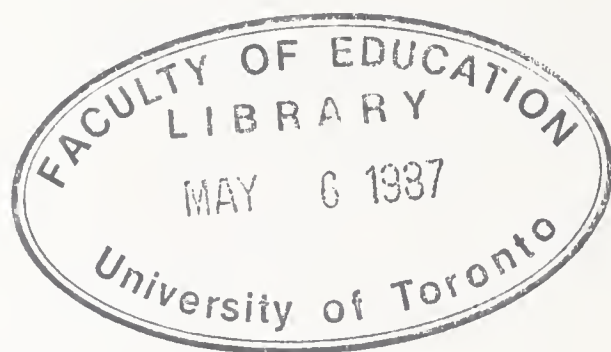


BUSINESS STUDIES

Intermediate and
Senior Divisions
1987

Consumer Studies

**Course Codes**

The consumer studies program includes the following courses:

- Consumer Studies, Basic Level (BCS/NCS)
- Consumer Studies, General Level (BCS/NCS)
- Consumer Studies, Advanced Level (BCS/NCS)

BUSINESS STUDIES

**Intermediate and
Senior Divisions
1987**

Consumer Studies

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Introduction

Program Description

The consumer studies program will provide students with opportunities to examine the factors that influence consumer behaviour in the marketplace. Students should develop effective consumer decision-making skills and examine the various forces that affect business, government, and consumers in the marketplace.

As illustrated in the following diagram, this part of the business studies guideline authorizes three courses in consumer studies for a maximum of four in-school credits in either the Intermediate or Senior Division. A student may take only one course in consumer studies and may earn a maximum of two of these credits at the basic level or one credit at either the general or advanced level of difficulty. Additional credits in this program may be earned through a co-operative education mode of delivery as authorized in section 5.11 of OSIS. A consumer studies course may form part of a school's business studies *or* family studies program. The credits earned in the program may, at the student's discretion, be used in either business studies or family studies.

Consumer Studies Program
Intermediate or Senior Division

Basic	Consumer Studies (BCS/NCS) (2 credits)
General	Consumer Studies (BCS/NCS) (1 credit)
Advanced	Consumer Studies (BCS/NCS) (1 credit)

Aims

Today's marketplace is a complex network of interconnected government, business, and consumer relationships. In order to make effective consumer decisions, students need an understanding of the major issues and concerns facing Canadian consumers today; opportunities to formulate and evaluate their goals in relation to their chosen lifestyles, employment opportunities, and financial-management skills; and the ability to identify appropriate communication and problem-solving procedures and to apply them to the solving of consumer-related problems.

Accordingly, the aims of all consumer studies courses are to provide students with opportunities to:

- identify the major problems and challenges that face consumers today and examine the way in which individuals, business, governments, and interest groups deal with them;
- identify the factors that influence consumer behaviour;
- examine and evaluate the attitudes and values that exist in the marketplace today;
- develop those personal skills and attitudes required for effective consumer behaviour;
- acquire the ability to assess consumer practices;
- apply their individual resources, goals, and financial plans to make effective consumer decisions.

Teaching Strategies

In addition to the general teaching strategies included in the business studies policy document, *Policy for Program Planning and Delivery*, teaching strategies for consumer studies courses are included in this section and in the descriptions of the specific consumer studies courses that follow.

While it may be assumed that all students entering this course will have engaged in some consumer activities, their experience and knowledge will vary widely. Formal and informal pretesting should allow teachers to assess the level of student knowledge and understanding so that they can adapt the course to suit the specific students enrolled.

The most effective teaching strategies will be those that encourage students to apply their consumer knowledge to real or simulated case studies. Current consumer-related newspaper and magazine articles, movies and videos, and speakers from business and consumer organizations can provide a constant supply of relevant material for discussion purposes, student projects, case studies, class presentations, and debates. Teachers should use these resources to develop a wide range of activities that involve students in consumer learning, analysis, and problem solving. Although the complexity of an activity may vary with the level of difficulty of each course, the emphasis placed on any one strategy should be constant throughout all consumer studies courses.

Consumer-related activities are generally suitable for either individual or group work or for assignments that involve a combination of both. However, since the development of effective communication and interpersonal skills is an important component in the overall development of consumer competence, group activities that require communication and positive interaction among students should be encouraged.

Evaluation of Student Achievement

General suggestions for the evaluation of student achievement may be found in the business studies policy document, *Policy for Program Planning and Delivery*. The following recommendations relate to all consumer studies courses. Additional suggestions for assessment are included in the “Teaching and Assessment Strategies” section for each consumer studies course.

The use of a wide variety of assessment tools will permit teachers to measure student progress across the range of learnings that are important to the development of consumer competence. In addition to formal testing, the assessment of student performance may be based on written and oral presentations, individual or group projects, case studies, note keeping, and peer and self-assessment.

