



Shopping and Consumer Life

Multiple choice: consumer choices | Cambridge IGCSE ESL 0510/0511

1. Lead-in discussion

Talk with a partner before you read.

1. Would you buy second-hand clothes? Why, or why not?
2. How can advertising affect what teenagers want to buy?
3. Is a bargain always a good purchase?
4. What makes clothes feel personal to someone?

Exercise 4 at a glance

Read one longer text and answer six multiple-choice questions. Choose A, B or C. The correct answer may depend on attitude, purpose or a detail across a whole paragraph, not just one matching word.

2. Read for overall understanding

Read the article. What did Erin learn from buying second-hand clothes?

Buying only second-hand clothes

by Erin Walsh

Last January, I decided not to buy any new clothes for six months. It began as a challenge with my cousin, who said we both bought too many things after seeing them online. I did not think of myself as wasteful. I rarely bought expensive brands, and I often chose sale items. But when I emptied my wardrobe, I found shirts I had worn once and a jacket with the price label still attached. Cheap clothes had made me careless, not sensible. I also realised that sale prices had trained me to ask whether something was cheap before asking whether I needed it.

At first, second-hand shopping felt slow. In normal shops, clothes are arranged by size, colour and trend, so you can find what you expect. In charity shops and online resale apps, I had to search patiently. Sometimes I found nothing; sometimes I found something unusual that nobody else at school owned. That was the first surprise. I had expected second-hand clothes to make me look old-fashioned, but they actually made my style feel more personal. The slower process made me think more carefully, because I could not simply copy whatever was displayed at the front of a shop.

The challenge also changed how I understood price. A low price can make a bad decision feel harmless, especially if an advert says an item is almost sold out. With second-hand clothes, I still made mistakes. I bought a pair of trousers because they were a bargain, then realised they did not match anything I owned. After that, I asked myself three questions: Will I wear it often? Does it fit properly? Am I buying it only because it is cheap? I wrote those questions on a note in my phone and checked them before paying, which saved me from several almost-purchases.

My friends reacted in different ways. One friend thought the idea was brilliant and started sending me links to second-hand jackets. Another said she disliked wearing clothes that belonged to strangers. I understood that feeling, especially with shoes, but I also noticed that nobody worries about using library books or sitting on a bus seat. The more I talked about the challenge, the less strange it seemed. Some people were curious, not judgemental. Her comment made me think about how ideas of cleanliness, fashion and status can affect shopping decisions more than people admit.

When the six months ended, I did buy one new item: a plain coat I knew I would wear for years. I do not think buying new clothes is wrong, and I do not want to turn shopping into a moral test. The challenge simply made me pause. Now I buy fewer things, choose better, and feel less pulled around by adverts. My wardrobe is smaller, but it works harder. That has made shopping less exciting in the short term, but much more satisfying when I do choose something.

3. Strategy focus

Underline the key words

Before reading the options, underline the key words in the question. Watch for small traps such as time, reason, attitude or change.

4. Exam-style multiple-choice questions

For each question, choose the correct answer, A, B or C.

Question 1

Why did Erin begin the clothing challenge?

- A She and her cousin thought online habits encouraged them to buy too much.
- B Her school asked students to reduce fashion waste for a project.
- C She wanted to avoid buying expensive brands in future.

Question 2

What did Erin realise when she emptied her wardrobe?

- A Most of her clothes no longer fitted her.
- B Low-cost shopping had still led to waste.
- C She owned more expensive brands than she expected.

Question 3

How did second-hand shopping surprise Erin?

- A It was easier to search than ordinary shops.
- B It made her prefer old-fashioned clothes.
- C It helped her develop a more individual style.

Question 4

Why does Erin mention the trousers?

- A to explain why resale apps are unreliable
- B to show that a bargain can still be a poor choice
- C to prove that second-hand clothes are hard to match

Question 5

What point does Erin make by mentioning library books and bus seats?

- A People accept shared items in other parts of life.
- B Second-hand clothes are cleaner than people think.
- C Public services influence shopping habits.

Question 6

What is Erin's final attitude to buying new clothes?

- A It should be avoided whenever second-hand items exist.
- B It matters less than ignoring adverts completely.
- C It can be fine if the choice is careful and useful.

5. Follow-up tasks

1. Discussion: What would make second-hand shopping more popular with teenagers?
2. Strategy: Check two answers by underlining the sentence or short section that proves each one.
3. Writing: Write advice for someone who buys things too quickly online.
4. Vocabulary: Circle words and phrases connected to shopping, advertising and spending habits.

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2. Read for overall understanding

Suggested answer: She learned to make more careful choices instead of buying things quickly because they were cheap or fashionable.

4. Exam-style multiple-choice questions

1. A; 2. B; 3. C; 4. B; 5. A; 6. C

1. A - Her cousin said they bought too many things after seeing them online.
2. B - She found barely worn clothes and says cheap clothes had made her careless.
3. C - She found unusual items and says her style felt more personal.
4. B - The trousers were cheap but did not work with her wardrobe.
5. A - She compares second-hand clothes with other shared things people accept.
6. C - She buys a new coat but now pauses and chooses more carefully.