

Title: Customer care and satisfaction

Context: These activities draw on the students own consumer experiences to explore how good customer service impacts on both the consumer and retailer. This lesson plan is one of six, which link to the Consumer Council's '**Buy Rights – Have Your Say**' DVD and support materials. This lesson could also be used in relation to work experience activities and part-time jobs.

Year Group: Key Stage 3

Subject/Curriculum Reference: Home Economics, Citizenship, Life Skills, Business Studies

Topic Reference: Consumer Rights and Responsibilities, Consumer Protection

Time/Length: At least 1 x 55 minute lesson

Aims:

- To increase students awareness of their consumer responsibilities
- To examine a range of positive and negative consumer experiences
- To appreciate that consumers have rights as well as responsibilities
- To increase students awareness of the role of customer service provision and the benefits of customer satisfaction

Learning outcomes:

As a result of engaging in these activities pupils will be able to:

- Discuss how the way in which a complaint is made might affect the final outcome
- Identify possible conflicts and offer up suggestions as to how they might be avoided or resolved
- Discuss why customer care and customer satisfaction are an important part of a business
- Recognise the importance of good communication – that it is a two way process of talking and listening

Resources:

Buy Rights – Have your Say DVD and pack – available from the Consumer Council. **To order your copy, free of charge, please visit www.consumerCouncil.org.uk** and go to the Consumer Education Resources section.

For display:

Pictures of different 'consumer experiences' including shopping for goods AND services.

Artefacts:

Selection of consumer information leaflets – both independent and retailer specific

Background Information:

For information on consumer related issues:

www.consumerCouncil.org.uk – in particular the Consumer Advice Handbook and the leaflet 'Can't Complain, Won't Complain'

www.consumerline.org – for further detail on consumer rights and responsibilities

www.ofc.gov.uk

www.which.co.uk

Lesson summary/organisation/activities:

Teacher starting points

Activity One:

How do we communicate? By talking, by gesticulating, by our expressions, by sign language, by written word ... What happens if we hide the expressions on our faces?

Get the students to act out being angry, sad or happy but without showing any expression in their faces or voices. What happens – do you feel their sense of emotion so strongly?

Now get the students to act out an issue using only gestures and facial expression, can you tell what the problem is? e.g. my food is cold; I want to swap this CD; I think my hair cut is awful.

Activity Two:

What positive 'buying' experiences do they have? What are the key factors that make them positive rather than negative?

Activity Three:

Show Buy Rights – Have Your Say DVD clip – **At the hairdressers**. Use first part of the clip (play to 'how did the manager handle this?'). Ask the students to look for examples of good customer service?

Then discuss what they saw. How did the manager handle things? What should she have done, what shouldn't she have done?

Activity Four:

What is the link between a successful business and good customer service?

Outside speaker:

Invite the customer service's manager from a large company into school to talk to the students.

Pupil Activities

Activity One:

Think about how we communicate with one another? How do we tell a story? Communicate our feelings etc. List all the ways we might communicate with another person. Do we use more than one form of communication at a time?

What happens if we keep a blank expression and keep emotion out of our voices? Act out someone being very angry, sad or happy without showing it in your face or voice. Does it affect what people hear and think?

Now just use facial expressions and gestures but no voice to communicate a message. What happens? Can you understand what the person wants?

Activity Two:

Think about yourself as a consumer. Compare a positive consumer experience with a negative consumer experience – why do you think it was positive, how did the retailer help make it positive? What did you do?

Activity Three:

Watch the Buy Rights – Have Your Say DVD clip, **At the hairdressers**. How do you think the manager handled the situation? What else should/could she have done? In small groups discuss what you think you would do if you were the manager. How would you try and resolve the situation. Link this back to what you know are your rights.

Watch the final part of the **At the hairdressers** DVD clip. How was the situation resolved? Did it match your ideas? Do you think this was good customer service? Would you go back to this business?

Activity Four:

Why do you think businesses like to try and keep customers happy? How might it impact on the business?

Look at a big retail company; find out what their customer service policy is? How do they train their staff? What information do they have for their customers?

