The Stuff of Consumer Culture

“We live much of our lives in a realm I call the buyosphere.”

—Thomas Hine
The Stuff of Consumer Culture

In this collection, you will take a look at our consumer culture and consider the question: How much is enough?

COLLECTION PERFORMANCE TASK Preview

At the end of this collection, you will research and write an informative essay about consumerism, using information from the selections in the collection as your starting point. Then you will create a multimedia presentation of your essay to share with others.

ACADEMIC VOCABULARY

Study the words and their definitions in the chart below. You will use these words as you discuss and write about the texts in this collection.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Related Forms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>attitude</td>
<td>a way of thinking or feeling about something or someone</td>
<td>attitudes, attitudinal, attitudinize</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>consume</td>
<td>to buy things for your own use or ownership</td>
<td>consumed, consumer, consumer good, consuming, consumption</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>goal</td>
<td>the object toward which your work and planning is directed; a purpose</td>
<td>goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>purchase</td>
<td>to buy</td>
<td>purchasable, purchaser, purchasing, purchasing power</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>technology</td>
<td>the application of science and engineering as part of a commercial or industrial undertaking</td>
<td>technologic, technological, technologist</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Background  It’s hard to imagine, but less than 100 years ago, television as we know it didn’t exist. Then in 1927, Philo T. Farnsworth successfully transmitted an image onto a remote screen. By the early 1950s, TV purchases skyrocketed. Today almost every home in the United States has at least one. This excerpt from Life at Home in the Twenty-First Century describes what a team of archaeologists uncovered about TVs when they examined the daily lives of 32 California families.

from
LIFE at HOME in the
TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

Informational Text by Jeanne E. Arnold

SETTING A PURPOSE  Perhaps no other technology is more widely shared as the television. As you read, keep track of how the popularity of this consumer good has changed over time. How will archaeologists of the future track its significance? Write down any questions you have while reading.

Television and Daily Life

In North America, and in as few as three generations, mass media broadcast by analog and digital signal has all but replaced oral history and become the primary conveyor of culturally shared ideas. Broadcast communication, particularly television-streamed content, figures so prominently in economic decisions, political outcomes, and moral reasoning that even at the height of the last U.S. recession, TV advertising expenditures exceeded $50 billion. Television is now so intricately woven into the fabric of the American family experience that few children born during the last two decades will be able to imagine a social world that
has not been partly shaped by the imagery, discourse, and ideas originating from television programming. In fact, many twenty-first century children are born in the physical presence of a TV: most labor, delivery, and recovery rooms in the U.S. now feature large, wall-mounted flat-panel sets. That TVs are witness to such intimate and emotionally bonding experiences speaks volumes about televisions and the American way of being.

Currently, 99 percent of U.S. households own a TV, and more than 50 percent own three or more. All of the families in our study have at least one TV, and most have two or more. One set is typically located in a large space used by all family members, such as the living room, family room, or den. The set used by the collective is a compelling example of an object that is not merely a tangible product of otherwise invisible cultural forces but rather an agentive participant in the daily production of social lives. The introduction of a new TV to a living room, for example, shapes the decisions underlying where we locate our furniture, where we direct our gaze, and how we orient our bodies.

At some deeper cognitive level, our relationship to the TV—which includes a relationship to the object itself but also our personal experiences centering on TV media—even shapes the ways that we relate to our built spaces. Our photographs of living room assemblages repeatedly reveal spaces organized around televisions rather than spaces with other primary affordances, such as face-to-face conversation. For all of its influence on the design and organization of space, the TV may as well be a hearth, which until quite recently in human history exerted the most influence on the spatial distribution of social interactions and activities inside homes. Indeed, families often locate the TV immediately adjacent to a wood-burning stove or fireplace, and new homes feature recessed fireplace-like nooks designed for television sets. The TV has ascended to the rank of essential major appliance (alongside the refrigerator, clothes washer, and dryer) around which builders and architects imagine the designs of residential spaces.

---

1 *agentive*: having the power to cause an effect.
2 *assemblages*: collections of people or things.
3 *hearth*: the brick or cement floor of a fireplace that extends into a room.
Families now also routinely equip various bedrooms with televisions. Fully 25 of the 32 CELF\(^4\) families (78 percent) have a TV in the parents’ bedroom, and 14 families (47 percent) place a TV in one or more of the bedrooms used by children. Researchers at the Kaiser Family Foundation surveyed 1,051 U.S. households with young children and found that 43 percent place a TV in at least one child’s bedroom.

The same Kaiser-funded project reveals that 87 percent of children age four to six years are able to turn on the TV without assistance. Most two- and three-year-olds can do the

\(\text{CELF}^4\) the Center on the Everyday Lives of Families at the University of California at Los Angeles, which studies how families approach the challenges of everyday life.
same (82 percent), and the majority of children belonging to both age groups are capable of changing the channel. Suffice it to say that American children learn how to operate and engage with the TV at a very young age, a fact that has motivated more than 4,000 studies addressing the impacts of TV on children, education, and the social lives of families.

