

## CHAPTER 7

## What role should consumerism play in our economy?

---

**consumerism:** an economic theory that links prosperity to consumer demand for goods and services, and that makes consumer behaviour central to economic decision making

---

Consumerism influences the economies of both Canada and the U.S. It reflects some common values that shape the economies of both countries. This chapter presents information about those values, and about different views and perspectives concerning the impact of consumerism on citizenship and quality of life.

Consumerism is an economic theory that says the more people buy, the better it is for the economy. In economies based on **consumerism**, consumer behaviour plays a key role in economic decision making.

When we buy goods and services, we become consumers. **Have you ever thought of what influences you as a consumer?** Maybe you consider the quality or price of a good or service before you buy it. Or you might consider where it was made. Maybe laws about health and safety affect the products and services you can choose from.

The decisions we make as consumers have consequences for the quality of life, citizenship and identity of ourselves and others — so it's important to think about what does and what should influence consumer behaviour.

This chapter explores factors that affect consumer behaviour, and how these factors connect to economic systems in Canada and the U.S.

### FOCUS QUESTIONS

- How does consumer behaviour affect quality of life for individuals and groups in Canada and the U.S.?
- What affects the impact of consumerism on the economies of Canada and the U.S.?



Your consumer choices can create by-products such as wastes. For example, if you buy a bottle of water, the bottle ends up in the recycling or the garbage. If you buy a bottle for water, the bottle gets used again and again. **Think critically: What impact can consumer behavior have on the environment? How do impacts on the environment connect to quality of life?**

Based on these photographs, what challenges and opportunities can consumerism create for society?



North America's auto industry used to depend on consumers purchasing new cars every two or three years. Because of consumer pressure and foreign competition, today's cars are better built, safer and have longer warranties. So, consumers use their cars longer and don't buy new cars as frequently. When they do buy cars, they may choose one made in Asia or Europe. **Think critically:** To what extent does consumer behaviour affect the jobs and products available to people? How do jobs and products connect to quality of life?



Consumer behaviour has many impacts, including impacts on producers, jobs and the environment. **Think critically:** How might marketing affect consumer behaviour? Why might understanding the role of marketing be important to you as a consumer?

This bumper sticker dates from 2003. It aimed to encourage Alberta consumers to band together and buy Alberta beef to support Alberta beef producers. In 2003, "mad cow disease" had stopped international sales of Alberta beef, which meant Alberta beef producers faced hard times. **Think critically:** How can consumers act together to bring about change?



## Create a media message communicating how marketing affects consumer behaviour.

### Your Role

You've been asked by a leading North American consumer organization to create a media message informing your peers about how marketing affects consumer behaviour and quality of life. Think of your friends and how you could create an informative message about the effects of advertising for them. Your message should raise public awareness about the marketing techniques used by advertisers to sell a product and how consumer decisions are influenced by these techniques.

As you work through the chapter, think of a product or brand that will help you answer the question:

**To what extent does marketing affect consumer behaviour?**

### Your Presentation

Your message should reflect and describe:

- The relationship between marketing and consumerism.
- The common values consumerism reflects in the economies of Canada and the U.S.
- The marketing techniques used by the advertiser to sell goods and services.
- The relationship between advertising and consumer behaviour.
- The ways this relationship affects your quality of life and that of others.

Your media message should be engaging, persuasive and clear. Choose an effective format for your message, such as:

- A one-page feature for a magazine or newspaper.
- A public service announcement for radio or TV.
- A pop-up infomercial for the Internet.
- A poster or other visual.

## What's the best way to communicate your message?



It would be loud, but would it be effective?

## Let's get started!

Alone or with a partner, brainstorm some ideas on the question: To what extent does marketing impact consumer behaviour? What do you already know about marketing techniques used by advertisers to sell products? How do these affect your decisions as a consumer?

As you read through the chapter, collect examples of products or brands. Your examples could include a line of clothing, a type of vehicle such as trucks, products from a computer software company, or a type of food. Use a chart, like the one below, to analyze the examples. Determine to what degree each example affects consumer behaviour. Next, draw some conclusions on what you have learned from this chapter that might guide you when finishing your task.