What do you think your role might be if you were working as a sales person or tradesperson in this company?

Extension activities/Homework:

Contact three local stores and find out what their policy is for returning goods.

Teacher Reflection:

The lesson should also allow you to draw out how students may be treated by retailers – are the students positive experiences linked to friendly staff and positive reactions to the students as consumers? Young people often complain that shop assistants don't take them seriously and that they are treated differently to 'adult' consumers. Is this reflected in your students' experiences?

Some key findings to support class discussion:

Research conducted by the Consumer Council in 2004 has shown that:

- Only one in ten 16-17 year olds feel knowledgeable about their consumer rights
- Three out of five (58 per cent) feel embarrassed about having to make a complaint

In addition, more recent research undertaken by NICCY (NI Commissioner for Children and Young People), has found that:

- Three quarters of young people and adults believe shops treat young people differently to adults
- 63 per cent of young people and 57 per cent of adults thought the key reason for this was negative stereotypical attitudes towards young people
- One in four felt that shop staff did not act in a respectful way to young people
- Most retailers spoken to would be happy to listen to how they could improve their businesses for young people.

The same research discovered that:

- 73 per cent of young people surveyed said they spend £10 or more per week
- 39 per cent said they spend £20 or more per week

Title: Reasons to complain – Things that go wrong

Context: These activities use the student's own experiences of purchasing goods and services to explore how things might go wrong for consumers. This lesson plan is one of six, which link to the Consumer Council's 'Buy Rights – Have Your Say' DVD and support materials.

Year Group: Key Stage 3

Subject/Curriculum Reference: Home Economics, Citizenship, Life Skills, Business Studies

Topic Reference: Consumer Rights and Responsibilities, Consumer Protection

Time/Length: Approximately 1 x 55 minute lesson

Aims:

- To examine a range consumer experiences
- To increase students awareness of their consumer responsibilities
- To appreciate that consumers have rights as well as responsibilities

Learning outcomes:

As a result of engaging in these activities pupils will be able to:

- Identify a range of different types of consumer complaints
- Understand why consumers need to be responsible for their purchasing decisions
- To discuss why things might go wrong for the consumer

Resources:

Buy Rights – Have Your Say Resource Pack: Consumer Council for Northern Ireland – **To order your copy, free of charge, please visit www.consumerCouncil.org.uk** and go to the Consumer Education Resources section.

For display:

Pictures of different 'consumer experiences' including shopping for goods AND services.

Artefacts:

Selection of consumer information leaflets – both independent and retailer specific

Background Information:

For information on consumer related issues:

www.consumerCouncil.org.uk – in particular the Consumer Advice Handbook and the leaflet 'Can't Complain, Won't Complain'

www.consumerline.org – for further detail on consumer rights and responsibilities

www.ofc.gov.uk

www.which.co.uk

Lesson summary/organisation/activities: Reasons to complain – things that go wrong

Teacher starting points

Opening activity:

Get your students thinking about a range of consumer issues and behaviour? Ask them to think about how confident they feel in a variety of consumer related situations by completing the Self Assessment worksheet from the Consumer Council's Buy Rights – Have Your Say support materials, (page 16, Session 2, Exercise 4.)

Opening Questions:

Start by asking the students if they have ever made a complaint about something they have bought?

What was wrong with the item? What did they do? Are all the complaints related to goods? Have some students made a complaint about services e.g. a haircut, a meal at a café/restaurant?

Activity 1:

In groups ask the students to create a log of the complaints discussed. Categorise the type of product/retailer, what the issue was and if it was resolved. (See attached worksheet)

Activity 2:

Ask the students to think about the sorts of things they should think about **before** they make a purchase?

Use the 'What do I need to know before I make a purchase?' worksheet (See attached) to get students to think about the sorts of questions which they would need to ask either themselves or the shop assistant **before** they make a purchase.

Key questions might be: can I afford it, what other products are available in this range, what does the product do, does it do what I want it to, will it fit me/the space I have available, how does it work, do I need any other special equipment to make it work, what are the running costs etc.

