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Ethical Consumerism

Summary Writing

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Student

Two types of lesson

Lesson#1: [Easy] ***** [B2/C1]

1. Predict the content of the text. Write down key terms & ideas.
2. Read the text & check words & meanings with a dictionary.
3. Identify the key points & support & complete the **outline**.
4. Write the summary – only one paragraph (200-250 words).
5. Check key points with the **completed outline** & **model answer**.
6. Answer critical thinking questions & check suggested answers.

Lesson #2: [Hard] ***** [C1]

1. Read the text – no dictionary.
2. Identify the key points and support.
3. Write the summary – only one paragraph (200-250 words).
4. Check key points with the **completed outline** & **model answer**.
5. Answer critical thinking questions & check suggested answers.

Teacher

Two types of lesson

Lesson#1: [easy] ***** [B2/C1]

1. Distribute text a week /day before the test. Students read, check vocabulary & meanings.
2. Test day – distribute a **new copy of text** and **summary question**.
3. Set 1 hour to read the text, take notes and write a one-paragraph summary of 200-250 words.
4. Feedback¹: take in and mark [use correction code*].
5. Feedback²: distribute **completed outline** & **model answer**.
6. Summary marking: Should contain at least 4 main ideas with support – see summary key points.
7. Extra: Critical thinking questions / group discussion (30 minutes).

Lesson #2: [hard] ***** [C1]

1. Set 1 hour to read the **text** and write a one-paragraph summary of 200-250 words.
3. Feedback¹: take in and mark [use correction code*].
4. Feedback²: distribute **completed outline** & **model answer**.
5. Summary Marking: Should contain at least 4 main ideas with support – see summary key points.
6. Extra: Answer critical thinking questions / group discussion (30 minutes).

Correction code*: www.academic-englishuk/error-correction

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Ethical Consumerism

By A Watson (2020)

Due to the growing global concern about climate change, environmental destruction and the increasing number of endangered species, ethical consumerism has become an extremely prominent topic. Bertrand and Regan (2008) describe ethical consumption as consciously identifying the links between a product, its origins and the context in which it has been produced. They define the term as awareness of how a consumer's lifestyle affects people, communities and the environment, and claim that "[an] ethically-informed consumer realises that when they buy something, they are not only buying the product". Hussain (2012, p112) outlines an example: "...when you walk into Starbucks and face an array of coffee choices, one of them might be fair trade. If you base your decision to buy the fair trade coffee at least partly on the fact that the growers were treated fairly in the manufacturing process, you engage in ethical consumerism". This definition and example are relevant, as they place the responsibility of ethical consumerism on the end user, the customer, which is an accurate depiction of the term. However, to understand ethical consumerism, it is important to identify what constitutes unethical consumerism.

Unethical consumerism is a challenging term to define due to the subjective nature of what constitutes 'unethical'. However, Hunt (2018) highlights certain factors as being key ethical indicators consumers should consider when deciding whether to purchase from a company: adherence to tax laws, treatment of workers, environmental considerations and sustainability. If a company performs poorly in any of these areas, the consumer should carefully consider whether purchasing from that company is 'unethical consumerism'. For example, Hunt (2018) highlights delivery giant Amazon's poor treatment of workers at their distribution centres as an example of unethical practice as well as the much publicised tax avoidance accusations (Fuller, 2012). Other companies have also come under scrutiny for worker's rights abuses: ASDA and Tesco have been accused of paying unfair wages as well as showing discrimination towards staff (Tatum, 2020). Other company's ethics have been questioned for environmental reasons, with Coca-Cola being accused of hoarding water supplies in rural communities (Vos et al., 2018).

The growing number of reports of unethical practices by large companies has led many shoppers to consider what they can do as individuals to become more ethical consumers. This has resulted in a significant rise in the practice, with the Co-op Ethical Consumer Report (2018) reporting a 400% increase in ethical consumerism since 1999. When compared against the fact that the average UK household expenditure has grown by only 2% over the same period, this represents a significant increase in the practice. The biggest rises have been in ethical food and drink consumption, which could include such practices as buying Fairtrade or more local products as well as green home expenditure. This includes trying to be more efficient with energy and installing solar panels amongst other initiatives. The large and continuously expanding range of methods of ethical consumption has led to discussion of what type of consumer is choosing to become more ethical. Park (2018) argues that the range of people who may become ethical consumers has grown due to an expanding range of factors. She argues that female consumers respond to 'ethical narratives', where a product is sold based on an emotional appeal. This sort of marketing has become much more achievable in recent years due to the rise in social media advertising. Park (2018) also argues that younger people may value ethical goods more highly due to an increased awareness of the damage unethical consumption can do to the planet and the potential long-term ramifications this could have.