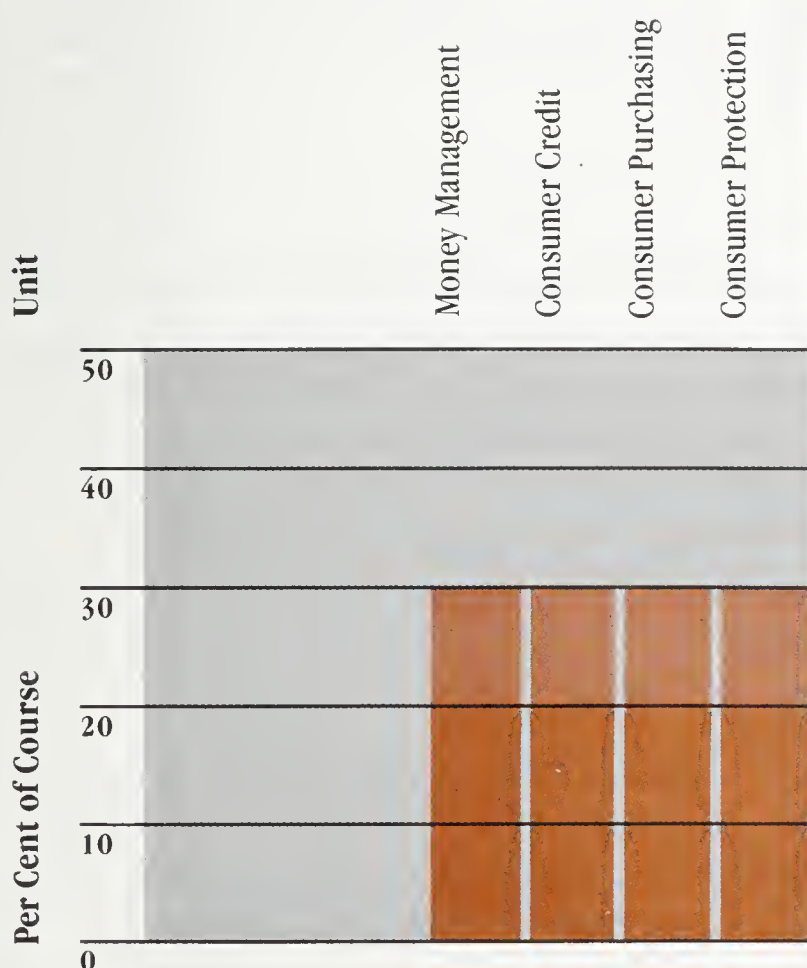
Students perform best when they are aware of how their performance will be assessed. For this reason teachers should outline their expectations of student behaviour and performance at the outset of a course. They should detail the procedures that will be used to evaluate each component of the course and outline how each part of the assessment process will be used to determine a student’s final mark.

Consumer Studies, Basic Level (BCS/NCS)

Introduction

In this course students will examine their role as consumers. They will have opportunities to practise effective money-management skills and to become responsible consumers. There are no prerequisites for this course, for which students may earn a maximum of two credits. Teachers should use the course content objectives that are identified with an asterisk to prepare a one-credit consumer studies course.

Note: This course may form part of a school's business studies or family studies program, and the credits earned in it may, at the individual student's discretion, be used as credits in either business studies or family studies. In addition, the credits earned may be counted as two of the eight required for a concentration in business studies.



This course should provide students with opportunities to:

- identify the role and the importance of the consumer in today's marketplace;
- identify and apply effective consumer decision-making skills;
- practise appropriate money-management principles and develop self-confidence in their ability to become wise consumers;
- identify those consumer rights and responsibilities that have been established by law and by custom;
- appreciate the importance of responsible consumer practice, both from a personal point of view and for the good of society in general;
- examine and understand the implications of current consumer issues;
- acquire and practise effective communication skills.

Teaching and Assessment Strategies

The teaching and assessment strategies included here are specific to this consumer studies course at the basic level and are suggested in addition to the general strategies for teaching and for evaluating student achievement outlined in the introduction to this program and in the business studies policy document, *Policy for Program Planning and Delivery*.

Teachers should ensure that the teaching strategies used are appropriate for the reading levels, learning abilities, and degree of socialization of the students involved. Students should have regular opportunities to confirm their understanding of course material and to develop and practise their reading, writing, speaking, listening, and thinking skills. Short consumer-related activities and discussions, question-and-answer periods, and opportunities to examine brief teacher-developed case studies are appropriate strategies for this course.

All student assignments, including the examination of case studies and individual or group projects, should be introduced with a series of short, well-defined procedures for students to follow.

Wherever possible, performance assessment should be based on individual student progress, rather than on the student's performance relative to that of other members of the class. The evaluation of student performance should be based on such regular activities on the part of the teacher as the following:

- the assessment of student effort and participation
- the checking of homework and class assignments
- the marking of notebooks for completeness of work and organization of material
- the short regular testing of daily learning activities and the use of end-of-unit tests
- the evaluation of group and small individual projects

Questions that require lengthy written responses should be avoided. Instead, the focus should be on testing activities that require students to match information, select correct responses from a list of alternatives, complete sentences, answer true-false questions, and solve simple mathematical problems.

The following table outlines the core units of content for the course and the percentage of class time and relative emphasis for evaluation purposes that should be allocated to each unit. Note that the sequencing of units is left to the discretion of the teacher. The percentages suggested here allow for the inclusion of optional material of local interest within each unit or as an additional unit.

Suggested Time and Evaluation Framework

Unit	Per Cent of Course
I. Money Management	20–30
II. Consumer Credit	20–30
III. Consumer Purchasing	20–30
IV. Consumer Protection	20–30

Course Content

The main items of course content for each unit are presented in bold-face type. Each of these is followed by more specific learning opportunities that relate to the main item of content. The objectives noted with an asterisk (*) should be used to prepare a consumer studies course for a single credit. Note that all of the items in bold face are core content.

I. Money Management

Core Content

Students will:

- * 1. identify the lifestyle alternatives available to such family groupings as the following: a single person, a single-parent family, a dual-parent family, a childless couple;**

- question representatives of different kinds of family groupings to determine the assignment of family responsibilities;
- in each kind of family grouping, determine the most practical assignment of such activities as the following: raising the children, shopping, cooking, paying the bills, maintaining living accommodation, purchasing major consumer items, choosing entertainment activities;

- * 2. identify various local employment opportunities and estimate the income potential for each;**

- obtain information through the Student Guidance Information Service (SGIS) and Employment and Immigration Canada with respect to potential employment opportunities and income opportunities;

- * 3. match a range of incomes to a variety of lifestyles;**

- examine potential employment opportunities and anticipated earnings in relation to desired lifestyles;

- * 4. practise the skills needed for effective money management;**

- analyse the elements of a pay cheque, including such components as hourly rate, gross pay, deductions, and net pay;
- determine the purpose and usefulness of a variety of compulsory and optional deductions;
- make simple gross-pay and net-pay calculations;

- * 5. identify the consumer services provided by financial institutions;**

- examine a variety of investment opportunities, such as savings accounts, investment certificates, term deposits, Canada Savings Bonds, and registered retirement savings plans;
- identify basic differences and similarities among different kinds of financial institutions;

- * 6. apply basic personal banking procedures;**

- open a bank account;
- complete a signature card and discuss its use;
- determine the kind of bank account that is best suited to their needs;
- cash a cheque and understand the purpose of blank and restrictive endorsements;
- purchase a money order;
- prepare deposit and withdrawal banking forms;
- write cheques;
- keep personal financial records;
- complete a simple bank-reconciliation statement;

