

Oral Examination

SG/WG Jg. 2

Kommunikationsprüfung 2013

Exercise CONSUMERISM

Situation: Your class is going to take part in an English Debating Competition on **consumerism**. Before the debate actually starts, you are expected to come up with a four-minute introductory statement.

Task: Use the *Wikipedia* definition below as a starting point to explain to the audience *what ethical consumerism actually is, how it is practiced and what its advantages and disadvantages may be*. The *cartoon* is supposed to give you more ideas.

Material 1 (*Wikipedia entry*):

"Ethical consumerism is the intentional purchase of products and services that the customer considers to be made ethically. This may mean with minimal harm to or exploitation of humans, animals and/or the natural environment. Ethical consumerism is practiced through 'positive buying' in that ethical products are favored, or 'moral boycott' that is negative purchasing and company-based purchasing."

Material 2 (*Cartoon*):



How do you tackle this assignment?

1 Have a close look at your task(s):

a) "... what ethical consumerism actually is..."

b) "... how it is practiced..."

c) "...what its advantages and disadvantages may be..."

So, you've got 15 minutes left for preparation - why not quickly sketch a grid to **collect your results/ideas** in tabular form?!



Task	Definition / Explanation from the <i>Wikipedia</i> entry	Examples (anything that comes to your mind)
a) What is ethical consumerism ?	consuming goods that do <u>minimal harm to humans</u>	respecting safety standards (workers should not be exposed to chemicals during working process) etc. ...
	consuming goods that cause <u>minimal exploitation of humans</u>	(concerns mainly/primarily targets third world working conditions) offering fair working conditions (workers should get a fair salary, have paid holidays, medical care etc.) ...
	consuming goods that do <u>minimal harm to animals</u>	not wearing furs from seals or animals that are trapped with leghold traps ...

	consuming goods that cause <u>minimal exploitation of animals</u>	not eating animals that are endangered with extinction ...
	consuming goods that do <u>minimal harm to the environment</u>	eating less hamburgers that are produced from cattle that produces greenhouse gases (South America) ¹ ...
	consuming goods that cause <u>minimal exploitation of the environment</u>	palm oil-based consumer products put rainforests at risk (Indonesia) ² ...
b) How is ethical consumerism practiced?	' <u>positive buying</u> '	only buying goods that have a low carbon foot print, e.g. fruit from "schwäbische Streuobstwiesen" (i.e. <i>Swabian meadow orchards</i>) buying locally, e.g. Porsche instead of Toyota ...
	' <u>moral boycott</u> '	(food and textiles) not buying products without a fair trade label  ...

Ethical consumerism	
c) What are the advantages?	c) What are the disadvantages?
I feel good...	goods are expensive...
I support local economy	annoyance because of proliferation of labels, rankings, scorecards, guidelines

¹ more information: <http://bit.ly/WleDto>

² more information: <http://bit.ly/10FiE2l>

...	renounce / give up buying exotic food/products (chinese bird's nests, kobe beef, tropical woods)
...	...

② Have a close look at the cartoon:

What is striking? Which ideas does the cartoon give you?

- pun³ 'CFC free - guilt free': juxtaposition / combination of a concrete substance (chlorfluorcarbonate) and an abstract
- **guy is smiling**: obviously feeling good, has a good ecological/environmental conscience, not guilty! Or is he guilty?
- 'CFC free fridge' (one object in the room): only one method to show responsibility, but there are more things we can do... (saving electricity, buying local, buying seasonal products, not travelling by plane in far away countries, consuming fair products...)

③ Oral presentation:

So, this is how you could start your monologue.

Try to complete it! Use the **blue notes** collected above (and of course what else comes to your mind or what you can use from the Background information in your books.)



³ **pun** = *play on words* = Wortspiel (witzig, von hohem Wiedererkennungswert, soll die Phantasie anregen)

Proposal for your monologue (4 minutes):

Good morning!

Today I want to tell something about "ethical consumerism".

Well, when we talk about consumerism, we basically talk about buying things that we essentially need and that we want. We need food and clothing and various things for our convenience and – to be honest – most of us want it now, to reasonable prices and in large amounts.

The last generations have increasingly become accustomed to over-consumption and we, the consumers often simply don't look at the effects our shopping behaviour has for the environment for example when we ship goods all around the globe. We don't want to spend much money and forget the people who produce those goods somewhere in third world countries in partly inhumane conditions.

Er – meanwhile people have become very critical of this kind of consumerism and have changed their consumption patterns. They try to follow ethical standards of consumerism. We call this "ethical consumerism".

Now, what is "ethical consumerism"? Wikipedia explains that customers who follow the principle of "ethical consumerism" willingly decide on what they buy...

[...]

The cartoon tells us that there is more than one aspect / one possibility to act responsibly /ethically correct...

[...]

To sum it all up I would say that...