

IELTS General Training Reading Test

Topic: Consumerism and Consumption

SECTION 1

Text A: Advertisement – EcoSmart Appliances

EcoSmart Appliances brings you a new generation of environmentally friendly home products designed to reduce energy usage and water waste. Our washing machines feature SmartSense™ technology, using 40% less water and 30% less energy. Our refrigerators are rated A+++ for efficiency and can be controlled via smartphone for real-time temperature adjustment. Visit our online store to find out about our Green Cashback Offer: get £50 back for every old appliance you recycle with us.

Questions 1–7

Answer the questions below. Choose NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS AND/OR A NUMBER from the text for each answer.

1. What percentage of water do EcoSmart washing machines save?
2. What is the energy efficiency rating of the refrigerators?
3. What special offer allows customers to receive money back?
4. How much cashback can a customer get for recycling an appliance?
5. Through what device can users adjust refrigerator temperature?
6. What technology do washing machines use to reduce water?
7. What is the main goal of EcoSmart products?

Text B: Notice – Store Return Policy

Customers may return most items purchased within 30 days of receipt. Items must be unused and in their original packaging. Proof of purchase is required for all returns. Perishable goods, gift cards, and clearance items are non-refundable. Refunds will be issued to the original method of payment. If an item was purchased online, customers must use the prepaid return label included with their delivery.

Questions 8–14

Do the following statements agree with the information given in the text?

Write TRUE, FALSE or NOT GIVEN.

8. Customers have 60 days to return an item.
9. Items must not have been used.
10. You can return perishable items within 30 days.
11. Clearance products are not refundable.
12. Proof of purchase is not necessary if you paid cash.
13. Online buyers receive a prepaid label for returns.
14. Refunds are always given as store credit.

SECTION 2

Text C: Internal Memo – Marketing Team Meeting

To: All Marketing Department Staff From: Head of Marketing Subject: Meeting on Consumer Habits Study
A recent survey shows that over 60% of our customers make purchasing decisions based on online reviews rather than advertisements. The younger demographic (ages 18–30) is especially influenced by influencer recommendations on social media platforms. Please prepare a short presentation on how we can integrate customer feedback into our upcoming advertising campaigns. The meeting will take place on Thursday at 10 a.m. in the Conference Room B.

Questions 15–21

Complete the sentences below. Choose NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS from the text for each answer.

15. The study found that over _____ of customers rely on online reviews.
16. People aged _____ are most influenced by social media influencers.
17. The marketing team must focus on using _____ in advertising plans.
18. The meeting is on _____.
19. It will be held in _____.
20. Staff should prepare a _____.
21. The memo was written by the _____.

Text D: Workplace Guide – Ethical Purchasing Policy

Our company believes in responsible consumerism. All office supplies and promotional materials must be sourced from suppliers who follow fair trade practices and use sustainable materials. Employees should check that products are certified under recognized environmental standards, such as FSC or Fairtrade. We aim to reduce unnecessary consumption by encouraging the reuse of existing materials where possible. Purchasing requests must be approved by the department manager.

Questions 22–27

Choose the correct letter, A, B, C or D.

22. What is the main purpose of the Ethical Purchasing Policy?
- A. To increase sales of office supplies
 - B. To promote sustainable and fair sourcing
 - C. To reduce staff expenses
 - D. To replace old suppliers
23. Which certification should employees look for?
- A. ISO
 - B. FSC or Fairtrade
 - C. CE
 - D. Vegan
24. Who must approve purchasing requests?
- A. The supplier
 - B. The finance team
 - C. The department manager
 - D. The HR director
25. What materials are employees encouraged to reuse?
- A. Existing ones
 - B. Imported ones
 - C. Branded ones
 - D. Digital ones
26. Which type of supplier should be avoided?
- A. Those without fair trade practices
 - B. Those that sell stationery
 - C. Those with international delivery
 - D. Those that sell cheap items
27. The company's approach to buying products can best be described as:
- A. Wasteful
 - B. Environmentally responsible
 - C. Indifferent
 - D. Financially motivated

SECTION 3

Text E: The Psychology of Consumerism

Modern consumerism has transformed not only how we buy but how we think. In earlier centuries, people purchased goods primarily for their practical use. Today, consumption has become a form of identity expression. Sociologists argue that individuals often use brands to communicate social status or personal values. For example, owning eco-friendly products may signify environmental awareness, while luxury brands convey prestige. However, the desire for material goods is not purely rational. Psychological studies reveal that purchasing triggers short-term dopamine release, creating a cycle of gratification and repetition. This explains why some individuals experience ‘retail therapy’ — buying items to improve mood temporarily. Yet consumerism carries environmental and ethical costs. Overproduction leads to resource depletion and pollution. At the same time, the pressure to buy fuels debt and financial anxiety. In response, a global movement toward minimalism and sustainable consumption has gained popularity. Advocates encourage people to buy less and focus on long-lasting products that serve genuine needs rather than trends. Ultimately, consumerism reflects both freedom and vulnerability: our ability to choose, and our susceptibility to persuasion.

Questions 28–40

Answer the questions below.

28–31. Choose the correct letter, A, B, C or D.

28. What was the main purpose of consumption in earlier centuries?

- A. To express identity
- B. To show wealth
- C. For practical use
- D. To follow trends

29. According to sociologists, why do people use brands?

- A. To show social or personal identity
- B. To save money
- C. To reduce anxiety
- D. To simplify life

30. What does ‘retail therapy’ refer to?

- A. Buying to relieve stress
- B. Selling goods
- C. Advertising techniques
- D. Environmental activism

31. Which movement promotes buying fewer, durable goods?

- A. Consumerism
- B. Minimalism
- C. Materialism
- D. Capitalism

32–36. Do the following statements agree with the text? Write TRUE, FALSE or NOT GIVEN.

32. People now buy goods mainly for necessity.

33. Buying can cause a temporary feeling of happiness.

34. Consumerism always improves personal wellbeing.

35. Environmental damage is one outcome of overproduction.

36. Minimalism supports constant upgrading of devices.

37–40. Complete the summary below. Choose NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS from the text.

Consumerism today represents both _____ and _____. People are free to buy what they wish, yet also vulnerable to _____. Advocates of sustainable lifestyles suggest focusing on _____ products.