- * 7. identify the reasons for preparing and following a financial plan;**

- identify sources of income and likely expenses for different kinds of family units and a variety of lifestyles;
- differentiate between essential expenses (e.g., food, housing, clothing, transportation) and non-essential expenses (e.g., entertainment, hobbies, travel);
- identify a variety of products and estimate the amount of money that might be spent on these items over an average lifetime;
- prepare a personal budget based on a student's average income and expenses;
- question representatives from financial institutions or private counselling services about personal money-management procedures;

8. examine the need for insurance as part of an individual's or a family's financial plan;

- investigate life insurance as an element of protection, savings, and collateral;
- identify the life-insurance needs of a variety of family groupings;
- discuss the important components of automobile insurance, especially the advantages and the disadvantages of liability insurance and collision and comprehensive coverage;

9. outline how insurance premiums are determined;

- consider such factors as sharing risks and previous claims.

Optional Content

Students will:

1. prepare a report on a hypothetical family's monthly budget;

- use a simulation that involves a variety of personal money-management aspects;

2. outline the budgeting process used by a school organization such as the students' council;

- interview the treasurer and/or staff adviser to identify the process used and present their findings to the class;

3. identify the budget processes used by a local business establishment;

- investigate how a particular local business utilizes the budget process and present their findings to the class;

4. identify the procedures to be followed in completing the simplified version of the current federal-income-tax form;

- examine the areas of the tax form that will apply to them;
- identify the personal documentation and records needed for completing a tax form;

5. identify common forms of life insurance;

- discuss the qualities of term, ordinary life, and endowment policies.

II. Consumer Credit

Core Content

Students will:

*** 1. describe the use of credit within their community;**

- identify the ways that credit can be used for household expenses (e.g., telephone, hydro, rent, gas);
- identify the reasons for using credit;
- determine the effective use of credit in home management;

*** 2. identify and evaluate a variety of sources of credit;**

- explore both positive and negative reactions to the use of credit;
- consider the use of retail-store credit cards as well as the opportunities for credit with established financial institutions;

*** 3. determine the cost of credit;**

- relate the total cost of an article including credit charges to its purchase price without the addition of credit costs;
- prepare a bulletin-board display that illustrates a variety of credit sources and identifies the costs involved;

***4. examine the criteria that are used by a money-lender to determine the credit risk posed by a client;**

- identify the kind of information they would need before deciding whether or not to lend money to a fellow student;
- in determining whether or not to grant credit to an individual, discuss the importance of the borrower's character, collateral, and capacity to repay;
- complete sample application-for-credit forms and role-play scenarios in which decisions to grant or not to grant credit are made;

5. describe the role and the responsibility of a credit bureau;

- examine the need for a positive credit rating;
- suggest ways to protect a good credit rating;
- visit a local credit bureau or invite a credit manager to talk about the importance of a good credit rating;

***6. identify the consequences of credit abuse;**

- discuss the problems associated with a bad credit rating;
- identify the social problems created by the misuse of credit;
- describe the legal implications of the abuse of credit;
- examine the power of a legal judgement against a debtor;
- distinguish a wage assignment from a wage garnishee;

7. identify credit-counselling agencies in the local community;

- describe the nature of credit counselling;
- identify the procedures for applying for credit assistance;

8. outline the ways in which bankruptcy laws apply to consumers;

- identify the circumstances under which an individual may declare personal bankruptcy;

***9. develop personal guidelines for the effective use of credit;**

- apply these guidelines to simulated consumer activities.

Optional Content

Students will:

1. *identify the negative consequences of not paying one's bills;*
 - consider the consequences for the individual, the business concerned, and the community as a whole;
2. *examine the question "Should teenagers be granted credit?"*

III. Consumer Purchasing

Core Content

Students will:




- * 1. **define *wants* and *needs*;**
 - illustrate the difference between a want and a need;
 - categorize particular purchases as meeting either wants or needs;
- * 2. **examine the effect of advertising on consumer behaviour;**
 - examine the effect of peer pressure and of product advertising, displays, and packaging on consumer purchasing activity;
 - recognize the difference between the informative and promotional aspects of advertising;
 - identify false and misleading impressions given by some promotional material;
3. **develop a list of purchasing suggestions that might encourage a responsible approach towards the purchasing of goods and services;**
 - use this list in real or simulated buying activities;
- * 4. **identify product-information sources within their community;**
 - examine the objectivity of the product information found in catalogues, magazines, newspapers, radio announcements, and consumer-information publications;
- * 5. **interpret product information contained on packages or labels;**
 - examine care symbols, hazardous-product symbols, indications of approval from such organizations as the CSA and Ontario Hydro, lists of ingredients, and product-grading designations;
 - using labels, brochures, and other pertinent information, prepare a bulletin-board display of relevant product information;
- * 6. **develop a decision-making formula for special purchases and apply it to simulated expenditures in the following areas: housing, furniture, appliances, transportation, leisure activities, clothing, food;**
 - consider a major purchase, for example, of a stereo, motorbike, or automobile, and identify the following:
 - a) the needs and wants that this purchase will satisfy,
 - b) the alternatives available,
 - c) the criteria for evaluating these alternatives,
 - d) the purchase that should be made;
- * 7. **determine and apply effective rules for successful shopping;**
 - in groups of two or three, using the resources available in the local community, determine the best buy from a specific selection of products;
- * 8. **identify and determine the significance of particular store policies for refunds, returns, guarantees, and warranties;**
 - discuss the features of each policy and identify their effect on particular consumer-purchasing decisions;
9. **examine the use of incentives to buy and identify their effect on selling prices;**
 - examine the use as buying incentives of trading stamps, premiums, and contests and identify consumer attitudes towards each;
- * 10. **examine questionable selling practices;**
 - consider such practices as special prices, free product or service hooks, bait and switch, and pyramid selling;
 - examine current consumer-protection activities.

