

Teaching notes

A Citizenship/PSHE lesson for year 9 students and above.

Resources:

- internet access (Citizens' Advice Bureau website) during the lesson
- the handouts on pp.3–6 below.

Learning objectives:

- Students will be able to identify their rights as consumers.
- They will understand the term 'consumer rights'.

Suggested answers

Question: Why do you think they do this?

Answer: To encourage **goodwill** (= to make customers like them and want to keep buying things from them).

What advice would you give Lisa?

First of all, Lisa should make sure that she has switched the machine off at the mains, so the combination of water and electricity won't cause an electrical fire.

Before she cleans it up, she should take photos of the leak and any damage it has caused, as evidence to the trader. She could also show the trader her damaged woollen items.

She doesn't need to have her receipt in order to complain to the trader and she is legally entitled to a refund, as the product isn't fit for purpose.

Presumably Lisa has already phoned the trader and explained the situation, but she should follow this up with a formal letter explaining:

- what the goods are
- when she bought them
- what damage has been done
- what she has done about it so far
- what she wants the seller to do (e.g. collect the washing machine and give her a refund).

Some sample letters are available on the Citizens' Advice Bureau website: [Consumer > Common problems with products > What you can do about faulty goods > Letter complaining about faulty goods.](#)

If the trader won't collect the washing machine, she could pay another company to return it for her and then claim the amount back from the seller.

She can also claim compensation for the loss of earnings she has suffered, the consequential loss she has suffered (the damage to her woollen items) and possibly for damage to her property, if any has been caused.

If the trader won't pay, she could claim from the manufacturer. However, she wouldn't be able to ask for more than £275 as she was using the washing machine for her business.

If the manufacturer won't pay, Lisa could contact the Citizens' Advice consumer helpline, who could pass her complaint on to Trading Standards.

If the problem still isn't resolved, Lisa could take the trader to court, but this could be expensive and might cost her more than she would receive in compensation.

Role-plays

- A. The customer should get a refund. The shoes weren't of satisfactory quality.
- B. The trader should send someone to repair the TV or else replace it with one which doesn't flicker.
- C. The trader doesn't have to offer the customer a refund or a replacement, but s/he could, particularly if the customer shops there regularly and/or has asked nicely.
- D. Same as C.
- E. The customer should get a replacement. The goods weren't of satisfactory quality.
- F. The customer isn't entitled to a refund or replacement, as the car works perfectly well. The stains were there when the customer bought the car and even if s/he wasn't told about them, this could be hard to prove – the trader could just say that the customer caused the damage. The customer is very unlikely to get his/her money back.
- G. The customer should get a refund and replacement, and compensation for the damage caused.
- H. Computers should come with a manufacturer's guarantee or warranty. As the customer can't take the computer back to the shop straight away, s/he could wait until s/he gets back from holiday and then send it back to the manufacturer. Alternatively, the shop could offer to replace or repair it when the customer gets back.
- I. The shop should offer the customer a refund. Hopefully this will be enough, but if the customer needs medical care as a result of the rash, s/he could claim compensation.
- J. The customer should get a refund or replacement. The goods weren't as described ('suitable for a newborn') or of satisfactory quality.

Extension

See the information on the Citizens' Advice Bureau website.

Further information for students

The Money Saving Expert website also has some useful advice for young consumers, including: a 'SAD FART' mnemonic of consumer rights; a list of dos and don'ts; a printable, wallet-sized consumer rights guide:

www.moneysavingexpert.com/shopping/consumer-rights-refunds-exchange

Resource 1

Using the Consumer advice guide from the Citizens' Advice Bureau (www.adviceguide.org.uk/england/consumer_e.htm) and the information on this sheet, try to give Lisa some good advice.

Consumer rights

When you buy **goods** they should be:

1. of satisfactory quality
2. **fit for purpose**
3. as described.

If they aren't, you may be able to get:

1. a repair
2. a replacement
3. your money back (a **refund**).



