

EDUCATIONAL CARD *on responsible consumption*

 **A** Carefully read the following text.

Let's become more responsible as consumers!

At the beginning of this 21st century, the sad state of the situation worldwide calls out for us all. The gap is widening between those who have and those who don't. More than 80% of the resources on the planet are consumed by only 20% of the population living in industrialized countries. We are rapidly using all the resources the planet has to offer. If all human beings were to adopt the lifestyles of the population living in industrialized countries, we would require three more planets the same size to match our needs. At this pace, our planet alone will never last!

We can compare this to two people arriving ahead of time at a birthday party and eating eight out of the ten cakes! Soon, we won't be able to eat anymore birthday cakes, because people will have eaten them all and there won't be any more ingredients available to make some more.

The seriousness of this situation must bring people from the North to act in a fairer manner when sharing the wealth and managing the resources of the planet.

We must not neglect the importance of the smallest daily gesture that can influence the environment and the living conditions of people in the South. By adopting the 3R's principles (reduce, re-use, recycle), the real foundation of responsible consumption, we are already practising the consump'action! By looking at the facts, many options are available. Choose a more natural diet and avoid over-wrapped products; start composting domestic products and join in on a community compost project, be critical of the publicity around us, promote fair trade products and always start by buying local products. Those are simple ways to act as responsible citizens.

Responsible consumption requires you to be well informed and calls for solidarity among each others. It's also a way to review our consumption habits and to be aware of the consequences and the stakes in our purchases. The choices we make in consuming will determine the world we are trying to build. In a sense, consuming is a society's choice!

 **B** After reading this text, what is your opinion on the following questions?

1. Does the actual situation prevailing around the planet concern you? Explain your answer.

2. What do you think the impact will be on population in the South and on the environment if you start consuming responsibly?

3. Consuming less and consuming better, is that realistic for you?

4. What do you understand when someone says "consuming is voting"?

Did you know that...

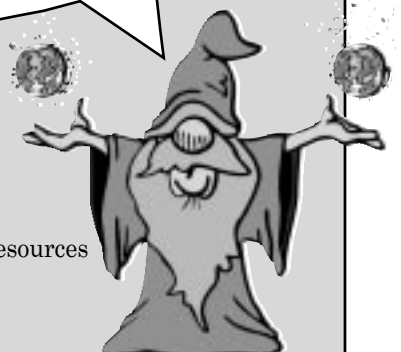
• On average, an American will consume 10 more than a Chinese and 30 more than an Indian.

• At this rate of consumption, we would need 3 or 4 planets to survive.

• There is more energy spent in manufacturing an aluminium can than in the calories you get from drinking a soda.

• North America represents only 6% of the world's population but uses 40 to 50% of the natural resources of the planet.

Note these facts.



You can consump'action and promote it with small gestures!

D Link the consump'actions with their respective description.

- | | |
|----------------------------|--|
| 1. Domestic composting | a) This method of travelling aims to show respect for cultures, protect the environment and share equally the economic spin-offs of this industry. |
| 2. Ethical funds | b) This international certification organization guarantees that products marked with their logo are part of the fair trade route. |
| 3. Fair trade | c) A smart and ecological way of decreasing domestic wastes and fertilizing the garden. |
| 4. Responsible tourism | d) The solution to yield a profit on investment while respecting the environment and the fundamental rights of humans worldwide. |
| 5. Local product purchases | e) North-South commerce where products are traded fairly. |
| 6. Consumption | f) Well-informed consumption where we are aware of the consequences and the stakes of our purchases. |
| 7. Transfer | g) Encourages local economy while decreasing pollution caused by the transportation of products and food. |
| 8. Voluntary simplicity | h) A way of living that promotes a moderate consumption in order to better live our life and end our dependence to over-consumption. |

E Read carefully the examples of responsible consumption below.

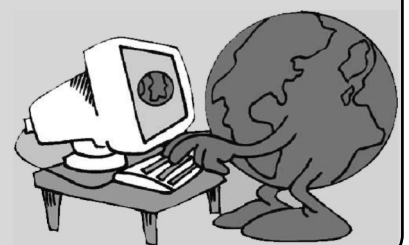
I bring my own bags when I go shopping. When I exist a room, I make sure to turn off the lights. I suggest to my parents to buy fair trade coffee. When brushing my teeth, I save water by closing the tap. When grocery shopping, I favour products that are not over-wrapped or the ones that come in a recyclable box. On occasions, I develop my own creativity and make a gift for someone special. When using the photocopier, I always make double-sided copied. I keep a critical mind about the publicity I see. I value someone I meet for who he is and not for what he has. I give priority to local products to encourage my community. Before buying something, I ask myself if I really need it. I inform myself on the products I buy and on the living conditions of the people making those products. Before printing a document, I make sure no mistakes are present to save paper. At school or work, I use my own cup. When consuming, I respect the 3R principles: reduce, re-use, and recycle. At home, I do my own composting or I participate in a composting community project. When purchasing, I favour companies that respect their employees. To yield profit on my investment, I favour ethical ones. I follow responsible tourism by respecting the services, the infrastructures and products in foreign countries. Others...

F Which actions of responsible consumption listed above can you follow knowing that today you are going to school and then going with your parents grocery shopping? You can invent more consump'actions and take up a personal challenge.

DAY SCHEDULE <input type="checkbox"/>	CONSUMP'ACTION TO FOLLOW

Don't hesitate to browse through the following references to learn more about responsible consumption;

- www.equiterre.qc.ca/english/home/indexfinal2.html
- www.maquillasolidarity.org
- www.ac.grenoble.fr/yre/article.php3?id_article=218
- <http://www.transfair.ca/>
- <http://www.clc-ctc.ca/>



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