Pupil Activities

Thinking about me as a consumer

Think about your own experiences as a consumer – have you had a poor experience, if so what happened?

Activity 1:

Create a chart to log the different types of complaints your classmates have had.

Which type of product/retailer has the most consumer complaints?

Why do you think this might be?

Look at the list of complaints you have compiled. Are all the complaints about **faulty** goods and services? Do you think any of these complaints could have been prevented and if so how?

Activity 2:

Think about the things you need to know before you buy something? What questions might you need to ask yourself? What questions might you want to find out from the sales assistant, the manufacturer and the provider of the service? How might these help you make a decision?

Can you summarise the key questions that you might need to think about for ALL purchases?

Why do you think it is important to be absolutely certain the product or service is right **before** you make a purchase? Whose responsibility is this?

If you make a mistake and buy something that is not right, can you complain?

Discuss what questions you would ask yourself and the retailer before you purchased a mobile phone.

Extension activities/Homework:

Talk to their parent(s) about how **they** make decisions about what to buy and where. What do they do when they need to make a complaint?

Visit a range of shops to find out how the shop handles complaints and what they would do if a consumer wanted to return something. Look out for refund policies. Where are these displayed? i.e. at the cash till, printed on the back of the receipt.

Teacher Reflection:

Informed consumers make more effective consumer decisions. Making choices can be a complex process:

- Identifying the need (or want)
- Ensuring that you can afford it (working within a budget)
- Checking out the market – looking at the range of products available (window shopping, research as to best buy etc.)
- Finding out about the features (what it does or doesn't do)
- Deciding what you want it to be able to do (refining your selected choice of products)
- Checking the best place to buy (remember cheapest doesn't necessarily mean best, some retailers provide increased guarantee cover free of charge, or offer better customer service provision if things go wrong)
- How am I going to pay for it? Cash, cheque, credit (how might I finance the purchase)

It is important to reinforce here that it is the **consumers' responsibility** to make sure they are making an appropriate buying decision; they cannot expect the retailer to put things right if they make a poor decision in the first place. For example if they buy a new table and then it doesn't fit through the door or fit the space it was intended for it would be the consumer's fault not the retailer and therefore the consumer would have no legal redress. Obviously if the item/service is faulty then they have consumer rights which should protect them in law.

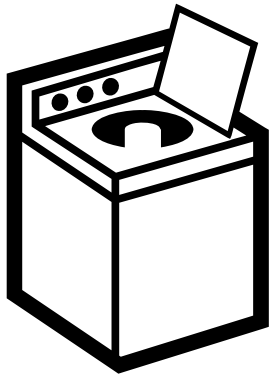
Activity 1: Consumer Complaints Log

Record the consumer complaints that your class members have described.

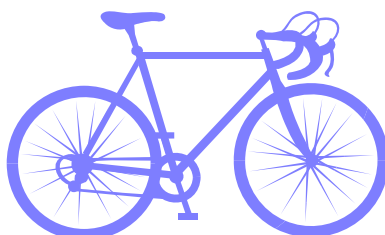
Product/service/retailer	Description of complaint	How was it resolved (or how might you have resolved it)

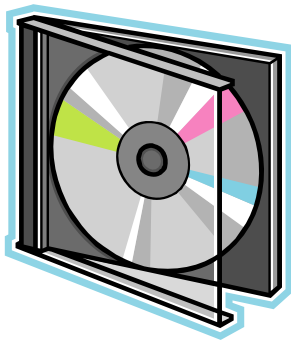
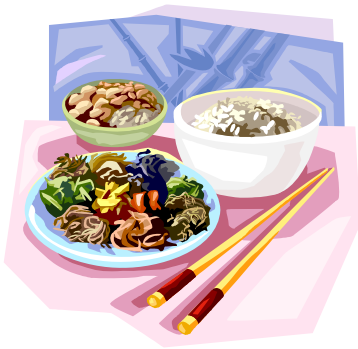
Activity 2: What do I need to know before I make a purchase?