IV. Consumer Protection

Core Content

Students will:

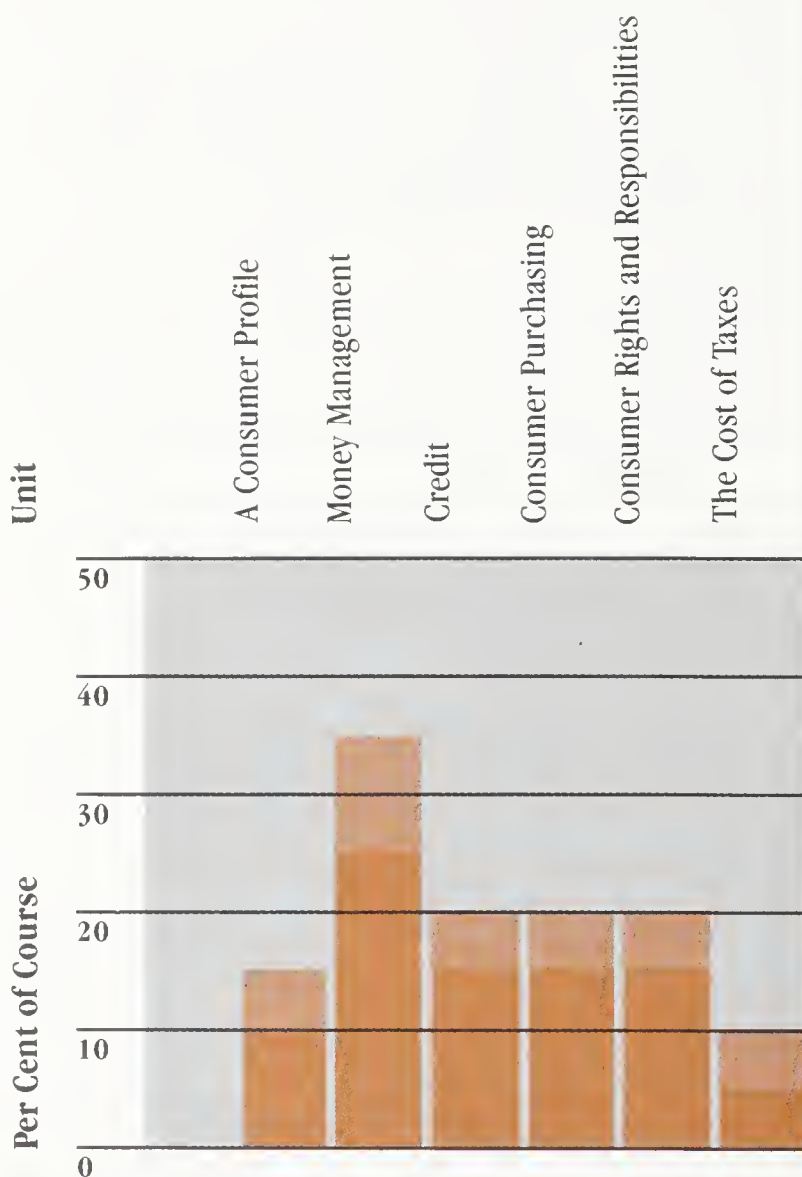
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- * 1. **identify situations within the community in which consumers may not receive full value for their money;**
 - use a brainstorming activity to generate a list of complaints;
 - determine what they might do to protect themselves from situations like these;
 - collect newspaper and magazine articles that describe situations in which consumers have been dissatisfied;
 - * 2. **outline the procedures to follow when making a complaint about defective products or unsatisfactory service;**
 - recount a situation involving a complaint;
 - role-play a complaint scenario;
 - using a real situation, write a sample letter of complaint to a store or manufacturer;
 - prepare an outline for a telephone complaint;
 - * 3. **examine a typical sales contract, such as an automobile sales contract, that constitutes a two-party agreement;**
 - discuss sales contracts and their implications with a lawyer;
 4. **develop a guideline for consumers' self-protection;**
 - examine the consumer's rights and responsibilities;
 - * 5. **describe various government agencies and the laws that they enforce on behalf of consumers;**
 - identify the functions of the Ontario ombudsman, the Ontario Ministry of Consumer and Commercial Relations, and Consumer and Corporate Affairs Canada;
 - * 6. **identify the functions of various private consumer-assistance agencies;**
 - consider the roles of the Consumer's Association of Canada, Better Business Bureau, local Chamber of Commerce, Canadian Advertising Advisory Board, and Canadian Standards Association;
 7. **recognize the need for legal assistance and know where to find it;**
 - examine consumer case studies to determine the need for legal advice;
 - identify the role of the county court and the small-claims court in consumer affairs.
-

Consumer Studies, General Level (BCS/NCS)

Introduction

Students in this course will identify the ways in which trends in the marketplace, lifestyles, and technology can affect consumer behaviour. They will examine appropriate money-management procedures and become aware of the consumer-protection agencies and services that are available to help them become effective consumers. There are no prerequisites for this course.

Note: This course may form part of a school's business studies or family studies program, and the credit earned in it may, at the individual student's discretion, be used as a credit in either business studies or family studies. In addition, the credit earned may be counted as one of the eight required for a concentration in business studies.



This course should provide students with opportunities to:

- determine the influence of personal lifestyles, economic conditions, and individual values on consumer behaviour;
- identify the role and importance of the consumer in today's marketplace;
- identify critical thinking skills and effective decision-making strategies and apply them to consumer questions;
- identify those consumer rights and responsibilities that have been established by law and by custom;
- appreciate the importance of responsible consumer practice, both from a personal point of view and for the good of society in general;
- examine and understand the implications of current consumer issues;
- develop the ability to examine consumer-related issues, organize their findings, and determine appropriate directions;
- acquire and practise effective communication skills.

Teaching and Assessment Strategies

The teaching and assessment strategies included here are specific to this consumer studies course at the general level and are suggested in addition to the general strategies for teaching and for evaluating student achievement outlined in the introduction to this program and in the business studies policy document, *Policy for Program Planning and Delivery*.

Students should be provided with a wide range of consumer-case-study materials. They should be required to determine what, if any, additional information is needed in each case study; what consumer principles and practices need to be applied; and which solutions are most appropriate. Although case studies may be designed for individual or group activities, they are most effective when they include both kinds of activity.