It is important to question whether the rise in ethical consumerism will continue. It could revert to a marginal social movement, or it could become a mainstream movement, replacing price, speed and convenience as the main factors behind consumption. In 2007 Thompson and Coskuner-Balli argued

that the emotional engagement and moral responsibility of the public as well as the rising awareness of our environment would lead to continuous growth in ethical consumerism. Thirteen years on this observation has proved to be correct, and the rise in ethical consumerism looks set to be a trend that will continue.

References

Bertrand, B. and Regan, C. (2008) *What is Ethical Consumption?*, Development Education.ie [Online] [Accessed 1st April 2020] <https://developmenteducation.ie/feature/ethical-consumption/>

Fuller, C. (2012) *Amazon tax-avoidance Will Hit UK Businesses*, Accountancy Age.ed [Online] [Accessed 2nd April 2020] <https://link-gale-com.mmu.idm.oclc.org/apps/doc/A308594368/ITOF?u=mmucal5&sid=ITOF&xid=f7641166>

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Park, K (2018) Understanding Ethical consumers: Willingness-to-pay by moral Cause, *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, 35 (2). p.157-168

Tatum, M (2020) *Why the Modern Slavery Act hasn't Worked: the Complex Food and Drink Supply Chain is an Easy Target for Human Traffickers*, Grocer [Online] [Accessed 2nd April 2020] <https://link-gale-com.mmu.idm.oclc.org/apps/doc/A618123391/ITOF?u=mmucal5&sid=ITOF&xid=8a7c04b3>

Thompson, C. and Coskuner-Balli, G. (2007) 'Enchanting Ethical Consumerism: The case of Community Supported Agriculture', *Journal of Consumer Culture*, 7(3), p. 275–303

Vos, D. Rosanne. Kohne, M and Roth, D. (2018) We'll Turn Your Water into Coca-Cola: the Atomising Practices of Oil Palm Plantation Development in Indonesia, *Journal of Agrarian Change*, 18 (2). p. 385-405

Outline: Summary note-taking

take notes on the key points of the article.

1. Main idea:

Support:

2. Main idea:

Support:

3. Main idea:

Support:

4. Main idea:

Support:

Summary Key Points **ANSWERS**

A good summary should have at 4 main ideas and 1-2 points of support for each main idea.

| |
|--|
| 1. Main idea: Definition of ethical consumerism. |
| <p>Support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ethical consumption = awareness of connection between product, its origins & the production context (Bertrand and Regan, 2008). How consumer's lifestyle affects people, communities & environment (ibid). "[an] ethically-informed consumer realises that when they buy something, they are not only buying the product" (ibid). Responsibility lies with consumer (Hussain, 2012). |
| 2. Main idea: Unethical behaviour. |
| <p>Support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Key ethical indicators: adherence to tax laws, treatment of workers, environmental considerations & sustainability (Hunt, 2018). If company performs poorly these areas = consumer should decide if this is 'unethical consumerism'. Amazon = poor treatment of employees (Hunt, 2018) & tax avoidance (Fuller, 2012). Supermarkets = paying unfair wages & discrimination (Tatum, 2020). Coca-Cola = hoarding water supplies in rural communities (Vos et al., 2018). |
| 3. Main idea: Ethical consumption in practice. |
| <p>Support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 400% increase in ethical consumerism since 1999 (Co-op, 2018). Ethical food & drink consumption (Fair Trade & local products) = biggest rise. Green home expenditure = solar panels. Consumer = females respond to ethical narratives (Park, 2018). Consumer = younger people = increase in awareness of unethical behaviour on planet. |
| 4. Main idea: Ethical consumption future predictions. |
| <p>Support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will it continue or revert back? Emotional engagement & moral responsibility = growth in ethical consumption (Thompson and Coskuner-Balli, 2007). Rising awareness of environment = growth in ethical consumption (ibid). Prediction 13 years ago correct = & will continue to grow. |

Summary

Task: Write a 200-250 word summary on the key elements of the text.