Look at the items below, imagine you are about to purchase each of them – think about the sorts of questions you should ask yourself and/or the sales assistant before you make the purchase?



What I need to know





Title: Know your consumer rights

Context: These activities build on the '*Reasons to complain*' lesson plan. Students explore basic consumer rights and responsibilities, look at what the law states and what this means in terms of our individual consumer entitlement. This lesson plan is one of six, which link to the Consumer Council's '**Buy Rights – Have Your Say**' DVD and support materials.

Year Group: Key Stage 3

Subject/Curriculum Reference: Home Economics, Citizenship, Life Skills, Business Studies

Topic Reference: Consumer Rights and Responsibilities, Consumer Protection

Time/Length: Variable

Aims:

- To increase students awareness of their consumer rights
- To examine specific consumer rights in relation to the purchase of goods and services
- To appreciate that consumers have rights as well as responsibilities

Learning outcomes:

As a result of engaging in these activities pupils will be able to:

- Understand their basic consumer rights
- Discuss which elements of consumer legislation they can use and when
- Identify possible conflicts and offer up suggestions as to how they might be avoided or resolved and how this relates to individual consumer responsibility

Resources:

Buy Rights – Have Your Say Resource Pack: Consumer Council for Northern Ireland – **To order your copy, free of charge, please visit www.consumerCouncil.org.uk** and go to the Consumer Education Resources section.

For display:

Pictures of a range of consumer retail opportunities e.g. clothing shops, supermarkets, hairdressers, cafes/restaurants, electrical retailers, mobile phone shops etc.

Artifacts:

Selection of consumer rights materials - look at the Consumer Council's and Consumerline websites

Background Information:

For information on consumer related issues:

www.consumerCouncil.org.uk – in particular the Consumer Advice Handbook and the leaflet Can't Complain, Won't Complain

www.consumerline.org – for further detail on consumer rights and responsibilities

www.ofc.gov.uk

www.which.co.uk

Consuming Passion: A Key Stage 4 resource exploring the consumer strand of citizenship available from the Institute for Citizenship - www.citizen.org.uk

Lesson summary/organisation/activities: Know your consumer rights

Teacher starting points

Starting Questions:

Kick start the session by asking a series of questions. Using Exercise 7 'Pushy or a Pushover – Which Are You?' from the Buy Rights – Have Your Say pack, page 24 either ask students to complete the worksheet or use the questions to stimulate a whole class discussion.

Activity 1:

Ask students what they know about their consumer rights – what does the law say? Record their thoughts for everyone to see. Are there differences depending on whether the issue is about goods or services?

Activity 2:

Get your students to do some research and find out their basic consumer rights for goods and services. What does the law actually say? What does this mean for the consumer and what does the retailer have to do in order to put things right?

Use the information to produce a poster or a fact sheet for young people, which will provide them with the key information they might need.

Use Internet and consumer law leaflets e.g. the Consumer Council's 'Can't Complain, Won't Complain' leaflet, Shoppers' Rights card and the Consumerline website.

External expertise:

Invite Trading Standards into school to talk about consumer law and identify particular local issues, which they should be aware of.

Pupil Activities

What would you do?

Think about the questions – what would you choose to do in each situation? Why?

Activity 1:

What do you think your consumer rights are? What does the law say you are entitled to?

Are there differences depending on whether you are buying goods or services?

Activity 2:

Using a range of resources – find out about your basic consumer rights. What does the law say you are entitled to? What does this mean for the consumer and what is the retailer required to do by law?

Produce a poster or a small leaflet on 'Your rights as a consumer' for other students in school.

Extension activities/Homework:

Using the problem page provided, ask your students to write a reply to each. Tips and hints are provided below:

1. *I recently bought a laptop to take with me to university. Ever since I began using it I have had problems saving documents. I rang the shop and they said that I should contact the manufacturer. Is this right?*

Ref: Buy Rights Pack, Page 32 Legal Eagle

N.B. The reply to this problem may wish to explain tips about putting the complaint in a letter to the manager of the shop, see ‘Can’t Complain, Won’t Complain’ leaflet.

