dislike?
4. Discuss
5. Play the video + take notes (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Urny4oFBbto>)
6. Pair discussion
7. Worksheet

Consumerism is a social and economic system that **emphasizes** the **acquisition** of **goods** and services in ever-increasing amounts. It is a phenomenon that has been growing rapidly in recent decades, driven by **marketing** and advertising, and is now considered a dominant aspect of our society. The history of consumerism can be traced back to the late 19th and early 20th centuries when mass production techniques were first introduced, allowing for the production of goods on a large scale. This made it possible for companies to sell goods to a **mass market**, and the concept of consumerism began to emerge.

The idea is that the more goods and **services** one consumes, the better their quality of life will be. This has led to a culture of **overconsumption**, where people are encouraged to buy more and more, often without considering the **consequences**. An example of this can be seen in the **fast fashion industry**, where clothes are produced quickly and cheaply, designed to be worn a few times and then discarded. This has led to a huge amount of **packaging waste**, with items being **shipped** all over the world, contributing to a growing **carbon footprint**.

Greenwashing is another aspect of consumerism, where companies make exaggerated or false claims about the environmental benefits of their products in order to attract **customers**. Ethical consumerism is a response to this, where consumers make an effort to purchase products that are produced in a **sustainable** and environmentally responsible manner.

Conscious consumers are becoming more aware of the impact that consumerism is having on the environment and society and are taking steps to reduce their carbon footprint. They are seeking out companies that practice sustainability and are committed to **reducing** their impact on the environment. This is leading to an increase in consumer advocacy, where people are speaking out about the need for companies to adopt more **responsible business practices**.

In conclusion, consumerism is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon that has both positive and negative impacts on society and the environment. As conscious consumers, it is important to consider the consequences of our purchasing decisions and to seek out products that are produced in a sustainable and responsible manner. By doing so, we can reduce our carbon footprint, support companies that are committed to sustainability, and help to create a more responsible and equitable world.

1. What is consumerism?

2. When did consumerism first emerge as a cultural phenomenon?

3. What are some negative effects of consumerism?

4. What are some arguments in favor of consumerism?

5. What is the future of consumerism and its impact on society?

With a partner, look at the following expressions. Have you heard them before? Do you know the meaning of any of these?

Shop till you drop ; retail therapy ; Keeping up with the Joneses ; Conspicuous consumption ; buyer's remorse

Now, on your own, read the following definitions and match the expressions with them.

This cultural reference refers to the idea of trying to match or surpass the possessions and lifestyles of one's neighbours or peers. It highlights the pressure to constantly acquire new and better things to maintain social status.

The phrase originated in the United States in the early 20th century and was popularized by a comic strip by the same name that ran from 1913 to 1940. The strip was centred on the idea of a middle-class family trying to match the wealth and lifestyle of their wealthy neighbours, the Joneses. Over time, the phrase has become a cultural reference and has been used to describe the pressures and behaviours associated with consumerism and the pursuit of material goods.

This saying refers to the idea that shopping can have a therapeutic effect and can be used as a way to improve one's mood.

This idiom means to go shopping and buy many things until you are too tired to continue. It emphasizes the idea of excessive consumption and the pursuit of material goods.

This term refers to the feeling of regret that comes after making a purchase, especially when the item was not needed or was more expensive than intended.

This term refers to the act of spending money on and displaying luxury goods and services to extend one's prestige and indicate social status.

