ETHICAL SHOPPING

Not all about price?

Many people are changing their shopping habits as they adjust to life in lockdown during the coronavirus pandemic. This lesson looks at the potential consequences of these changes in consumer behaviour for society as a whole, and the role that technology can play in helping us to shop in a healthier, fairer, more environmentally-friendly and sustainable way.

Learners will be able to:

▶ Reflect on their family's shopping habits and how these have altered as a result of the pandemic;

▶ Analyse the reasons why shopping habits have changed;

▶ Identify healthier, fairer, more environmentally-friendly and sustainable ways of shopping;

▶ Develop a sense of justice and fairness, and critical knowledge and understanding of the economy, the environment and sustainability

STIMULUS

Group survey:

Ask learners how the way their families shop for food has changed since the outbreak of the pandemic. For example, are they shopping:

▶ more/less frequently?
▶ in small local shops/ big supermarkets?
▶ in person/on-line?

Are they buying:

▶ more/less food?
▶ more fresh/processed or fast food?

Are they growing more of their own food? Are they cooking more of their own food?
Is price more/less important? Have there been other changes?

Create your own survey. There are many free on-line survey tools available on the internet, e.g. Google Forms.

Convert the data from the survey into an on-line graph, or ask the learners to do this for you.

DISCUSSION

After the survey:

▶ What does the survey tell you about the changes that have taken place in people's shopping since the outbreak of the virus?
▶ What do you think are the reasons for these changes?
▶ Do you think the changes will:
  – make people healthier?
  – be better for the environment?
  – be fairer for people who produce the food?
▶ What normally influences people's choices when shopping for food?
▶ How can people be persuaded to take these other factors into account when shopping?
▶ Who in society is responsible for ensuring that the food we buy is healthy, good for the environment and fair for food producers?

Encourage learners to generate a range of answers.

Encourage learners to explore the pros and cons of each of these 3 issues in depth. You may wish to divide them into 3 groups for this.

You could ask learners to make a list and identify the responsibilities of each.

CONCLUSION

Summarise the main points arising out of the discussion.

Re-cap how when shopping for food we not only make choices based on price and taste, we also make choices about health, the environment and fairness and justice in society.

Briefly outline the main stages of the food supply chain in your country. Explain the effect that our choices as consumers have on these.

Try to find a suitable infographic, e.g.https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/explore-how-farmers-produce-food-sustainably/0/steps/60769

ASSIGNMENT

Learners imagine they are helping to design an app that consumers can use to guide their shopping choices. The app will scan any product with a bar-code and give it a rating. Learners have to choose which aspect of shopping they want their app to address: health, the environment or fairness. They draw up a list of criteria the app should use and decide how it should rate these.

There are many such apps already available. Older learners might like to review some of these, or even design one themselves. See: https://bit.ly/3axohWx

FOLLOW-UP

Learners present their ideas for the app and explain the thinking behind them.

They consider the practical applications of such an app and what would persuade somebody to use one.

They reflect on changes in other forms of shopping since the pandemic and consider the ethical implications of these, e.g., clothes and fashion.

Alternatively, they could discuss the pros and cons of shopping on-line in terms of health, environment and fairness.

Consumer awareness

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