

Lesson Plan: The Conscious Consumer & Citizen Advocate

Materials Needed:

- Notebook or journal & writing utensil
- Access to the internet for research (with supervision)
- A common household food product with an ingredients label (e.g., a box of cereal, a can of soda, a bag of chips)
- Art supplies (paper, markers, colored pencils, scissors, glue) or a digital tool (like Canva, Google Slides, or a video editor) for the final project
- Optional: A camera or smartphone for documenting research or creating a video

Segment 1: The Investigator - Rights, Responsibilities, and a Healthy World (45-60 minutes)

1. Opening Discussion: What Are Our Rights? (10 minutes)

Let's start by thinking like a **Principled** and **Caring** citizen. We'll talk about rights and responsibilities.

- **Question 1:** What does it mean to have a "right"? Can you think of any rights you have? (e.g., right to education, right to be safe).
- **Question 2:** If we have rights, do we also have responsibilities? What is the responsibility that comes with the right to live in a clean and safe home? (e.g., responsibility to help keep it clean).
- **Connection:** We have a right to a healthy environment. This means clean air to breathe, clean water to drink, and safe places to play. What is our responsibility that goes with that right? (e.g., not littering, conserving water).

2. Activity: Product Investigation (20 minutes)

Now, let's become **Inquirers**! We are going to investigate a product to see how it connects to our health and the environment.

1. **Choose Your Subject:** Select one food product from your pantry. Let's pick something you see often.
2. **First Impressions:** Look at the packaging. What does it promise? Does it look fun, healthy, or delicious? Who do you think the company wants to buy this product? Write down your observations.
3. **Read the Label:** Turn the package over and find the ingredients list.
 - Read the first five ingredients. Can you pronounce them all? Do you know what they are?
 - Look for sugar. Sugar can have many names (high-fructose corn syrup, sucrose, dextrose, etc.). How many times do you see words that might mean sugar? Where is sugar on the list? (Ingredients are listed by weight, so the first ingredient is the most plentiful).
 - Think about the packaging itself. What is it made of? (Plastic, cardboard, aluminum). Is it recyclable? What resources were needed to make it? (Water, trees, energy).

IB Learner Profile Focus (Knowledgeable): By examining this product, you are exploring concepts of health, environmental impact, and marketing that have local and global significance.

3. Brainstorming a Problem (15 minutes)

Based on your investigation, let's think like a **Thinker** and identify a problem to solve.

- Does the product seem less healthy than its packaging suggests? (e.g., A "fruity" cereal that is mostly sugar).
- Does the product create a lot of waste? (e.g., A small item in a large plastic box).
- Does making the product use a lot of a precious resource, like water?

In your notebook, write down one clear problem you have identified with your product. *Example: "This cereal is marketed to kids as a healthy breakfast, but its main ingredient is sugar, which is not healthy."*

Segment 2: The Researcher - Digging for the Truth (45-60 minutes)

1. Planning Your Research (10 minutes)

Great investigators need a plan. Let's figure out what we need to know. Based on the problem you identified, write down 3-5 research questions. These questions will guide your search for information.

Example Questions (if the problem is sugar in cereal):

- What does too much sugar do to a person's body?
- Why do companies put so much sugar in kids' cereal?
- What is the environmental impact of growing sugarcane? (It's a very thirsty crop!)
- What are my rights as a consumer to have clear and honest information about my food?

2. Guided Research (30 minutes)

Using the internet (with a parent's help for safe searching), find the answers to your questions. You are now a **Knowledgeable Inquirer**, seeking out facts and evidence.

Tips for Research:

- Use keywords like "health effects of sugar," "environmental impact of plastic packaging," or "consumer rights for food labeling."
- Look for reliable sources like health organizations (e.g., World Health Organization), environmental groups (e.g., National Geographic, Greenpeace), or consumer protection agencies.
- Take notes! Write down the most surprising or important facts you find. Don't forget to note where you found the information.

3. Synthesize Your Findings (5 minutes)

Look at your notes. What is the most important message you want to share with others about this product? Summarize your findings in one or two powerful sentences. This will be the main idea for your advocacy campaign.

Example: "Companies are harming kids' health and wasting water by producing sugary cereals in non-recyclable packaging, and we have a right to demand better options."

Segment 3: The Advocate - Taking Respectful Action (60 minutes)

1. Brainstorming Solutions (15 minutes)

Now it's time to be a **Risk-Taker** and a **Communicator**. We've identified a problem and researched it. What can we do about it? As a consumer and citizen, you have power!

Let's think about respectful ways to ask for change:

- **Educate Others:** How can you teach friends or family about what you learned?
- **Contact the Company:** How can you respectfully tell the manufacturer what you think they should change?
- **Suggest Alternatives:** What is a better, healthier, or more environmentally friendly choice people could make?

Choose one action-oriented goal for your campaign. *Example: "My goal is to persuade the company to reduce the sugar in their cereal by 50% and use a recyclable cardboard box."*

2. Create Your Advocacy Campaign (35 minutes)

This is your chance to be creative! Your task is to design a campaign to communicate your message and achieve your goal. Choose **one** of the following formats:

- **A Persuasive Poster:** Design a poster that grabs people's attention. Include your main message, a key fact from your research, and a clear "call to action" (what you want people to do).
- **A Letter to the CEO:** Write a formal, respectful letter to the head of the company. State your concern (the problem), provide evidence from your research, and clearly explain the change you would like to see. This demonstrates being **Principled** by using a fair and honest approach.
- **A 60-Second Public Service Announcement (PSA) Video:** Write a script and film a short video. Explain the problem and urge viewers to make a different choice or join you in asking the company to change.
- **A Redesigned Package:** Redesign the product's packaging to be more honest and environmentally friendly. On the back, explain the changes you made and why they are important for consumer and environmental health.

3. Presentation and Reflection (10 minutes)

Present your finished campaign project. After you present, let's reflect on the process:

- What was the most interesting thing you learned?
- How did this project change the way you think about the products in your home?
- What is one small, responsible choice you can make as a consumer starting today?

Assessment:

The final campaign project will be evaluated based on:

1. **Clarity of the Message:** Is the problem and the proposed solution easy to understand?
2. **Use of Evidence:** Does the project include at least one key fact from your research?
3. **Creativity and Effort:** Is the project thoughtful, creative, and well-executed?

4. **Respectful Tone:** Does the campaign advocate for change in a firm but respectful way, reflecting a **Principled** and **Caring** approach?