Goals and values play an important part in the choices that consumers make. Students should be encouraged to consider their individual goals and values and use a consumer decision-making process that allows for the defining of a problem, the determination of potential solutions, the selection of an appropriate solution, and the acceptance of responsibility for their decisions, all in light of their individual goals and values.

Students should have regular opportunities to confirm their understanding of course material and continue to develop and practise their reading, writing, speaking, listening, and thinking skills in consumer-related activities. Oral work such as role playing, class presentations, and the debating of current consumer issues should be encouraged to help students improve their public-speaking skills. All student assignments, including the examination of case studies and individual or group projects, should be introduced with a series of well-defined procedures for students to follow.

The evaluation of student performance should emphasize the importance of daily assignments and activities. A major portion of the student's final marks should be based on the evaluation of the following:

- in-class effort and participation
- development of positive personal and social skills
- homework and class assignments
- the completeness of work and effective organization of material in notebooks
- short regular tests of daily learning activities and end-of-unit tests
- group and individual projects

Longer tests and formal examinations should require students to recall important consumer principles and apply these principles to current issues and activities.

The following table outlines the core units of content for the course and the percentage of class time and relative emphasis for evaluation purposes that should be allocated to each unit. Note that the sequencing of units is left to the discretion of the teacher. The percentages suggested here allow for the inclusion of optional material of local interest within each unit or as an additional unit.

Suggested Time and Evaluation Framework

Unit	Per Cent of Course
I. A Consumer Profile	10–15
II. Money Management	25–35
III. Credit	15–20
IV. Consumer Purchasing	15–20
V. Consumer Rights and Responsibilities	15–20
VI. The Cost of Taxes	5–10

Course Content

The main items of course content for each unit are presented in bold-face type. Each of these is followed by more specific learning opportunities that relate to the main item of content. Note that all of the items in bold face are core content.



I. A Consumer Profile

Core Content

Students will:

- 1. identify the role of the consumer in the marketplace;**
 - examine the influence of consumer behaviour on the distribution and pricing of goods and services;
 - examine the interdependence of consumers and businesses;
 - examine the role of business as a provider of employment, products, and services;
- 2. explore a variety of consumer-related problems and issues;**
 - identify effective decision-making procedures, examining the importance of defining the problem, describing the alternatives, predicting the consequences, making a decision, and evaluating the consequences;

3. **examine the predominant lifestyles of the following kinds of family groupings: a single person, a single-parent family, a dual-parent family, a childless couple;**
 - examine the effect of various family groupings on an individual's role as a consumer, especially in the areas of housing, food, clothing, transportation, leisure, and the carrying-out of household duties and responsibilities;
4. **determine how a person's family grouping and lifestyle might change over a period of time;**
 - discuss changes of lifestyle with representatives from a variety of different ages and family units;
 - prepare a personal-needs assessment and examine the factors that might affect these needs;
5. **examine the role of personal goals and values in consumer decision-making activities.**

II. Money Management

Core Content

Students will:

1. **identify a variety of employment opportunities and determine the approximate income for each;**
 - identify the role of Employment and Immigration Canada and other government agencies in locating jobs for the unemployed;
 - discuss particular problems that students might face in the work force;
 - discuss the issue of health and safety with a representative from the Industrial Accident Prevention Association;
2. **relate vocational ambition to potential income and desired lifestyle;**
 - compare employment opportunities in terms of potential income and educational requirements;



3. identify the goals and values that must be considered in preparing and using a personal and a family budget;

- identify the difference between needs and wants;
- identify the difference between fixed and variable expenses;
- recognize the importance of budgeting to future financial success;
- plan a personal budget based on their present income and expenditures;
- design a budget for a hypothetical family grouping;

4. examine various forms of remuneration;

- consider yearly, monthly, weekly, hourly, and contractual forms of payments;
- examine rate of pay, deductions (compulsory and optional), and fringe benefits;
- discuss purchasing power as a feature of disposable income;
- compare gross income to disposable income;

5. describe and apply routine banking procedures, such as opening and operating a personal bank account;

- compare a variety of personal savings and chequing accounts;
- complete those bank forms required to open and operate a personal bank account;
- reconcile personal financial records with bank statements;
- examine other financial institutions as alternatives to traditional banks;

6. identify common saving and investment vehicles and classify each with respect to its short-term or long-term potential;

- develop effective criteria for evaluating investment vehicles;
- identify investment areas (e.g., bonds, stocks, RRSPs, term deposits, guaranteed investment certificates, gold and silver, real estate);
- determine the reasons for the popularity of savings accounts;

7. identify the reasons for investing as opposed to saving;

- consider the following factors: (a) putting surplus money to work, (b) overcoming the adverse effect of inflation;
- interview a stockbroker or a bank manager about effective personal money management, including how to cope with the complexity of financial decisions such as buying a house, selecting insurance, budgeting, and using a variety of savings vehicles;

8. compare short-term and long-term investment objectives;

- examine immediate cash needs and reinvestment possibilities;

9. examine the need for life insurance as part of a financial plan;

- examine life insurance in terms of protection, savings, investment, and collateral;
- examine the characteristics of term-insurance, ordinary life-insurance, and endowment life-insurance policies;
- determine how insurance premiums are established;
- discuss waiver-of-premium clauses, accidental-death benefits, and cash-surrender value;
- determine an appropriate amount of life insurance for a variety of different people in different family groupings, lifestyles, and age brackets.