You can't always complain. You have no **grounds** if:

1. you were told about the fault
2. you have damaged the item
3. the goods are fine, but you have changed your mind
4. the clothes don't fit.

However, some shops will give you your money back even if the goods are fine or the clothes don't fit.

Question: Why do you think they do this?

What to do if you want to take something back

- You must **return** goods in the same condition, and as quickly and reasonably as possible.

If you can't do this in person, you should telephone the shop to let them know about the problem.

You don't have to pay for the return of goods, although in practice it is easier to return small items yourself.

- Legally, you don't have to show your receipt. You still have the same rights without it (but it makes it much easier, as you can prove where the goods came from).
- You have the same rights with items bought in a sale, unless it is clearly stated that they are non-returnable.
- If you claim **loss** or **injury** because of the **faulty** goods, you may be able to **claim compensation** (= ask for extra money, as well as a **refund**).

Keywords

to claim	demand; ask for
compensation	money to make up for problems you have suffered (on top of your money back)
faulty	which doesn't work properly
fit for purpose	does what it is designed to do, e.g. if it is a kettle, it boils water
goods	products; things that you buy
grounds	legal reasons for being able to do something
injury	you've been hurt
loss	losing money that you would normally have made (in your business) or spending your own money to solve the problem
refund	your money back
return	take or send back

Tasks

What advice would you give Lisa?



Lisa buys a washing machine and is told it will work to wash woollen items. She gets it home and the washing machine breaks after the first wash, leaking water all over the floor. It has also damaged her woollen items.

Lisa can't return it to the shop, as the item is too big to fit in her car.

Lisa has lost her receipt, but she knows where she bought the washing machine.

Lisa washes clothes for a living and the shop is taking weeks to collect the item, so Lisa has now lost money.

Role-plays

Get into pairs.

Using the scenarios below, one of you will play the customer and the other will be the seller. Take it in turns.

Use the Consumer advice guide from the Citizens' Advice Bureau (www.adviceguide.org.uk/england/consumer_e.htm) and the information p.1 to decide upon the fairest outcome.

Scenario A

You bought a pair of trainers last week. You wore them twice and the sole came off. You have the receipt and want a refund.

Scenario B

You bought a television which keeps flickering. You go back to the shop (without the item) to complain.

Scenario C

You bought a T-shirt and were in a rush so didn't try it on. It's too small. You want your money back.

Scenario D

You bought a skateboard. It has a long scratch down one side which you were told about at the time. You want a refund because a friend says that the scratch looks stupid.

Scenario E

You bought a Nintendo DS in the sale. The hinges have broken and so you want to exchange it.

Scenario F

You bought a secondhand car from a local garage. You notice that it has a few small stains on the front seat. You want to get your money back.

Scenario G

You buy a new oven. The first time that you use it to make a pizza, it explodes. This causes damage in your kitchen which will cost £5,000 to fix.

Scenario H

You bought a new computer which doesn't work. You can't take it back to the shop as you're about to go on holiday. You ring them.

Scenario I

You buy some shampoo which leaves a terrible rash on your face. You've never had a rash from shampoo before. You go back to the shop to complain.

Scenario J

You buy a teddy bear for your six-month-old sister. The shop assistant says that it's suitable for a newborn. When she chews the teddy at home, all the stuffing comes out.

Extension

Go to the Consumer page of the Citizens' Advice Bureau website (www.adviceguide.org.uk/england/consumer_e.htm) and then to the following pages:

- a. [Different ways of buying > Buying by internet, mail order or phone](#)
- b. [Different ways of buying > Off-premises sales > Protecting vulnerable people](#)
- c. [Phones, TV, internet and computers > Cancelling your TV, phone or internet contract](#)

Use them to write down five facts that you didn't know before this lesson. Remember to use your own words – no copying and pasting!

Five facts about consumer rights

Example: You can cancel your mobile phone contract without being charged if there's a price increase, if you got it on/after 23 January 2014.

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