

SHOP LIKE A CONSUMER LESSON PLAN



SUBJECT

Agriculture, Food Literacy + Consumer Decision Making

TOPIC

Understanding How Canadians Choose Chicken

FOCUS

Middle School

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Recognize the many factors that influence food purchasing decisions.
- Interpret common food labels found on Canadian chicken products.
- Identify how marketing, price, nutrition, ethics, and country-of-origin influence consumer behaviour.
- Apply inquiry-based learning strategies that encourage students to think critically rather than simply memorize facts.

MATERIALS

- A consumer avatar worksheet
- Grocery flyers or direct students to Flipp.com on phone or Laptop

REFERENCES

- Chicken Farmers of Canada
- BC Chicken Growers' Association
- Canada's Food Guide
- www.flipp.com

INTRODUCTION

Activity: Shop Like a Consumer

This inquiry-based activity is designed to help students recognize that food purchasing decisions are influenced by many competing priorities, and that there is rarely one "correct" choice. Rather than focusing on the "best" chicken product, students learn to evaluate products through the perspective of different consumers.

PREPARATION

Divide participants into groups. Provide each group with:

- One Consumer Avatar worksheet
- Grocery flyers (printed or accessed through Flipp.com)
- Paper for note-taking
- Pens or highlighters

TEACHER INSTRUCTIONS

Explain to participants that they are no longer shopping as themselves—they are shopping as the consumer described on their avatar card.

Each group will:

- Review their assigned consumer avatar.
- Search grocery flyers for a chicken product that best fits their avatar's priorities.
- Record the product they selected and explain why it meets their avatar's needs.
- Identify any labels, claims, or marketing language that influenced their decision.
- Discuss any compromises or trade-offs their avatar had to make (price, nutrition, convenience, ethics, country of origin, etc.).
- Prepare a brief presentation explaining their shopping decisions.

SHOP LIKE A CONSUMER LESSON PLAN



WHOLE CLASS DEBRIEF

Following the presentations, facilitate a discussion using questions such as:

- Did different groups choose different products? Why?
- Which priorities seemed to influence decisions the most?
- Were any marketing claims confusing or misleading?
- How did price affect purchasing decisions?
- Were there situations where values and budget conflicted?
- Which labels helped consumers make informed decisions?
- How might different families make different choices based on their circumstances?
- Conclude by reinforcing that consumers bring different experiences, values, budgets, and priorities to the grocery store, and that developing food literacy means understanding how to evaluate information—not simply choosing one "right" product.

CLASSROOM ADAPTIONS (GRADE 8–12)

This activity can be extended by asking students to:

- Compare Product of Canada and Made in Canada claims.
- Calculate the cost per kilogram of different products.
- Investigate nutrition labels and ingredient lists.
- Analyze how packaging and marketing influence purchasing decisions.
- Research the meaning of common labels such as Free Run, Organic, Raised Without Antibiotics, and Raised by a Canadian Farmer.
- Reflect on how their own purchasing priorities compare with those of their assigned avatar.

CONSUMER AVATAR

AVATAR 1: THE BUDGET SHOPPER

Main Priority: Lowest price possible while still being safe to eat.

Things they care about:

- Price per kg
- What's on sale
- Pack size / bulk
- Store brand vs premium brand

What they "don't" care much about:

- Organic
- Free-range wording
- "Air chilled" or marketing fluff

AVATAR 2: THE ECO-CONSCIOUS + ETHICAL CONSUMER

Main Priority: How the chicken was raised.

Things they care about:

- Labels: "Raised by a Canadian Farmer," "Product of Canada," "Free-run," "Raised Without Antibiotics," "Certified Humane," etc.
- Supply management (local food)
- Carbon footprint → local vs imported
- Packaging material (foam vs recyclable)

What they "don't" care much about:

- Paying more — "if" it aligns with values

AVATAR 3: THE HEALTH & NUTRITION SHOPPER

Main Priority: Choosing the healthiest option.

Things they care about:

- Skinless cuts
- "Lower sodium" or "No added seasoning"
- Fresh over fried/prebreaded
- Protein per serving
- Ingredient list on frozen breaded products
- Fat content & added sugars

What they "don't" care much about:

- Fancy packaging
- Convenience if it has lots of additives

AVATAR 4: THE BUSY CONVENIENCE SHOPPER

Main Priority: What's fastest and easiest.

Things they care about:

- Ready-to-cook or ready-to-eat
- Pre-seasoned
- Pre-cut (strips, diced)
- Microwavable or air-fryer friendly options
- Time saved

What they "don't" care much about:

- Price
- Labels
- Ingredient list