Optional Content

Students will:

1. *evaluate the role of a second income in financial planning;*
 - determine the need for all adults in a family grouping to contribute to the financial well-being of their unit;
2. *determine the likelihood of financial success through the purchase of lottery tickets;*
3. *compare trust companies and credit unions to chartered banks, identifying the services and costs involved in each kind of institution;*
4. *design a personal investment portfolio;*
 - discuss the following factors:
 - a) starting “small” with what one’s budget will allow,
 - b) choosing stocks that suit one emotionally as well as financially,
 - c) reinvesting profits (i.e., dividends, capital gains, interest income);
5. *review and revise an investment portfolio, taking current economic conditions into account and maintaining an appropriate degree of flexibility.*

III. Credit

Core Content

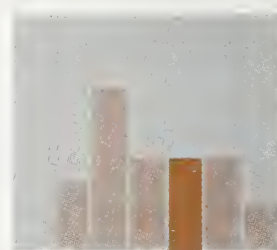
Students will:

1. **list the advantages and disadvantages of using credit;**
 - determine where credit can be used effectively;
 - describe the use of credit within the community;
2. **identify and evaluate the major sources of credit;**
 - examine the use of retail-store credit cards, as well as the opportunities for credit with established financial institutions;
 - explore both the positive and negative aspects of the use of credit;
3. **determine the costs of using credit;**
 - relate the total cost of an article including credit charges to its purchase price without the addition of credit costs;



-
4. **determine the procedures for applying for credit;**
 - discuss the criteria used to evaluate a credit risk;
 - examine credit opportunities for minors, married and single individuals, new Canadians, and male and female consumers;
 - discuss the effect of social and legal problems (e.g., garnishees, judgements) and personal bankruptcies on a credit rating;
 5. **identify the credit-counselling agencies in the community and describe the services they provide.**

IV. Consumer Purchasing



Core Content

Students will:

1. **conduct cost-benefit comparisons on recent purchases;**
2. **develop a list of effective purchasing procedures;**
 - consider the following purchasing procedures:
 - a) determining a need or want,
 - b) identifying the product that will satisfy the need or want,
 - c) pricing different brands,
 - d) determining personal preferences, product reputation, and product features (e.g., warranties, service);
3. **apply this list of procedures to the hypothetical purchase of food, clothing, or large appliances;**

4. determine appropriate housing for individuals from a variety of family groupings in a wide range of financial situations;

- summarize the advantages and disadvantages of renting and owning housing;
- determine how to obtain the best value for one's money when renting or purchasing housing;
- speak to real-estate agents to determine the variety of housing options available;
- determine the cost of a variety of mortgages;

5. identify the best form of transportation for an individual with specific needs;

- identify transportation needs and wants;
- compare available types of transportation;
- compare forms of transportation in terms of the individual's ability to pay;
- determine the best financial institution to finance a consumer loan.

V. Consumer Rights and Responsibilities



Core Content

Students will:

1. recognize the consumer's right to value for every dollar spent in the marketplace;

- determine the consumer's right to proper information and protection from deceptive practices;
- discuss the information consumers require to make wise decisions with respect to telephone solicitations, magazine subscriptions, home-improvement schemes, debt-consolidation plans, health or diet programs, and second-income opportunities;

2. assess questionable market practices and make recommendations for change;

3. determine the responsibilities of the consumer in the marketplace;

- consider the cost to the consumer of the following: shoplifting, careless buying practices, abuse of return/exchange privileges, excessive use of customer services (e.g., delivery, credit);
- identify appropriate procedures for businesses to follow in dealing with customer suggestions and complaints;

4. **determine the areas of consumer protection offered by the federal, provincial, and municipal governments;**

- discuss the purpose of the following: the Ontario ombudsman, Hazardous Products Act, Textile Labelling Act, Consumer Packaging and Labelling Act, Combines Investigation Act (Competition Act), Food and Drug Act, Ontario Business Practices Act, Consumer Protection Act, and licensing regulations;

5. **identify the non-government agencies that offer assistance to consumers;**

- examine the assistance provided by the local Chamber of Commerce and Better Business Bureau, the Consumers' Association of Canada, and the Canadian Standards Association;

6. **illustrate the effect on consumer-buying decisions of the following: peer pressure, advertising, salespeople, consumer wants and desires, fads;**

- discuss their responsibility to make rational buying decisions and to avoid unnecessary legal entanglements;

7. **determine the long-term results of bankruptcy as well as the short-term costs and inconveniences involved.**

Optional Content

Students will:

1. *investigate the use of legal action by a consumer who is displeased with a product or service;*

- visit a small-claims court or invite someone knowledgeable about legal actions to discuss the procedures involved;

2. *examine a typical conditional sales agreement.*

VI. The Cost of Taxes



Core Content

Students will:

1. **determine the amount of direct and indirect taxes collected by the government;**

- identify the amount of tax collected on sales of specific products;
- identify how taxes are assessed and collected by the three levels of government (federal, provincial, and municipal);

2. **complete a simple personal-income-tax return and Ontario Tax Credit forms;**

- examine the role played by tax shelters and various other deductions in reducing taxable income;

3. **examine the ways in which all three levels of government use the money they collect through taxation;**

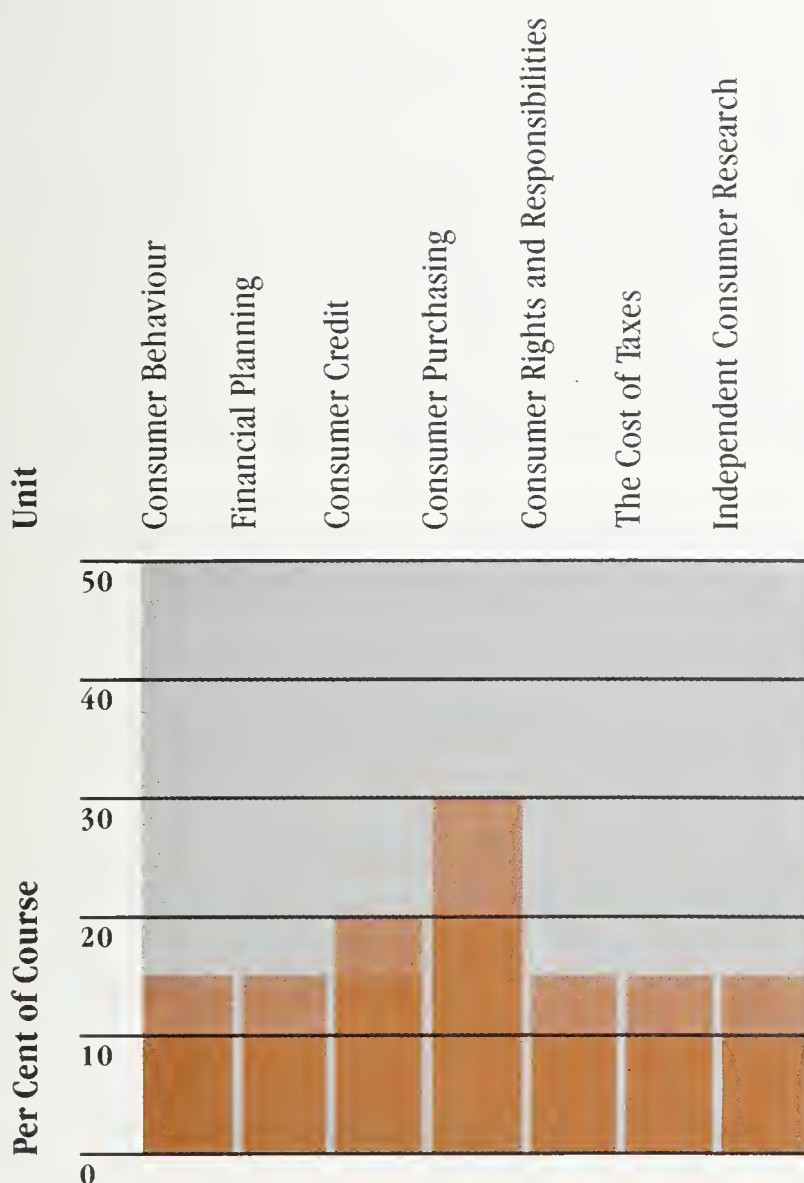
- discuss taxpayer demands for reduced taxes and increased government services.