Inquiry	Example of product	Impacts on consumer behaviour: a little or a lot?
The marketing techniques used by advertisers to sell the product are...		
Some examples showing the relationship between advertising and the choices of consumers about this product are...		
Consumer decision making with this product affects quality of life in these ways...		
<b>My Conclusion</b> <i>Marketing affects consumer behaviour in these ways...</i> <i>As consumers, we can take action to improve quality of life by...</i>		



How could you use the Internet?



How might you plug into emerging communications technology?

## How does consumer behaviour affect quality of life for individuals and groups in Canada and the U.S.?

Many factors can affect the behaviour of individual consumers, such as the shoppers in this mall. Individual consumer choices affect society as a whole — for example, the jobs people have and the quality of the environment. **Think critically:** How do factors such as jobs and the environment connect to citizenship, identity and quality of life?

### WHAT'S IN THIS SECTION

In this section, you will read about how consumer behaviour affects quality of life for you and others. You will find:

- Articles and interviews that illustrate factors that affect consumer behaviour.
- A chart and examples of how consumer behaviour is linked with economic growth.
- Examples of how advertising affects consumer behaviour.

### What are you looking for?

As you read this section, look for:

- Factors that link consumer behaviour to identity, health and the environment.
- Connections between economic growth and consumer behaviour.
- Techniques marketers use to influence consumer behaviour.
- How government decisions influence consumers by limiting or supporting certain consumer behaviours.



## What guides your behaviour as a consumer?


Imagine it's Saturday. By some lucky chance, you have plenty of money to spend. You've decided to go shopping at Mall of the World.

The mall has many stores offering different products and services. Some products come from countries where human rights is an issue. Some products contain substances that you can recycle — or not. You can buy products that use a larger or smaller quantity of resources to manufacture and use — an electric toothbrush or an ordinary toothbrush, for example.

This section investigates some of the factors that might influence the decisions you make. It considers these questions:

- How will your identity — who you are, what you believe in and value, where you live, the groups you belong to, your way of seeing the world — come into play?
- How much will you consider your health? Safety? Security?
- How does choosing a product affect the jobs people have?
- How important to you are the environmental impacts of products and services?
- How will marketing affect what you buy?
- Do you really need to buy anything at all?

Buying things is serious business!  
It's part of the economic decision making that determines how our society uses resources.



if we haven't got it, it doesn't exist.

**Shopping**  
All the brand names and the bargains!  
3 kilometres →

**Food Court**  
Tasty snacks and meals from every corner of the globe!  
← 1.2 kilometres

**Entertainment**  
Movies! Petting Zoos! Bungee Jumping! More!  
Right this way! ↑



## FACTOR

## Identity

The choices we make as consumers can reflect our identity. Think about the clothing you are wearing today. What do your clothes say about your beliefs and values, and what you consider important to your quality of life? Consider how these factors may have influenced you when you bought these clothes.

Take a look at the comments of the Grade 9 students on this page and the next. These students have different views on how clothing can express their identity. What do their views say about their behaviour as consumers? How do their views compare with your own ideas about expressing identity?



I think what influences me the most as a consumer is brand names. Everyone wears brand names, and you want to be accepted. Conformity is a huge factor in brand names.

Also, you can see how reliable brand-name clothes are. If everyone has had a good experience with them, then you know they're good quality.

– Jordan Stang



I'm mainly influenced by my friends' and family's opinions, because I see them every day. But even though my friends and family give me their opinions, I don't like to conform. Conformity gives you an image of unoriginality, because you follow what everybody else is doing.

Unless I know a product is good quality and a good price, though, I don't give a thought about buying it.

– Thao Duong



Which of these views about factors that affect consumer behaviour are most similar or dissimilar to your own views? Why?



**CRITICAL THINKING CHALLENGE** To what extent do the products we consume define who we are and what's important to our quality of life?

When I'm looking for food, I go for personal preference: 100 percent. Same goes for video games and movies. I don't care what the ads or other people say. If I like it, I'll buy it.

That's only somewhat true when I'm buying clothes, though. I usually try to buy the brand that's popular, unless I don't have enough money. Then, I usually save up until I do.

All in all, I try not to let advertising influence me too much, although it is kind of difficult.

– Mackenzie Kerman



I just started working, so one of the most important influences for me is price. Brand names are also a big influence. When I see stars with a particular product, I feel compelled to try it. I want to know why these big stars with lots of money are buying it.