Word count: _____

Ethical Consumerism - Model Summary

Task: Write a 200 - 250-word summary on the key features of the text

Ethical consumerism can be defined as an awareness of the connection between the product, its origins and the situation in which it was produced. With the responsibility lying with the consumer (Hussain, 2012), it is how their lifestyle impacts individuals, communities & the environment (Bertrand and Regan, 2008). The consumer has to make a decision on what counts as ethical behaviour if an organisation performs inadequately in the key ethical indicators of adherence to tax laws, treatment of workers, environmental considerations and sustainability (Hunt, 2018). In the last two decades, consumers have become more ethical in their buying decisions. The Co-op (2018) report a considerable increase since 1999 with the largest proportion in the consumption of food and drink. The two main consumers that are mostly purchasing ethical products are females who respond well to emotional appeals (Park, 2018) and young people who are aware of the impact unethical behaviour has on the planet. Although the writer questions whether ethical consumerism will become mainstream, she does illustrate that the prediction thirteen years ago that ethical consumption would increase due to the public's emotional engagement, moral responsibility and awareness of environmental issues (Thompson and Coskuner-Balli, 2007) has been realised. She ends by stating that this trend is set to continue to rise.

211 words

Critical Thinking Questions

i) What's the stance of the author? What is the evidence for this?

[2 points]

ii) Is this a credible article? Yes /no – why?

[2 points]

iii) Highlight four ideas in the text you would use for an essay on 'Is ethical consumerism here to stay?'

[4 points]

iv) Highlight two areas in the text that you question, disagree with or lack evidence

[2 points]

Critical Thinking Questions

i) What's the stance of the author? What is the evidence for this?

The writer believes that ethical consumption is growing and predicts that it will continue to do so. She supports her ideas with evidence from the Co-op & Thompson and Coskuner-Balli and also states her opinion in the conclusion:

"Thirteen years on this observation has proved to be correct, and the rise in ethical consumerism looks set to be a trend that will continue".

[2 points]

ii) Is this a credible article? Yes /no – why?

Yes, good source choice with eight sources used.

But who is the author? Not published or supported by a journal publication. Probably a good idea to use the primary sources.

[2 points]

iii) Highlight four ideas in the text you would use for an essay on 'Is ethical consumerism here to stay?'

P1: Global concern: climate change, environmental destruction & endangered species.

P1: Ethical consumption = consciously identifying the links btw product, origins & context (Bertrand and Regan, 2008).

P1: Consumer's lifestyle affects people, communities and the environment (ibid).

P1: Responsibility lies with consumer (Hussain, 2012).

P2: key ethical indicators: adherence to tax laws, treatment of workers, environmental considerations and sustainability (Hunt, 2018).

P2: Unethical consumerism = Amazon's poor treatment of employees (Hunt, 2018) & tax avoidance (Fuller, 2012); supermarkets' unfair wages & discrimination (Tatum, 2020); Coca-Cola - hoarding water supplies (Vos et al., 2018).

P4: Ethical consumerism = rise. 400% since 1999 (Co-op Ethical Consumer Report, 2018).

P4: Biggest rises = ethical food & drink consumption (Fairtrade or local) & green home exp., e.g, solar panels.

P4: Female consumers = respond to 'ethical narratives' (Park, 2018).

P4: Young consumers = value ethical goods = awareness of damage to environment (ibid).

P5: Emotional engagement, moral responsibility, awareness of our environment = would lead to growth in ethical consumerism (Thompson and Coskuner-Balli, 2007).

P5: Prediction = realised. Ethical consumerism = will continue to rise.

[4 points]

iv) Highlight two areas in the text that you question, disagree with or lack evidence.

P1: Consumer's lifestyle affects people, communities and the environment. *Good Point!*
P1: When a consumer buys Fair Trade coffee in Starbucks, is this really ethical consumption?
[What about all other product that they sell that aren't Fair Trade? Is this an example of greenwashing?]
P1: Responsibility lies with consumer. *Good Point!*
P2: Do consumers really see the connection between ethical consumerism and the examples in the paragraph of unethical practice? [Do they turn a blind eye? Do they think that buying one ethical product constitutes being an ethical consumer? Should there be more publicity on companies that are unethical?]
P3: What criteria did the Co-op follow in the research in ethical consumerism? [Was it based more on the organisation, the product or the consumer? [Would the results change if the subject changed? How did they conduct their studies?]
P3: Is buying Fair Trade products ethical? [What studies prove this?]
P3: Which age group are the younger consumers in Park's study? [Where was this research conducted? Would it change if the research was conducted in a different country? Do socio-economic factors change our consumption habits?
P4: Will there always be consumers who would choose price, speed and convenience over ethics?
P5: Emotional engagement, moral responsibility & awareness of our environment would lead to growth in ethical consumerism. *Good Point! But it'll probably take decades as a change in culture is needed.*

[Any 2 of these – obviously subjective but accept any credible student answer too].

[2 points]