Name:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Be an Educated Consumer Activity**

**Station #1**

**Product Testing Organizations**

One way to get information on a product is through product testing organizations. These groups run safety tests on products. *Consumer Reports* is a monthly magazine published by the **Consumers Union**. This organization performs independent tests on a number of consumer products and publishes the results of their tests in this magazine.

**Activity**

*Read the “*Consumer Reports: How We Test*”. Then answer the question below.*

1. Summarize the various ways Consumer Reports does their product testing.

*Pretend you are shopping for a new 55-inch LCD or plasma TV. Using the* Consumer Reports *“*LCD, LED, OLED & plasma TVs Ratings & Reliability*” and “Flat panel TVs Reliability” guides, answer the questions below.*

1. List the features being compared among the TVs in the **Ratings and Test Results** section.
2. Of the TVs tested, which company and model provided the best ratings and test results? Justify your answer. What is the approximate retail price?
3. Review the **Flat Panel TVs Reliability** page. What brands would you consider buying? Which brands would you NOT consider buying? Why?
4. If you were to buy one of these LCD or plasma TVs today, which brand and model would you buy? Why?

**Station #2**

**Media Sources**

Information on products can be found in a number of media sources: through broadcast organizations (TV and radio), on the Internet, and in print (magazines and newspapers). Some examples of printed sources are *Consumer’s Digest* and *Good Housekeeping* magazines. Other magazines give information on specific products, such as a magazine that discusses boats or another on cars. Radio and television stations will often carry programs to inform you about product safety, care, and use of products. Online information allows customers to obtain specific answers to their questions.

**Activity**

*Use the copies of the magazine covers provided to answer the following questions.*

1. Look at each magazine cover. Give two examples of products/services that each magazine might publish helpful information on.
   1. *Good Housekeeping* -
   2. *Parents* -
   3. *Money* -

*The Internet is also a great media source for product information. Pretend you are in the market for a new Trek CrossRip bicycle and you Googled it. Use the screenshot of the Google search results to answer the questions below.*

1. What is the order in which you would visit each of the websites given in your search results? Explain why you choose that order and/or why you would visit each site first, second, etc.
2. Are there any websites from this list that you would not look at? Why not?

**Station #3**

**Government Agencies**

A number of government agencies provide information for consumers on products and product safety. For example, the **Food and Drug Administration (FDA)** inspects human and animal food, medicine, and cosmetics to name a few. It maintains a thorough website with tons of information and help for consumers. Another example is the **United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)** also publishes information in print and online. This organization gives information on food buying, meal planning, and nutrition. It is also responsible for inspecting and grading the meat that you purchase at the grocery store.

**Activity**

*Read “*The Food and Drug Administration: An Overview*”. Answer the questions below.*

1. How does the FDA inspect products?
2. If a company violates any laws, what does the FDA do?
3. How many products are found each year to be unfit for consumers?
4. Does the FDA do the drug research? If not, who does?
5. Make a list of the non-food types of things that the FDA inspects for safety.

*Read “*USDA Grades for Meat and Poultry*”. Answer the questions below.*

1. How is beef graded? Explain the difference.
2. Which is the best grade of beef? Which grade would you prefer and why?
3. Which grade do you think costs the most? Why?

**Station #4**

**Advertising**

Advertisements can be a great way to find information on products. Of course, since the advertisement is the company’s way to encourage you to buy a product, you should always be careful when interpreting the information given.

Good advertisements should answer the following information:

1. What is product?
2. How is the product made?
3. What does the product do?

**Activity**

*Look at the magazine and newspaper advertisements provided. Select four ads and answer the questions below.*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Ad #1\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_   1. What is product? 2. How is the product made? 3. What does the product do? | Ad #2\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_   1. What is product? 2. How is the product made? 3. What does the product do? |
| Ad #3\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_     1. What is product? 2. How is the product made? 3. What does the product do? | Ad #4\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_   1. What is product? 2. How is the product made? 3. What does the product do? |

**Station #5**

**Comparison Shopping**

The unit price is the price of a product per unit of measure, and there is only one formula with which the consumer needs to be concerned. This unit price formula is the cost divided by the unit of measure. **Cost ÷ Unit of Measure = Unit Price**

*Ex #1*) Unit price of a six-ounce can of frozen orange juice that costs $0.64.

$0.64 ÷ 6 = $0.11/ounce

*Ex #2*) Remember that to compare prices, you must work with the same units. So if another orange juice option is the fresh two-quart jug for $3.29, this unit price must be calculated in terms of ounces, so the prices are comparable. (Hint: 2 quarts is 64 ounces)

$3.29 ÷ 64 = $0.05/ounce

**Activity**

*Your turn! Use the product photos and descriptions to calculate the unit prices for each item below. Then circle which item you would purchase – based on the lower unit price. \*Always round to the nearest penny!*

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Item** | | **Calculations** | **Unit Price** | **Which do you choose?** (circle the #) |
| Bush’s Baked Beans | 1. 28 oz can |  |  | 1 2 |
| 1. 16 oz can |  |  |
| Fruit Snacks | 1. Motts |  |  | 1 2 |
| 1. Market Pantry |  |  |
| Cereal | 1. Cocoa Pebbles |  |  | 1 2 |
| 1. CocoaRageous |  |  |
| 7Up Soda | 1. Cans |  |  | 1 2 |
| 1. 2 Liter |  |  |

*Now answer the questions below based on the unit prices above and your personal preferences.*

1. Is a smaller container always more expensive?
2. Would you buy private label brands? Why or why not?

*Hint: Have you ever looked at a shelf tag in a grocery store? Did you know that many stores already calculate the unit price for you???*

**Station #6**

**Shopping Locations**

When deciding where to buy, you have many choices. The types of stores and other buying locations expand every day because of competition and technology. Customers can also buy products through mail order catalogs and vending machines.

**Activity**

*Refer to the “*Types of Retailers” *table and* “Retailers in Carpentersville, IL” *pages* *to answer the questions below.*

1. Categorize the businesses from the two lists of “Retailers in Carpentersville, IL” into the appropriate types of retailers in the table below. Refer to the retailer descriptions on “Types of Retailers” as needed.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Traditional Retailers** | |
| **Type of Retailer** | **Examples** |
| **Department Stores** |  |
| **Discount Stores** |  |
| **Specialty Stores** |  |
| **Supermarkets** |  |
| **Convenience Stores** |  |
| **Contemporary Retailers** | |
| **Type of Retailer** | **Examples** |
| **Specialty Superstores** |  |
| **Superstores** |  |
| **Warehouse Clubs** |  |
| **Factory Outlets** |  |

1. Some of the types of retailers above will be empty. List any unused categories below and then provide an example of a store that fits each one below.