2. *I went to the hairdressers at the weekend and asked for my hair to be cut exactly like the photograph I’d brought in with me. The hairdresser said that was fine and that the style would suit me. The style I landed up with is nothing like the photograph I’d shown her and I really wasn’t at all happy. I told the hairdresser that I didn’t like the cut but I still paid £40.00 (but no tip!). Would I have been within my rights to refuse payment?*

Ref: Buy Rights Pack, Page 35 scenario 8.

N.B. The Supply of Goods and Services Act also applies in this case, where the service must be provided with ‘reasonable care and skill’. See www.consumerline.org Consumer Law section

3. *I bought an expensive denim jacket but once I tried it on at home I realised that the sleeves were a bit too long. I took it back to the shop but they said that as the jacket wasn’t faulty, I couldn’t get a refund. However, they did offer me a credit note. I would prefer a refund, as I don’t normally go to that shop and it was only the jacket that I liked. What can I do?*

Ref: Buy Rights Pack, Page 35 scenario 8.

N.B. The reply to this problem may wish to highlight the consumer’s responsibility to carefully check the item before buying, in this case, trying the jacket on before making the purchase.

4. *Three months ago I bought an MP3 player but it stopped working properly a couple of weeks ago so I took it back to the shop. First of all the sales assistant tried to say that I had caused the damage myself and then he said that because I didn’t have my receipt he wouldn’t be able to do anything to help. I can’t find my receipt anywhere, what can I do?*

Ref: Buy Rights Pack, Page 32 Legal Eagle

N.B. No receipt does not mean no refund, but it is a good habit to keep your receipts somewhere safe, just in case.

5. *A designer T-shirt that I bought at the weekend from a market stall has faded after the first wash. It cost me £3.50 and even though it was a bargain, I’d still like my money back. Should I go back and complain?*

Ref: Buy Rights Pack, Page 35 scenario 7

N.B. The price (£3.50) and place of purchase suggest that the 'designer T-shirt' is in fact a fake. See www.consumerline.org **Goods & Services: Counterfeit Goods.**

Teacher Reflection:

Consumers have clearly identified rights – it is important to know and understand these rights. Consumers are much more likely to be exploited if they don't have a clear understanding of their basic rights. The laws protecting the consumer can be quite complex and can be divided into two types – criminal and civil law. Criminal consumer law is enforced by relevant authorities such as Trading Standards Service and your local Environmental Health Department. Consumers may use civil consumer legislation to enforce their individual rights, other agencies such as the Consumer Council for Northern Ireland and Consumerline may offer help and support to consumers when they seek redress.

When a consumer makes a purchase they have the right to expect the goods to look and perform satisfactorily. This applies equally to goods bought from shops, markets, by mail order or from a door-to-door sales person. The Sale of Goods Act 1979 (as Amended by The Sale And Supply of Goods Act 1994 and The Sale and Supply of Goods to Consumers Regulations 2002), and the Supply of Goods and Services Act 1982 all offer the consumer a basic level of protection. Other pieces of legislation offer consumers additional rights for more specific types of products, services and contracts.

In general the law states that goods must:

- Fit the description given
- Be of satisfactory quality
- Be fit for their purpose

Services carried out must be done:

- With reasonable care and skill
- Within a reasonable time
- For a reasonable charge

Civil consumer legislation provides consumers with a minimum or 'statutory' level of rights. However, many retailers and traders, in the interests of improving the quality of their customer service provision may offer additional or enhanced customer benefits e.g. by changing goods which are not faulty (clothes that are the wrong size, or things that don't match). They do this in order to encourage customer loyalty and increase sales. These additional benefits are based purely on trader goodwill and are not a consumer's legal right. Therefore, just because one shop offers you a full refund within 28 days if you change your mind about the product, you can't expect every shop to offer this benefit.

In addition, the consumer should act responsibly – ensuring that they make a careful and considered choice before making a purchase, if they discover a fault then it is their responsibility to stop using the item immediately and return it as soon as possible, or at the very least inform the retailer of the problem and arrange for the item to be inspected at home if necessary.