These impacts, however, are debated. Some researchers associate TV viewing with reduced social interaction, while others report the opposite and even see evidence for families’ use of TV time as a platform for togetherness. Research based on our unique observational data sets is new to the discussion and actually lends support to both generalizations, reflecting the complex relationship Americans have with television. For example, our study shows that families are not actively engaging with TV as much as we might otherwise predict. Attentive, focused TV viewing accounts for only 11 percent of all primary person-centered scan sampling observations, and the careful coding of 380 hours of videotape (derived from our observational videography) reveals that families engage with TV media on weekday afternoons and evenings for an average daily total of just 46 minutes (although the TV may be turned on for much longer periods). Furthermore, families’ viewing is usually a social experience: during about two-thirds of observations where a child or adult watches TV, at least one other family member is present.

However, children are slightly more likely than their parents to watch TV alone. Kids view solo in about 17 percent of the cases where we record TV viewing as the primary activity, mothers and fathers watch alone in only 6 percent and 13 percent of the cases, respectively. We also found that children much more frequently watch TV in a bedroom (34 percent of primary TV observations, alone or with others) than either of their parents (9 percent for mothers and 10 percent for fathers). Indeed, the socially isolating potential of TV appears higher among families that have more than one TV set in the home. Children in families that have TVs in one or more bedroom spaces are more likely to watch TV alone than children in families that do not have a TV in a child’s or parents’ bedroom.

observation
(əb’zar-və’nshən) n. An observation is the act of watching something.
Some researchers associate TV viewing with reduced social interaction.

The Material Legacy of TV

The proliferation of video media technology since the debut of network television in 1946 has had a profound influence on American lifestyles. Indeed, few Americans can imagine everyday life without access to TV. Television is so entrenched in popular culture that we are surprised when we meet people who do not have at least one set. In 1947, U.S. households owned 44,000 TVs, just one set per 3,275 people. During the early 2000s, people purchased about 31 million TVs annually in the U.S., or one new TV for every nine Americans each year.

Of course, sales figures do not reflect the number of sets already found in what archaeologists regard as systemic context (here, the home): the behavioral system in which artifacts participate in everyday life. The full inventory of TVs emerges only when the count includes the sets purchased in years past and still in the house. Only some older TVs are replaced. As is true for most artifacts, the life history of each individual television is entangled in the changing ways that families use them, the availability of similar artifacts in the home, and the desire for newer forms of visual media technologies.

Eventually the life history of a TV, or at least the portion of the life history that overlaps with family use, comes to an end. At that point, the artifact exits the systemic context and enters an archaeological context, a state in which interaction is primarily with the natural environment, such as the city dump. The Environmental Protection Agency estimates that

proliferation (prə-lif’ər-ə-shan) n. A proliferation is the fast growth of something.

5 artifacts: objects made by humans.
during the mid-2000s, Americans discarded an average of 1.5 billion pounds of TVs each year, in the range of 25 to 27 million sets annually, of which only 4 to 4.5 million were collected for domestic recycling.

**An Archaeology of TVs**

The rate at which TV technology evolves and the sheer volume of television sets people discard both suggest that this artifact will be particularly useful for teasing out discrete generations of household refuse from the materially complex and jumbled strata\(^6\) that constitute our **municipal** landfills. Archaeologists rely on seriation—the sequencing of functionally similar artifacts based on stylistic differences—as a method for ascertaining relative chronology\(^7\) at archaeological sites. Although seriation cannot be used to pinpoint a specific date, it places older and younger materials in order based on the simple assumption that object styles change over time. Frequency seriation thus determines the relative age of each layer.

We expect 1980s-era landfill strata to contain high proportions of black-and-white TVs and color CRT TV sets, but very low proportions of rear-projection TVs and no flat panels. Garbage layers forming today will contain few black-and-white sets, numerous color CRT sets, and (assuming a continued low rate of recycling) an increasing number of flat panels, assuming that household disposal of any particular TV may postdate its purchase by a decade or more.

Archaeologists often use battleship curves to depict frequency seriation patterns. These graphs are particularly useful for showing changes in the proportion of different technological styles of artifacts over time. Interpretation of the curves is straightforward: the width of a horizontal bar for each year represents a percentage of a total count (see right axis opposite). In 1990, for example, 22.6 million TVs were purchased in the U.S. Only 6 percent were black-and-white sets, whereas 46 percent were color CRT models less than 19 inches in size and another 46 percent were large color CRT models. Just 2 percent were the new rear-projection models, and flat panels had not yet debuted.

---

\(^6\) **strata**: layers.

\(^7\) **chronology** (krə-nəl ˈə-ˌjē): the order of events in time.
The shape of each battleship curve is particularly telling, providing an at-a-glance account of changes in the popularity of an artifact style or type over the course of its history. After the artifact’s introduction, curves typically become gradually wider as the artifact style becomes more popular. As newer styles enter the material system, the first curve **tapers** and eventually terminates altogether. The maximum widths and rates of tapering (in both directions) summarize the popularity, rapidity of change in preference or supply, and persistence through time.

