Consumer Choices helps 4-H’ers:

- Learn to make wise decisions based on current information
- Learn critical thinking skills
- Learn to verbalize and defend choices
- Develop observation skills
- Learn to express ideas clearly and concisely
- Meet new people and learn from them
- Enjoy friendly competition
- Generalize the decision-making process into everyday problem solving

Consumer Choices is an educational opportunity for 4-H members to make decisions as an individual and as a team member. It can help youth learn to make decisions based on information they have learned and studied during this process. It also can help youth learn to defend their decisions. Consumer Choices helps youth practice making decisions by matching their knowledge, skills and abilities against that of others. Success depends upon how well they process and evaluate what they have observed.

Study Guides

Each year, a set of study guides is written on three different topic areas. The study guides provide youth with information needed to make informed choices during practice sessions and again in the contests.

As technology advances, additional information and website addresses may be provided to learn more about the Consumer Choices categories.

Classes

Classes are put together to give youth the opportunity to test the knowledge they gained from the study guides and additional resources. A class will contain a situation statement and four class items. A contest will include six classes, two from each of the three topic areas. The youth must give an oral set of reasons for three of the classes.

Standards

Standards are the main things the youth look for in each class. Standards are written into the situation statement and are given in order of importance. Three or four standards may be listed in the situation statement for the 8- to 10-year-old participants, while as many as six may be listed in the senior classes.

Situation Statement

Each class begins with a story called a situation statement. The situation statement contains the standards so judges know what to look for in the class and they are better able to make a choice. The most important standard always is listed first. The least important standard is listed last. For example:

Jenny has $70 to spend on shoes when she joins the volleyball team this fall. Her coach has told her to have a pair of volleyball shoes with gel midsoles for shock-absorption.

In this situation, the first and most important standard is that Jenny has $70 to spend. The second standard is that she wants a pair of volleyball shoes. The third standard is that the shoes should have gel midsoles. The study guide would provide the information that volleyball shoes and running shoes differ and that gel midsoles give more shock-absorption. The standards for this situation are:

1. Costs $70 or less
2. Volleyball shoes
3. Gel midsoles

Placing

Placing is the order in which a 4-H judge ranks the choices of items in the class. To help make a decision, draw a grid on scratch paper. Standards from the situation statement are listed on the left and the class items that are numbered go across the top.

Each class will contain four similar articles, such as four pairs of shoes or four snack items, with characteristics that vary. The class will be placed according to the standards in the situation. Purchasing shoes that cost $70 or less is more important than having a pair of volleyball shoes.
If an item meets a standard, place an X in the appropriate box.

Once finished comparing all items, look at the grid and compare the items. Choose the top-placing item first. Many choose the last item next and then the middle pair are put in order or placed.

Look at the grid. The items with the X on the first standard (top line of the grid) are considered the best choices for this situation. If all items have an X in the top line, go to the next line to compare and so on. What is important is not necessarily the number of X's on the grid but where they are placed. Remember, in the situation statement, the most important standards are listed first.

Consumer Choices judging events allow 12 minutes for placing each class. A two-minute warning will be given.

The Judging Card

At an event, each contestant receives a judging card for each class. The cards should be filled out completely and accurately.

Look at the information requested on the card. First is the contestant’s name and/or number. Without that information, the judger will not get credit for the placing score.

The next line is the class line. This refers to the class being judged, such as snacks, shoes, etc. Because each set of standards may have two classes, putting the name of the person from the situation statement on the card also is important.

Along the right side of the card are numbers in various orders; this is where the class placing should be recorded. Do this by darkening the section to the right of the numbers that are in the order of how the class was placed. If the placing is 3412, then darken the box beside that number.

The tabulators and the reasons judge will fill in the placing score and the reasons score.

Reasons

After the 4-H judger has decided on placings, he or she must prepare reasons. Reasons are given to compare the differences and tell why the class was placed in this order.

At an event, scratch paper on which to write the reasons will be provided. Use the grid to help write the reasons. When giving reasons, notes can be referred to but not relied on or read word for word.

Grants

A grant is when two items are compared and the second one meets a standard that the one before it does not.

Suggested Training Form for Organized Oral Reasons

I place this class of

_______________________________, ______, ______, ______, ______.

(Name of class)                                    (Placing of class numbers here)

I place _______ over _______ because:

Compare — reasons why the first choice is better than the second; list in order of importance of standards

Grant — any comparisons where the second excels the first; some pairs may have nothing to grant

I place _______ over _______ because:

Compare

Grant

I place _______ last because:

Statements of fact – this is the only time anything negative should be said about an item.