Problem Page

Below are five letters sent to you from consumers that are unsure of their shoppers' rights. Write back to each of them letting them know whether they have a right to complain and if so, what they should do next.

Dear Consumer Champion I recently bought a laptop to take with me to university. Ever since I began using it I have had problems saving documents. I rang the shop and they said that I should contact the manufacturer. Is this right?

Bovered from Ballymena

Dear Consumer Champion I bought an expensive denim jacket but once I tried it on at home I realised that the sleeves were a bit too long. I took it back to the shop but they said that as the jacket wasn't faulty, I couldn't get a refund. However, they did offer me a credit note. I would prefer a refund, as I don't normally shop in there and it was only the jacket that I liked. What can I do?

Hacked-off from Holywood

Dear Consumer Champion I went to the hairdressers at the weekend and asked for my hair to be cut exactly like the photograph I'd brought in with me. The hairdresser said that was fine and that the style would suit me. The style I landed up with is nothing like the photograph I'd shown her and I really wasn't at all happy. I told the hairdresser that I didn't like the cut but I still paid £40.00 (but no tip!). Would I have been within my rights to refuse payment?

Annoyed from Antrim

Dear Consumer Champion A designer T-shirt that I bought at the weekend from a market stall has faded after the first wash. It cost me £3.50 and even though it was only cheap, I'd still like my money back. Should I go back and complain?

Bargain hunter from Banbridge

Dear Consumer Champion Three months ago I bought an MP3 player but it stopped working properly a couple of weeks ago so I took it back to the shop. First of all the sales assistant tried to say that I had caused the damage myself and then he said that because I didn't have my receipt he wouldn't be able to do anything to help. I can't find my receipt anywhere, what can I do?

Panicked from Portrush

Title: Making a complaint

Context: These three linked lesson plans consist of a series of activities, which build on the *'Reasons to complain'* and *'Know your consumer rights'* lesson plans in this section. They are based around a central activity of making a complaint.

The activities look at:

1. How to complain effectively
2. Complaining about goods
3. Complaining about services

Students consider how to make an effective complaint, reflect on appropriate behaviour and what to do if we don't at first succeed. The following two lessons contextualize this by looking at how they might make a complaint about a particular product and then about a service.

This lesson plan is one of six, which link to the Consumer Council's **'Buy Rights – Have Your Say'** DVD and support materials.

Year Group: Key Stage 3

Subject/Curriculum Reference: Home Economics, Citizenship, Life Skills, Business Studies

Topic Reference: Consumer Rights and Responsibilities, Consumer Protection

Time/Length: 3 x 55 minute lesson

Aims:

- To increase students awareness of their consumer responsibilities
- To examine how to make an effective consumer complaint
- To appreciate that consumer behaviour is important in the relationship between customer and retailer/tradesperson
- To examine the law in relation to the purchase of goods and the supply of services

Learning outcomes:

As a result of engaging in these activities pupils will be able to:

- Identify a range of different approaches to making a consumer complaint
- Understand the key points to remember when making a consumer complaint
- Discuss ways in which they might handle different types of responses from the retailer
- Identify possible conflicts and offer up suggestions as to how they might be avoided or resolved
- Understand the key points of consumer law relating to the purchase of goods and the supply of services
- To know where and how they might seek help with a consumer problem

Resources:

Buy Rights – Have Your Say DVD and support materials– **To order your copy, free of charge, please visit www.consumerCouncil.org.uk** and go to the Consumer Education Resources section.

For display:

Pictures of different ‘consumer experiences’ including shopping for goods AND services.