– Meagan McIntosh



## connect to the big ideas

1. Choose examples of five different products you have bought recently. Take some time to analyze why you bought each item. Create a breakdown of factors. To what extent did your identity play a role? Think about how your purchases reflect who you are, what you believe and value, the groups you belong to, and your way of seeing the world. Also consider what other factors played a role, such as price and quality.  
Create a collage explaining your analysis. Include visuals of the items and visuals to illustrate the major points of your breakdown.
2. Describe how each item in question 1 affects your quality of life. Discuss your conclusions with a small group of classmates. How do your conclusions compare? How do you explain similarities and differences between your consumer behaviour and theirs?





## Steps to Analyzing Media Messages

For your chapter task, you need to create a media message about the effects of marketing on consumer behaviour. Media messages and marketing are important in our economy — and the economy of the U.S. — because consumerism is important in our economy. Media messages and marketing aim to affect consumer behaviour.

For an experiment, count how many media messages you encounter as you get ready for school and travel there — for example, on TV, your computer, the newspaper, the radio or billboards. How do the messages get your attention? To what extent do they affect what you believe or what you do?

Media messages try to influence us. Analyzing media messages, and thinking critically about them, is an important skill because it helps us become informed and active citizens.

**Media messages can affect your decision making and your position on issues. It's important to think critically about media messages, so you base your decisions on reliable information.**

**I look at who a media message targets. I think about why and how it targets a particular audience. This helps me step back from the message and think for myself about what it's saying.**

## Try this!

For your task, you need to create a media message that clearly communicates your research and conclusion on the question: **To what extent does marketing affect consumer behaviour?** What will make your message effective and persuasive?

To figure out techniques that make media messages effective, explore and analyze two or three examples, such as a bulletin board, flyer, radio announcement or TV commercial. Use an organizer like the one below.

<b>What type of text is it?</b>	<i>There are many kinds of media out there (television, radio, online texts, visual). Identify what kind of media it is first.</i>
<b>Who is communicating and why?</b>	<i>Examine who is producing the text and what their goal is. For example, a message might inform the public about a non-profit group. What ideas and values are the authors of the message trying to communicate?</i>
<b>How has it been produced?</b>	<i>The way a media message is produced affects how the message gets out. Look for the kind of technology it uses.</i>
<b>Who is the intended audience?</b>	<i>Look for clues about who the message is for – for example, in images and slogans. Who will respond to the text or listen most to the message?</i>
<b>How is the message constructed?</b>	<i>Look for symbols, slogans, use of colour and other designs. How do they convey underlying values or meaning? What does this tell you about the intent of the message?</i>
<b>Is music or sound involved?</b>	<i>If music is used, what emotions does it provoke? What do the lyrics relate to the content of the message?</i>
<b>How does the content represent the subject?</b>	<i>Think about how people and places are presented in the media. Do you detect bias or stereotyping? Are the events portrayed positively or negatively? What persuasive techniques are used? Is the message realistic or sensational? What needs is the message saying it will meet, such as safety, comfort, health or popularity?</i>



When a message gets my attention, I think about why. Sometimes, I just like the music or the pictures that go with a message. Once I figure that out, I can look at the message itself. I can think about what it really says.



In 2007, the Edmonton Public School Board decided to ban the sale of foods such as chips and chocolate bars from schools. As the article on this page shows, parents had different views about this decision.

## FACTOR

### Health and Safety

Federal law requires warnings on products such as cigarettes to discourage consumers from buying them. As the warnings tell you, smoking can lead to cancer and heart disease. Despite the warnings, however, adults can still buy cigarettes.

Some governments in Canada have gone further. They have banned some products and made them unavailable to consumers. **Why might Canadians have different views about decisions to ban some products?**

#### Schools ban junk food

EDMONTON — Edmonton's school board gave unanimous support Tuesday to a motion to eliminate the sale of junk food in all schools. Trustee Ken Gibson said it's important for the board to lead by example. "We need to have a strong statement about what our beliefs are and what is good for our students," he said.

Of eight community members who addressed the board, most called for a ban. Nancy Rempel, a parent at Rutherford School, said junk food sold in schools is often too tempting for children. She compared it to someone going grocery shopping while feeling hungry. "Why offer (junk food) in an institutional setting that is meant to provide role-modelling and an education?" Rempel said. "Schools teach health and gym, and then offer sugar-, salt- or fat-laden treats in vending machines. It's wrong and it needs to stop."