Consumer Studies, Advanced Level (BCS/NCS)

Introduction

Students in this course will develop an understanding of the factors that influence consumer behaviour. They will examine current economic conditions that affect the role of the consumer in our society and evaluate personal money-management activities in the marketplace. There are no prerequisites for this course.

Note: This course may form part of a school's business studies or family studies program, and the credit earned in it may, at the individual student's discretion, be used as a credit in either business studies or family studies. In addition, the credit earned may be counted as one of the eight required for a concentration in business studies.



This course should provide students with opportunities to:

- appreciate the complexities of today's marketplace;
- examine and understand the implications of current consumer issues;
- expand their understanding of today's economic realities, especially in relation to competition, money, security, and employment;
- assess the influence of personal lifestyles, economic conditions, and individual values on consumer behaviour;
- apply critical-thinking skills and effective decision-making strategies to consumer-related issues;
- appreciate the importance of responsible consumer practice, both from a personal point of view and from the perspective of society in general.

Teaching and Assessment Strategies

The teaching and assessment strategies included here are specific to this consumer studies course at the advanced level and are suggested in addition to the general strategies for teaching and for evaluating student achievement outlined in the introduction to this program and in the business studies policy document, *Policy for Program Planning and Delivery*.

Students will have a wide variety of background knowledge. This is likely to be particularly noticeable in content areas such as banking, credit, and consumer rights. Surveying student experience in these areas will enable teachers to tailor their instruction and the evaluation of student performance to students' levels of expertise.

The ability to identify and manipulate pertinent information and to draw appropriate conclusions is central to the effective analysis of consumer-related problems. It is important, therefore, that students have opportunities to identify and apply effective problem-solving techniques and to evaluate and develop their analytical skills.

Goals and values play an important part in the choices that consumers make. Students should be encouraged to consider their individual goals and values and use a consumer decision-making process that allows for the defining of a problem, the determination of potential solutions, the selection of an appropriate solution, and the acceptance of responsibility for their decisions, all in light of their individual goals and values.

Effective communication and interpersonal skills are important to consumers. Students at the advanced level should have opportunities to examine case studies in small-group situations, complete independent consumer-related investigations by interacting with members of the local business community, debate current consumer issues with other members of their class, and prepare written consumer reports on consumer products, services, and concerns.

Students should be expected to master information, facts, terms, and definitions. However, the evaluation of student performance should be directed towards the assessment of students' abilities to link facts, terms, and definitions to concepts and to use these concepts to analyse consumer situations and draw logical conclusions.

The following table outlines the core units of content for the course and the percentage of class time and relative emphasis for evaluation purposes that should be allocated to each unit. Note that the sequencing of units is left to the discretion of the teacher. The percentages suggested here allow for the inclusion of optional material of local interest within each unit or as an additional unit.

Suggested Time and Evaluation Framework

Unit	Per Cent of Course
I. Consumer Behaviour	10–15
II. Financial Planning	10–15
III. Consumer Credit	15–20
IV. Consumer Purchasing	20–30
V. Consumer Rights and Responsibilities	10–15
VI. The Cost of Taxes	10–15
VII. Independent Consumer Research	10–15

Course Content

The main items of course content for each unit are presented in bold-face type. Each of these is followed by more specific learning opportunities that relate to the main item of content. Note that all of the items in bold face are core content.

I. Consumer Behaviour



Students will:

- 1. identify an appropriate decision-making process for consumer questions and apply it;**
 - identify particular consumer problems, gather appropriate information, identify and evaluate possible solutions, and select and justify their choice of one of these solutions;
 - in small groups, use an appropriate decision-making process in the simulation of the purchase of a major item for family use (e.g., a residence, a car, a holiday, an educational plan);
- 2. determine the influence of the following on consumer decisions: personal needs, values, and goals; societal values; status and peer pressure; consumer information; advertising; price; marketing practices; family influences;**
 - identify how peer pressure influences consumer participation in popular activities or events;
- 3. identify a variety of lifestyle alternatives available to the following family groupings: single persons, single-parent families, dual-parent families, childless couples;**
 - describe how the costs of food, housing, transportation, clothing, and leisure-time pursuits can affect each family grouping's budget.