Artifacts:

Selection of consumer information leaflets – both independent and retailer specific
Shoppers’ Right’s cards – available from the Consumer Council at www.consumerCouncil.org.uk

Background Information:

For information on consumer related issues:

www.consumerCouncil.org.uk – in particular the Consumer Advice Handbook and the leaflet ‘Can’t Complain, Won’t Complain’

www.consumerline.org – for further detail on consumer rights and responsibilities

www.ofc.gov.uk

www.which.co.uk

Lesson summary/organisation/activities: How to complain effectively

Teacher starting points

Starting Questions:

What are their key consumer rights? (If you have already used the 'Know your rights' lesson plan then this will serve to recapitulate the key issues). Students can check what they think they know against materials providing key consumer rights information – leaflets and websites (see resources).

Activity 1:

Show Buy Rights – Have Your Say DVD clip – **At the Clothes Shop**. Use first part of the clip (play to what should happen next), and then discuss what they would do to try and resolve the situation. Link this back to their consumer rights.

Activity 2:

How would they approach the shop/shop assistant? What would they say? You could use role play here and get the students to act out a range of different approaches – polite, rude/argumentative/aggressive/unassertive/assertive, etc. (See cards on next page) How does this affect the outcome? Get the students to think about how they communicate.

Activity 3:

Return to the Buy Rights –Have Your Say DVD clip, play on to find out how the situation was resolved. Did it match what the students thought? Identify the key points to remember when making a complaint. Use the How to Complain sheet from the **Buy Rights – Have Your Say** pack (page 57) to help pull together key ideas.

Extension activities/Homework:

Compile a 'top tips' to complaining, something that could be easily carried by consumers – see the Shoppers' Right's card example overleaf.

Ask the students to compile their own question and answer page for 'A guide to complaining effectively'.

Pupil Activities

Are you sure you know your consumer rights?

Think about what you know – are you correct? Check what you think are your rights against the information in the leaflets and websites available.

Activity 1:

Watch the Buy Rights – Have Your Say DVD clip, **At the Clothes Shop**. What would you do next? In small groups discuss what you think you would do next? How would you try and resolve the situation. Link this back to what you know about your rights.

Activity 2:

How would you make a complaint in this situation? What approach would you take? Using the role-play cards act out how you would deal with this. What did each person do right? What could they have changed about their behaviour, attitude etc? Think about how you say things, the tone of voice you use, verbal and non-verbal communication.

Activity 3:

Watch the final part of the **At the Clothes Shop** clip. How did they resolve the situation, did it match your thoughts?

Teacher Reflection:

The main thrust for the first session is to identify how we should complain. As a consumer we need to know our rights and what we are entitled to by law e.g. if a product is faulty we are entitled to our money back. However, we need to be sure that we put our case effectively, and remember the three 'c's' of complaining: be clear, be concise and stay calm. If we rush in, shouting and banging the desk, we are less likely to receive a sympathetic response.

Ideas for role-play types

Angry consumer

Very polite sales assistant

**Very quiet and timid
consumer**

Belligerent sales assistant

**Knowledgeable and assertive
consumer**

**Knowledgeable and helpful
assistant**

Polite consumer

Indifferent sales assistant

Shoppers' Rights Card

Your rights under the Sales of Goods Act 1979

Goods must:

- Fit the description given
- Be of satisfactory quality
- Be fit for their purpose

If not, depending on the circumstances, you **may** be entitled to a repair, replacement or refund



For more information contact Consumerline
0845 600 62 62 or **www.consumerline.org**

Shoppers' Responsibilities

Remember:

- Always keep your receipt
- If you have a complaint, act quickly to resolve it
- If you simply change your mind you are not entitled to a refund
- You may have added protection if you pay by credit card for a single item over £100

For more information contact Consumerline
0845 600 62 62 or **www.consumerline.org**

Published by the
General Consumer Council for Northern Ireland



Lesson summary/organisation/activities: Complaining about goods

Teacher starting points

Starting questions:

Think of an item they have had to complain about?

What was the item?

What happened when they complained?

Was the situation resolved to their satisfaction? If not, why not?

Activity 1:

Identify the key points to remember if you buy something and then you discover it is faulty:

- Stop using it at once
- Notify the shop where you bought it, this could be as you take it back, or if it is too big to carry back, by telephone, letter or a home visit.
- Be clear about what you want – the law entitles you to your money back, you do not have to accept a repair or a refund.