Of eight community members who addressed the board, most called for a ban. Randy Lee said children need encouragement to get away from junk foods that contribute to unhealthy lifestyles. "We've removed cigarettes from the environment and the equation, so now it's time to remove junk food," Lee said. Two people said they thought it was wrong to ban junk-food sales. One said a ban would prevent schools from raising funds by selling candy, or from having "pizza days."

— Adapted from an article by David Howell in the *Edmonton Journal*, November 28, 2007.



**Examine the information on this page and page 249. How does legislation about consumer health and safety affect consumer behaviour? How does this legislation connect to values and economic systems in Canada and the U.S.?**

## Calgary eateries race to reduce trans fats

CALGARY — Calgary restaurants are scrambling to trim trans fats just days before the city becomes the first in the country to regulate use of the artery-clogging additive.

Controversial new health regulations take effect Tuesday.

"The research suggests there is no safe level of consumption of trans fat," said Dr. Brent Friesen of the Calgary Health Region (CHR).

Restaurants are the first to be targeted in the CHR's battle against trans fats, and grocery stores are next. Organizations such as the Canadian Council of Grocery Distributors expressed concern about the regulations because trans fats are a staple in many processed foods on grocery and bakery shelves.

— Adapted from an article by Sarah Chapman, CanWest News Service, December 30, 2007.



New health regulations mean customers at Calgary restaurants will no longer jeopardize their health with trans fats. Trans fats occur in some kinds of food more than others.

Packaged and processed foods, for example, generally contain higher levels of trans fats. **Think critically:** How might a ban on trans fats affect demand for food products? How might it affect producers who supply food to restaurants?

## DID YOU KNOW?

### Legislation about Consumer Health and Safety

Consumer health and safety is the focus of legislation in both Canada and the U.S. — or the focus of debates about it. For example:

- Both Canada and the U.S. have product-labelling laws that require producers to list the ingredients in food and cosmetics.
- The U.S. has laws making airbags mandatory in cars, along with seat belts. In 2007, Canada's laws made only seat belts mandatory.
- In 2007, neither Canada nor the U.S. had legislation to limit trans fats in foods. Canada had considered it, however. In 2004, Canada's government established a task force to investigate the issue, but decided to ask food companies to reduce trans fats voluntarily.

## SPOT THE ISSUE

How much control should consumers have over choices that affect their health and safety?



**CRITICAL THINKING CHALLENGE** To what extent do differences in the way the U.S. and Canada regulate products for health and safety reflect differences in their economic systems?

**FACTOR**

**Jobs**

When you buy a product, you connect to a chain of people and their jobs. Your choice is part of what keeps them employed.

Take, for example, a ballpoint pen. Here are some of the jobs connected to your pen purchases.

**What is the link between consumer spending and jobs? What can you conclude from this flow chart?**



## DID YOU KNOW?

### Consumer Spending and Economic Growth

Consumer spending plays an important role in both mixed and market economies. For example, in Canada in 2006, consumers spent more than \$400 billion on products and services. In the U.S., consumer spending accounts for 70 percent of economic activity. Consumer spending affects economic growth in Canada and the U.S. Economic growth is the degree to which a country's wealth increases over a period of time, usually a year. Measures of economic growth include:

- How much profit a country's economy makes from the goods and services it produces.
- How many people have jobs and are making an income.

If profits fall, or fewer people have jobs, this indicates that an economy is shrinking rather than growing. In both Canada and the U.S., governments watch consumer spending closely. Through tax breaks and other measures, they sometimes encourage consumer spending to keep their economies growing.



**Consumerism is the theory that the more consumers spend, the better it is for the economy. In what way does the flow chart on page 250 support this theory?**


## connect to the big ideas

1. Take a close look at the production flow chart on the opposite page. List the participants in the production and sales process. How might consumer decisions to buy ballpoint pens affect the quality of life for each participant?
2. Explain how, in your opinion, consumer behaviour affects the production of goods and services and affects jobs. Support your ideas with examples and evidence.
3. Research a product or service that you like or that you frequently consume. Create a flow chart or other visual illustrating the relationship among the producer, other participants in the production and sale of the product or service, and the consumer. In your opinion, which participant contributes most to the economy? Explain your reasons.

**FACTOR**

**Environment**

Your choices as a consumer also affect the air, water and land that you share with everybody. Here are some of the environmental effects connected with the purchase of a pen.