For these reasons, I place this class of

_______________________________, ______, ______, ______, ______.

(Name of class)                                    (Placing of class numbers here)

When using the form to practice, not writing out complete sentences may be best. Just write thoughts or words so the reasons can be recalled easily. When discussing each class, first compare, then grant only if the second article is better than the first. For example:

I place 3 over 4 because 3 has gel midsoles while 4 does not.
When presenting reasons, keep the following in mind:

- Compare in a positive way.
- Correct grammar should be used and words should be enunciated properly.
- Practice “seeing the class” in the mind’s eye when giving reasons.
- Have reasons well-organized and present them in a logical sequence.
- Follow the 4-H dress code.
- Be neatly groomed.
- Stand in a straight, comfortable position. Try not to rock back and forth or from side to side.
- Present reasons in a pleasing and confident manner.
- The reasons should be convincing, impressive, interesting and sincere but brief.
- Speak with a convincing tone, placing greatest emphasis on the most important words.
- Be accurate when giving reasons.
- Your voice should be clear and loud enough to be heard.
- Stand a comfortable distance from the judge to be heard but do not crowd the judge.

* You can refer to notes, but do not read them word for word.

The following values are assigned to the different aspects of giving reasons:

- Correctness of information............................30
- Presentation (manner of speaking) ..............15
- Appearance ........................................................5

PERFECT REASONS SCORE..........................50

A reasons guide may be:

46-50 ......... Accurate, thorough reasons; proper terminology; logical organization; excellent voice quality and poise

41-45 ......... Accurate reasons with less organization and thoroughness

36-40 ......... Accurate reasons, not well-organized or thorough, delivered in less than smooth manner

31-35 ......... Inaccurate reasons, well-organized and delivered

26-30 ......... Inaccurate reasons, less organized and less thorough

20-25 ......... Follows reasons order but with little information other than class name

Sample Class

Situation Statement:

Jenny has $70 to spend on shoes when she joins the volleyball team this fall. Her coach has told her to have a pair of volleyball shoes with gel midsoles for shock-absorption.

Standards:

- Costs $70 or less
- Volleyball shoes
- Gel midsoles

Class Items:

1. Asics GEL-1170 running shoe
2. Mizuno Wave Bolt volleyball shoe
3. Asics GEL-Rocket 6 volleyball shoe
4. Mizuno Wave Rally 2 volleyball shoe

The study guide sheet tells us that gel midsoles give a person more shock-absorbancy and that volleyball shoes and running shoes are different. That information can be important when placing this class.

A judging participant should fill in his or her name or number on the judging card, put the name of the class, (athletic shoes) and Jenny’s name (the name in the situation statement) on the class line. List standards or what Jenny is looking for in this situation on the side of the grid. Put class item numbers across the top. Study the four items and place an X by the standard that each item meets. When necessary, put in prices, fat grams or other important numbers to help decide on placings.

Now look at the judging grid. To find the top placing, compare items to find the one that meets the top standard or standards. Continue comparing until one item exceeds the other with one of the standards. Compare the two remaining items and select one that best meets the top standards. However, always remember to consider the standards in order of importance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standards</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Costs $70 or less</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volleyball Shoe</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gel Midsoles</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Look at the grid. Class items 1, 3 and 4 meet the first standard, so number 2 moves down to the bottom of the class and is placed last. Compare class items 1, 3 and 4; 3 and 4 are volleyball shoes, so they meet the second standard, while 1 does not. This moves class item 1 to third place. Compare class items 3 and 4. Class item 3 has gel midsoles while 4 does not, so this places 3 at the top of the class.

Our placing for this class is 3-4-1-2. Color in that space on the judging card.
Now the 4-H judge should prepare for reasons.

I place this class of athletic shoes 3-4-1-2.
I place 3 over 4 because 3 has gel midsoles while 4 does not.
I place 4 over 1 because 4 is a pair of volleyball shoes while 1 is a running shoe.
Grant: 1 has gel midsoles.
I place 1 over 2 because 1 costs no more than $70 at $69 while 2 costs more at $79.
1 has gel midsoles while 2 does not.
Grant: 2 is a volleyball shoe.
I place 2 last because it costs more than $70.
2 does not have gel midsoles.
For these reasons, I place this class of athletic shoes 3-4-1-2.
A perfect placing score is 50.
A perfect reasons score is 50.

The following is recommended for the 4-H member’s use.

Grid Sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standards</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reasons Sample Format

I place this class of

________________________, _______, _______, _______, _______

I place ______ over ______ because:

I place ______ over ______ because:

I place ______ over ______ because:

I place ______ last because:

For these reasons, I place this class of

________________________, _______, _______, _______, _______

Glossary of Consumer Choices Terms

Class

Classes are prepared to help youth learn more about making wise consumer decisions. A class is made up of a situation statement and four class items.

Class items

Each class is made up of four class items that are to be compared and placed in order of which item would be the first, second, third and fourth choice based on the standards.

Situation statement

A situation statement is a story that helps determine what to look for when comparing the class items.

Standards

Standards are information or criteria on which items are judged. The standards are found in the situation statement. The standards are listed in the situation statement in order of importance.

Placing

Placings are the order in which the items are ranked in each class. Determine which would be the best choice for this situation, which would be second best, third best and the poorest choice. This decision is to be based only on the standards listed in that particular situation statement.

Oral reasons

Reasons are an opportunity for a judging participant to defend his or her decision by speaking to a judge and telling the judge why the class was placed the way it was.

Grant

When comparing and placing two items, at times, the second item meets a standard that the first one does not. This is when a grant is needed in giving reasons comparing those two items. When making a grant, just state why the second is better than the first.