Activity 2:

Use the scenario cards from the Buy Rights – Have Your Say pack (page 34). What do you think might happen? What might the consumers' rights be in each case? Ask them to discuss in groups/individually and then share their responses with the whole class.

Activity 3:

Show Buy Rights – Have Your Say DVD clip – **At the mobile phone shop**. Use first part of the clip (play to 'what do you think?'). Then discuss what they think is right and what they would do to try and resolve the situation. Link this back to their consumer rights.

Return to the Buy Rights – Have your say DVD clip, play on to find out how the situation was resolved. Did it match what the students thought? Reinforce the key points to remember when making a complaint.

Extension activities/Homework:

Survey your local shops – find out what their returns policy is? How do things change when you buy from an auction, market stall or privately? What might you do in this situation? Visit www.consumerline.org

Find out where consumers go if they need help with a consumer complaint.

Pupil Activities

Activity 1:

List the key points to remember if you buy something and then discover it is faulty?

Activity 2:

Using the scenario card you have been given, list what you think your rights are and what you would do in this situation. Share your ideas with the rest of the class.

Activity 3:

Watch the Buy Rights – Have Your Say DVD clip, **At the mobile phone shop**. What would you do next? In small groups discuss what you think you would do next? How would you try and resolve the situation. Link this back to what you know about your rights.

Watch the final part of the **At the mobile phone shop** clip. How did they resolve the situation, did it match your thoughts?

Teacher Reflection:

The key message for this lesson is to ensure that students understand their rights in relation to the purchase of goods. Students should be clear about what they are entitled to by law; understand that many shops offer enhanced consumer benefits e.g. the option to a full refund within 28 days if you change your mind.

It is also important to realise that consumers have limited rights when they purchase goods via an auction house or from private sellers.

Lesson summary/organisation/activities: Complaining about services

Teacher starting points

Activity 1:

Be clear about the differences between goods and services.

Identify the key points to remember if you are buying services:

- Inform the supplier of the service of your concerns – put your complaint in writing.
- Take photographs if necessary
- Document how and when things happened.
- Be clear about what you want – the law states that the supplier of the service should put the problem right within a reasonable amount of time. If not you are entitled to get someone else to put things right and charge this cost to the original service provider.

Activity 2:

Show Buy Rights – Have Your Say DVD clip **At the café**. Use first part of the clip (play to 'what are her rights?'), then discuss what are the rights in this situation and what they would do to try and resolve the situation.

Return to the Buy Rights – Have Your Say DVD clip, play on to find out how the situation was resolved. Did it match what the students thought? Reinforce the key points to remember when making a complaint.

Outside speaker:

Invite an officer from Trading Standards Service, Environmental Health or the Consumer Council to talk about consumer rights. In particular to case study some good examples of how consumers can become trapped by difficult situations and how they can be resolved.

Extension activities/Homework:

Think about how consumers might best ensure that the tradesperson/company they use for a service is the best for their situation. What tips would you give someone wanting to have some work done on their house? (e.g. A decorator or a plumber).

Who else might be involved if the consumer complaint is about food?

Pupil Activities

Activity 1:

List the key points to remember if you purchase a service and it is not up to standard.

Activity 2:

Watch the Buy Rights – Have Your Say DVD clip, **At the café**. What would you do next? In small groups discuss what you think you would do next? How would you try and resolve the situation. Link this back to what you know about your rights.

Watch the final part of the DVD. How did they resolve the situation, did it match your thoughts?

Teacher Reflection:

The key message for this lesson is to ensure that students understand their rights in relation to the purchase of services. Complaints about the quality of a service are much more difficult than for goods. What constitutes poor service or workmanship may differ from one customer to another. It is therefore important that the consumer is very clear about exactly what it is they want.

For instance it is no use asking a hairdresser to cut your hair, without explaining what it is you want. If you are looking for a particular standard of finish in terms of decorating your house, then this should be clearly explained to whoever is quoting for the work. Students should be clear about what they are entitled to by law and understand that they have a responsibility to set out their expectations.