 **The economic theory of consumerism says the more people buy, the better it is for the economy. Consider the information on this page and page 253. Why might Canadians have different views about the value of consumerism?**

**WHAT IS YOUR PEN MADE OF?**

**Packaging**

Packaging makes up one-third of the waste North American consumers generate. Many resources end up as packaging. For example, packaging accounts for about one-quarter of all plastic produced in the U.S.



**Plastic**

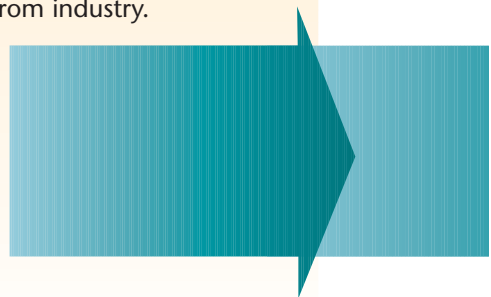
Plastic manufacturing emits toxins such as formaldehyde, phenol and xylene. In Canada and the U.S., governments regulate the amount of toxins industries can release into the atmosphere.

**Ink**

Ink is made from organic compounds. The manufacture of organic compounds emits pollutants such as sulphur oxides. Sulphur oxides make rainwater acidic, which can damage lake ecosystems and crops. To limit the damage, governments in Canada and the U.S. regulate and monitor acid-forming emissions from industry.

**Metals**

Pen tips use metals — typically copper, zinc and tungsten. Metals come from mines, which can have many environmental impacts. Copper, for example, typically comes from open-pit mines.



## DID YOU KNOW?

### Legislation about Consumerism and the Environment

Canada and the U.S. have laws and programs related to consumer behaviour and the environment. For example:

- Both governments have banned leaded gasoline, because of the harmful effects of lead on human health and the environment.
- Consumers shopping for new appliances in both Canada and the U.S. can identify energy-efficient options because of government programs that label these appliances.

In both Canada and the U.S., producers and consumers have also taken environmental action on their own. Many green products on the market today — such as organic foods and environmentally friendly household cleaners — don't come from legislation. They come from consumer demand.



### CRITICAL THINKING CHALLENGE

Why might choosing to buy environmentally friendly products affect the quality of life for you and other people?



What are some choices you can make as a consumer that protect the environment? Why might this be important?

## connect to the big ideas

1. Go online and research consumer protection organizations regarding their policies for making the public aware of products that have a positive or negative effect on the environment. Create a slide presentation or electronic animation that highlights the organization and their policies.
2. Develop three criteria to evaluate how consumer behaviour affects quality of life. Think about how quality of life, and consumer behaviour, connect to identity, health and the environment. Use your criteria to evaluate information you find in this chapter.



This is the Kennecott mine, an open-pit copper mine near Salt Lake City in the U.S. It's the largest human-made hole on Earth. Governments in Canada and the U.S. set standards for restoring open-pit mines, but the task is challenging.

In addition to pen tips, copper is used in the manufacture of coins and products such as plumbing pipes, cutlery and musical instruments. This mine represents decision making about how to use scarce resources — land, labour and capital (refer to pages 202 and 203). Consumer demand for products containing copper contributed to the decision to open this mine, and contributes to the decision to keep it operating.



**CRITICAL THINKING CHALLENGE**

To what extent do consumers choose the products they buy, and to what extent does marketing determine what they buy?

**FACTOR**

**Marketing**

Let's say you're in the Mall of the World food court. You are deciding whether to buy a drink. The food court offers many well-known brand-name beverages you have seen advertised in magazines and on TV. How might advertising affect what you do?

Identify ways the ads on this page promote informed decision making. Identify other ways they try to influence your decision making. How might the principles you find in these ads apply to advertising and marketing for all products — including clothes, electronics, entertainment and school supplies?

**DID YOU KNOW?**

**Legislation and Marketing**

Both Canada and the U.S. have legislation that affects what advertising can say and can't say. For example, advertising can't make false or misleading claims about products and services. In Canada, rules about advertising come under the Competition Act. The Competition Act aims to uphold competition among producers by ensuring fair business practices.

**We drink NOW. You should too.**

Your mother won't like this. But you will.

NOW® is the drink of the new generation. Your generation.

NOW® delivers a jolt of flavour you'll love.

Taste tests show that 60% of young people choose NOW® over other leading brands.

**Join your generation. Drink NOW®**

**IT'S JUST COFFEE**

When you buy brand-name coffee, only a few cents of every dollar goes to the farmers who grow the coffee.