II. Financial Planning



Students will:

- 1. examine earnings by occupation, region, and percentage grouping;**
 - use material from Statistics Canada;
 - capitalize income or total lifetime earnings in order to realize the large amount that an individual can earn and spend during the course of a lifetime;
- 2. determine the need for financial planning;**
 - investigate the purpose and benefits of planning;
 - from personal experiences, create a list of successful and unsuccessful consumer decisions;
 - identify the steps to be followed in effective budgeting;
 - compare personal budgeting with corporate and government budgeting;
 - create budgets for a variety of family situations;

3. identify the deductions that reduce gross income to net income;

- relate deductions to security;
- examine the financial aspects of a variety of retirement savings plans;
- identify savings that can be made through payroll deductions;
- identify the deductions that are made for various insurance plans;

4. describe the factors that could affect an individual's financial plan;

- consider such factors as family commitments, prolonged illness, unemployment, retirement, death, marriage, and divorce;

5. prepare a report that describes banking services for individual consumers;

- examine a variety of banking topics such as the following: major customer services, current or future trends in banking, factors that influence interest rates, banking careers;

6. identify the vehicles available for short- and long-term investing;

- list items that can be purchased for their investment value and evaluate the actual dollar-value change over the past decade for some of them;
- examine estate planning and insurance investments;

7. investigate investment in the stock market as a vehicle for long-term investing;

- create a simulated stock portfolio, manage it during the term, and compare their experiences with those of other members of the class;

8. explore the role of computers in financial planning and money management;

- use a computer financial-planning program.

III. Consumer Credit



Students will:

1. assess the positive and negative aspects of consumer credit;

- examine the impact of credit on consumer purchasing power;
- describe situations in which the use of future income would be a wise use of credit and those in which it would not;
- relate the use of credit to a consumer's ability to achieve personal goals and maintain an acceptable lifestyle;
- discuss the misuse of credit and identify potential consequences;
- examine cases in which the unwise use of credit has created personal problems;

2. assess various sources of consumer credit;

- list and compare the sources of consumer credit;
- relate the type of credit to the purpose for which it is being secured;

3. describe how credit can be considered a purchase and evaluate it accordingly;

- consider alternatives to credit;
- calculate the limitations on an individual's future spending ability when future earnings are committed to pay credit obligations;

4. outline the procedures for obtaining a credit rating;

5. examine the effect on the economy of credit buying and interest rates;

- read about and report on the influence of the prime bank rate on consumer borrowing;
- show how the economy can be stimulated by lowered interest rates;

6. describe the financial implications of borrowing to finance a particular purchase;

- write a report comparing the cost of various types of loans and repayment plans;
- identify a variety of student loans that are available.

IV. Consumer Purchasing

Students will:

1. describe the pressures exerted on the consumer in the marketplace;

- study current selling promotions and determine the quality of the merchandise being sold;
- evaluate the effectiveness of advertising;
- recognize the influence of peer pressure on purchasing decisions;

2. describe common selling techniques and strategies and explain how they may influence the decision to buy;

- assess the use of selling techniques such as the following: last-chance or premium assumptions, the establishing of mental ownership during the presentation, turnover to a different salesperson, referral selling, bait and switch, and telephone solicitation;

3. develop a list of effective purchasing procedures;

- investigate comparative shopping;
- examine situations in which the comparative-shopping process has been maintained despite a restricted supply of goods, cash limitations, or time limitations;



4. describe the role of various members of a group in group buying decisions;

- recognize that the person who initiates the buying process may not be the one to decide what will be bought;
- role-play a situation in which an appropriate decision is made on the purchase of an item such as a family car, a condominium, furniture, or appliances;

5. undertake a detailed analysis of a major item in order to make a decision on its purchase;

- defend the thoroughness of their study and the wisdom of their purchase choice;
- use the school's resource centre to do research on effective buying;
- outline the role of and the responsibilities assumed by various consumer publications;

6. identify and describe specific examples of fluctuation in demand;

- examine the life cycle of a product and its influence on consumer purchases;
- examine supply and demand in relation to price;

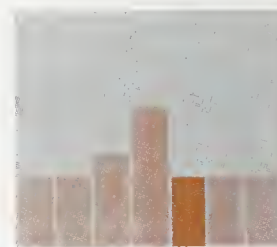
7. assess consumer reaction to generic foods and bulk foods;

- compare national brands, store brands, and generic (no-name) brands in terms of the advantages and disadvantages of each and assess the market segment for each;
- examine the practice of bulk-food merchandising in large supermarket chains;
- distinguish between quality and price with reference to the federal-government guidelines on the grading of the quality of foods;

8. compare and contrast the leasing and purchasing of consumer goods;

- consider the leasing or purchase of an automobile, personal computer, video cassette recorder, and television;
- determine if and when leasing may be the more economical alternative.

V. Consumer Rights and Responsibilities



Students will:

1. investigate business practices that stand in the way of consumers' free choice;

- discuss incidents where undue peer pressure appears to have been created by promotional campaigns;

2. describe the effectiveness of government policies undertaken to protect consumers;

- study federal, provincial, and municipal consumer legislation;
- describe the assistance available from the Ontario ombudsman;

3. assess consumer responsibilities in the marketplace;

- list fraudulent schemes that have succeeded only because consumers may have been unthinking;
- develop a guide for the self-protection of young or new consumers;
- identify the cost of careless buying practices;
- discuss the cost of shoplifting to business and to the consumer;

4. examine available consumer resources that can be used to demand improvements in products or procedures;

- discuss how consumers can be encouraged to be more responsible in their purchasing practices;
- list examples of situations in which they feel there may be grounds for complaint regarding a product or a practice;
- simulate and role-play complaints regarding a product or a service;

5. describe the work of consumer-action groups;

- study the work and the accomplishments of groups such as the Consumers' Association of Canada and the Automobile Protection Association;
- conduct a weekly review of syndicated consumer-information columns;
- examine the need for "lemon laws" for dissatisfied car buyers and analyse the success or failure of existing consumer legislation;
- examine the emergence of the class-action suit as a means of redressing mass wrongs and evaluate its current legal status;
- examine the advantages and the disadvantages to consumers and manufacturers of class actions.

VI. The Cost of Taxes



Students will:

- 1. identify the amount of direct and indirect taxes paid on specific products;**
 - compare the money paid in taxes to the total income of a consumer;
- 2. evaluate the services provided by the three levels of government in terms of costs and benefits;**
 - understand how municipal taxes are assessed, collected, and spent;
 - speak with local politicians to learn about areas of municipal expense;
- 3. complete a personal-income-tax return;**
 - use forms provided by the federal government to complete an average tax return for a student working part time and a single person working full time.

VII. Independent Consumer Research



Students will explore a consumer-related issue in depth and produce a major written and/or oral report.

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