We don't think that's just. So, when we buy coffee, we pay fair prices to farmers.

It costs a little more, and it tastes a little better.

*"I feel good about buying this coffee. I know my choice is directly supporting a farmer in Central America. And the coffee is delicious!"*

- Singer/songwriter Leslie Mellon

**RENEW YOURSELF**

When you go hard, your body needs replenishment.

Renew's patented formula of essential nutrients and electrolytes supplies what your body needs. Clinical trials show it hydrates you better than any other sports drink on the market.

**GO HARD. RENEW®**

*"Years of scientific testing show that you need proper hydration to perform at your peak. If hydration levels fall even 2%, you start to feel the effects."*

- Dr. G. Vesceik, sports medicine specialist

## HOW TO ANALYZE ADVERTISING

Have you ever thought about how much influence advertising has on the decisions you make as a consumer?

Advertising is not just seen on television commercials and on billboards — it's everywhere. Today, you will find advertising at sports events, on buses, in public washroom stalls, online and digitally, and even on park benches!

In mixed and market economies, marketers create demand: they encourage you to buy products even if you don't need them.

Using evidence in the chapter so far, and advertising from other sources, identify techniques that marketers use to get you to buy their products. Find examples of:

### Bandwagon Effect

- Encourages you to buy a product or service because everyone else is.

### Emotional Appeal

- Uses strong emotional language that connects with your fears and desires.

### Glittering Generalities

- Relates the product or service to words or images that promise everything, but deliver little or nothing.

### Plain Folks Appeal

- Relates a product or service to the experience of ordinary folks.

### Testimonials

- Uses celebrities or experts to speak for a product.

### Scientific Appeal

- Uses statistics or scientific data to persuade consumers to buy a product or service.

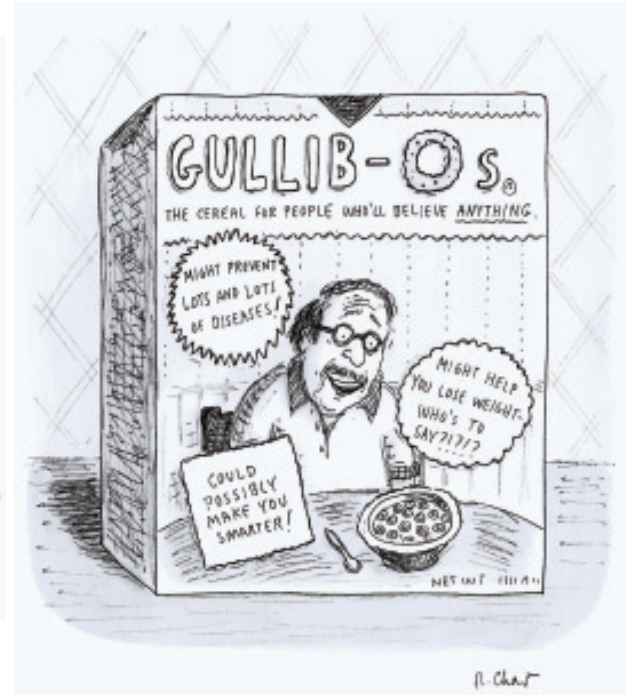


Scan online or print newspapers or magazines and choose three or four advertisements. Identify what advertising techniques are used in each advertisement. How do they put different techniques to work in the way they choose words and visuals?

To what extent do these techniques influence consumer behaviour? Share your results with a partner.

## Cartoons about Consumerism

Political cartoons often comment on aspects of consumer behaviour. Why, in your opinion? Examine the cartoons presented here. What issues about consumer behaviour do they raise?



### connect to the big ideas

1. Work with a partner to analyze and discuss the cartoons on this page. Refer to page 74 for tips on reading political cartoons. Analyze each cartoon for:
  - A factor that influences consumer behaviour.
  - How it evaluates the link between consumerism and quality of life. For example, does it see this link as basically positive or negative?

Support your answers with evidence from the cartoons.
2. Draw your own cartoon representing your own ideas about factors that influence consumer behaviour. Consider how both the image and the caption can convey your meaning. *Check out tips on cartoons in the Skills Centre on page 373.*



## What affects the impact of consumerism on the economies of Canada and the U.S.?

### WHAT'S IN THIS SECTION

This section explores some of the powers and limitations of consumerism to influence economic decision making.

- A comic about an economic decision-making scenario.
- A map illustrating different regional perspectives in North America about consumerism.
- Examples of how **boycotts** can empower consumers.
- Examples of how consumer behaviour, underlying values and government decisions affect quality of life for citizens in society.

### What are you looking for?

As you read this section, look for:

- Examples of how income affects consumer behaviour.
- How boycotts represent one way to influence economic decision making.

**boycott:** a decision by consumers to stop buying a product or service as a way to bring about change



Canada and the U.S. track consumer spending closely because consumerism plays an important role in mixed and market economies. Many factors can influence consumer spending, including how much money consumers have to spend.





**LATER ALL OF THE WORLD**

Okay, first shopping. Then some lunch and a movie.

Shopping for brand names and the bargains! 3 kilometres →

Ouch!

I guess I'll get this one.

Brand Free

Do you want fries with that?

Uh, yes.

Er, I mean, no.

Shouldn't have bought the T-shirt!

**What influences John's behaviour as a consumer? How does his income affect his decisions?** ?

## Why might views on consumerism differ regionally in North America?

Work through the questions below, and then answer the blue questions:

- **How does consumerism affect quality of life?** Think of both positive and negative views of consumerism you have encountered in this chapter.
- **How does prosperity affect consumerism?** The prosperity of people — how well off they are — affects how much they spend as consumers.
- **How does prosperity differ regionally?** Prosperity varies within countries and among countries. The map below presents regional differences in prosperity in North America. Because of these differences, the world considers Canada and the U.S. “developed countries” and Mexico a “developing country.”



To what extent might Canada, the U.S. and Mexico have different perspectives on consumerism and quality of life?



How might these different perspectives affect the economy of their region and the other regions?

GDP Per Capita in North America, 2006



### WHAT'S GDP?

The map on this page shows Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita. GDP measures the amount of wealth a country's economy generates. The term *per capita* means “average per person.” So, GDP per capita is a way to estimate how well off people are in a country.

Here are the exact 2007 figures for GDP per capita, for the countries on the map:

Canada	\$33 000
Mexico	\$12 500
U.S.	\$46 000

How accurately does the map reflect these statistics?



## How can consumerism empower groups?

A boycott is a decision by a group of consumers not to buy certain products. Some people boycott products as a way to respond to issues.

This page presents some examples of boycotts dating from 2007. What different perspectives on these boycotts can you identify?



### CRITICAL THINKING CHALLENGE

How might boycotts affect producers? What positive and negative impacts might they have on quality of life?



### CRITICAL THINKING CHALLENGE

To what extent is it important for consumers to be informed about issues connected to boycotts?



Environmental organizations, such as Greenpeace, use boycotts as one way to take action on issues that concern them. For example, in 2007, Greenpeace called for consumers to boycott some oil and gas products. The boycott aimed to pressure oil and gas companies to reduce the impacts of their economic activities on the environment — especially impacts linked to climate change. Some oil and gas companies — and consumers — consider these impacts necessary to fuel the economies of the world.

Greenpeace has many ways that it takes action on issues. In this photo, for example, Greenpeace activists dressed as giant eyeballs demonstrate during a U.N. meeting on climate change in Vienna in 2007.



## SPOT AND RESPOND TO THE ISSUE

How would you state the issue at the centre of each of these boycotts?

Animal rights groups boycotted the products of some cosmetic companies in 2007, because the companies used animals to test their products. Some cosmetic companies view animal testing as the most effective way to determine the safety of the products for customers.

Human rights activists renewed calls for a boycott of companies with business links to Myanmar (Burma), including some cell phone companies. The activists hoped to pressure the companies to leave Myanmar, which would in turn pressure Myanmar's government to change its policies on human rights. The call for the boycott followed a government crackdown on democracy protestors in Myanmar in September 2007. Many companies — and consumers — believe that doing business in countries such as Myanmar is an effective way to promote change.

## Boycotts in Canadian History

### Les Patriotes: “No!” to British Products

Louis-Joseph Papineau organized Canadiens in Lower Canada to boycott British goods in 1837. A majority of people living in the British colony of Lower Canada at the time were Canadiens, and Papineau was the leader of Les Patriotes, a political movement. Les Patriotes wanted Britain to make the system of government in the colony more democratic, so that Canadiens had more control over their own affairs. The boycott aimed to pressure Britain to make reforms — one of many measures Canadiens took to pressure Britain, including petitions, speeches and rallies. Britain resisted reforming the government of Lower Canada, which led to the Rebellion of 1837. Britain suppressed the rebellion with military force.



This painting shows Louis-Joseph Papineau at a rally in 1837.

### Boycott Stops Logging on Lubicon Land

The land rights of the Lubicon Lake Cree in Alberta were at the centre of a boycott between 1991 and 1998. The boycott targeted the products of pulp-and-paper giant Daishowa Ltd. Boycott organizers persuaded businesses and consumers to stop buying Daishowa products. For example, Woolworths, a department-store chain, stopped using paper bags manufactured by Daishowa. In all, the lost business cost Daishowa millions of dollars. The boycott pressured Daishowa to stop logging land claimed by the Lubicon, until the Lubicon and Canada’s government had come to an agreement. In 2007, the Lubicon and Canada had still not come to an agreement — and Daishowa had still not logged the land.



Members of the Lubicon Lake Cree protest for their land rights in 1987. The Lubicon faced growing pressure on their traditional lands from forestry operations, and from oil and gas development, in northern Alberta. The development was taking place without their consent, because their traditional lands were not part of a historic or modern Treaty. **Think critically:** How does the protest in this photograph connect to the rights of the Lubicon Lake Cree as an Aboriginal people?



To what extent do the boycotts on this page reflect collective identity?



## Wrap Up Your Task

For your task, you need to think of a product or brand that will help you answer the question:

**To what extent does marketing affect consumer behaviour?**

### Summarize Your Ideas

Review the examples of products and brands you collected and analyzed, using the organizer from page 241. Choose one product from your examples. Think about how marketing for that product affects consumer behaviour.

Research advertising and promotional campaigns for the product, and think about the techniques they use. How do they try to engage consumers? How successful are they? How might choosing this product affect a consumer's quality of life?

Try finishing each of these sentences to identify the points you want to make:

- The product I have selected is... because...
- The marketing techniques used by advertisers to sell the product are...
- Some examples showing the relationship between advertising and the choices of the consumer about this product are...
- Consumer decision making with this product affects quality of life in these ways...
- As consumers, we can take action to improve our quality of life by...

How can you use different technologies to communicate your message?

### Choose a Format

Decide which format you will use for your media message. Use the techniques you practised in Analyzing Media Messages on page 247 to help you create your own effective media message.

#### TIPS FOR CREATING EFFECTIVE MEDIA MESSAGES

- ✓ Your message should be concise in communicating the main idea.
- ✓ Consider what you learned about writing for different audiences and purposes.
- ✓ Use friendly language that relates to real-life situations.
- ✓ Include examples and evidence to illustrate your information.
- ✓ Explain why your message is important and how it relates to citizenship, identity and quality of life.



## Chapter 7 Review

### WHAT DID CHAPTER 7 EXPLORE?

- How does consumer behaviour affect quality of life for individuals and groups in Canada and the U.S.?
- What affects the impact of consumerism on the economies of Canada and the U.S.?

### Revisiting the Chapter Issue

Use what you have learned in this chapter to develop your own informed position on the chapter issue:

#### What role should consumerism play in our economy?

Work through the directions for “Demonstrating Your Learning” on page 55 to present your position.

### Share What You Know

Create an organizer that illustrates the role and responsibilities of the consumer in mixed and market economies. Consider the people that consumers interact with, such as advertisers, government and producers. Make a presentation explaining your ideas to others. *Go to the Skills Centre, page 364 to 366, for ideas on organizers.*



### Link with Technology

Develop an electronic bulletin board or blog sharing your ideas and opinions about the environmental effects of products we consume. Include suggestions for making environmentally friendly choices.

### Take Action

In this chapter, you read about groups that boycott products they believe have a negative impact on quality of life. With a group, find an example of a boycott proposed or taking place today. Describe the steps you would take to develop an informed position on whether to join the boycott. Plan how you could lead an awareness campaign to help others make up their minds about the boycott.

### Reflect Before You Forget

Reflect on what you learned in this chapter about the role of consumers in the economy. Complete these thoughts:

- In this chapter, I discovered... about individual consumer behaviour...
- Understanding how consumers affect economic decision making matters because...
- One thing I'd like to know about the relationship between consumer behaviour and quality of life is...