In the complex story of U.S. television consumption, several well-defined patterns emerge. Black-and-white TV sets persisted until the early 2000s, long after color CRT sets began dominating household assemblages, and rear-projection units enjoyed a long lifespan but never gained popularity. When things **taper**, they **gradually get thinner**.
significantly better TV technology emerged in the form of flat-panel models, color CRT models declined precipitously, producing the narrow profiles at the tops of the CRT battleships. The adoption rate of flat-panel sets has been steep and unprecedented in the domain of television technology, expanding as CRT use plummeted.

**COLLABORATIVE DISCUSSION**  When future archaeologists study life in the past—the early twenty-first century—what clues will TV sets provide? Talk about your ideas with other group members.

**precipitous**  
(prɪ-sɪpˈtəs) **adj.** When something is precipitous, it is very steep, like a cliff.
Analyze Structure: Cause and Effect

The **structure** of a text is the way it is put together. Authors of informational texts organize their central ideas in paragraphs, and may organize the paragraphs in sections with **headings**. Within the sections, you can identify **patterns of organization**, a particular arrangement of ideas and information. For example, a **cause-and-effect** pattern of organization shows one or more events (causes) leading to one or more other events (effects).

This chart shows a single cause leading to multiple effects, based on details in the first four paragraphs of the section “Television and Daily Life” in the informational text you’ve just read.

- **CAUSE:** There is at least one TV in 99 percent of U.S. households.
  - **EFFECT:** Media broadcast is the main conveyor of culturally shared ideas.
  - **EFFECT:** Living spaces are organized and designed around a TV set.
  - **EFFECT:** Oral history and face-to-face conversation are reduced.

Restate one of these cause-and-effect connections, using the phrase **as a result**.

Cite Evidence

**Graphic aids** are diagrams, graphs, maps, and other visual tools that are printed, handwritten, or drawn. In informational texts, graphic aids organize, simplify, and summarize information. Here are a few types of graphic aids:

- Line graphs show numerical quantities across time and can indicate trends. The **vertical axis** of a graph indicates frequency. The **horizontal axis** shows the categories being considered.
- Bar graphs use horizontal and vertical bars to show or compare categories of information.
- Picture graphs convey information through symbols instead of lines and bars.

As you read, you can use evidence from both the text and the graphic aids to **draw a conclusion**—make a judgment based on evidence and reasoning.

Reread lines 157–162. Examine the graph on page 227. What conclusion can you draw from the text and the graph about flat-panel TV sets?
Analyzing the Text

1. **Cite Evidence** Reread the first paragraph. What causes more than $50 billion of TV advertising expenditures?

2. **Infer** What information about American families were the archaeologists gathering?

3. **Compare** Reread lines 39–46. According to the author, in what ways is a TV like a hearth?

4. **Summarize** Reread lines 66–99. What are the most important findings in this study of the impacts of TV?

5. **Infer** According to the details in “The Material Legacy of TV” section, during the mid-2000s, 25–27 million American-owned sets were discarded, but only 4–4.5 million were collected in domestic recycling. What might these figures suggest about the purchasing habits of American consumers?

6. **Analyzing Graphics** Of the 32 households represented in the graph on page 223, what number of households own only two TVs? What makes that figure worth noting?

7. **Predict** Look at the graph of battleship curves. How do you think the graph might change in the years ahead?

8. **Draw Conclusions** What do archaeologists look for as they study artifacts, and what does TV have to do with artifacts?

**PERFORMANCE TASK**

**Writing Activity: Informative Essay** You’ve just read that a number of different types of televisions have been available through the years. Find out about a new development in TV technology and write about it in a brief informational essay.

- Use digital or print sources about consumer electronics to research your topic.
- Take notes as you try to answer questions like: Who invented this technology and when? How does it work? How could it change how people watch TVs? Why would consumers want to purchase it?
- Use your notes to create an outline of your ideas.
- Share your completed essay with a partner or group that has written about other new features of TVs. Discuss the different features and consumers’ attitudes toward them.
Critical Vocabulary

observation  proliferation  municipal
taper  precipitous

Practice and Apply  Complete each sentence to show that you understand the meaning of the bold word.

1. The scientist counted each observation of . . .
2. We’ve recently had a proliferation of . . .
3. An example of a municipal service is . . .
4. To draw lines that taper, you . . .
5. A change that occurs in a precipitous way is . . .

Vocabulary Strategy: Domain-Specific Words

The subject areas of *Life at Home in the Twenty-First Century* are sociology and archaeology. Sociology is the study of human societies. Archaeology is the study of the things left behind by past societies. When you read about any area of study, you will encounter technical language, terms and phrases used by specialists in a certain field or domain. Note the term social interactions in this quotation:

> For all of its influence on the design and organization of space, the TV may as well be a hearth, which until quite recently in human history exerted the most influence on the spatial distribution of social interactions and activities inside homes.

One way to figure out the meaning is by looking at its two parts: social has something to do with living with other people; interactions are the ways people communicate with each other. But often with technical language, you need to use a print or digital dictionary to confirm the meaning. For more highly specialized terms, you might have to use resources specific to the field, such as a manual of nautical terms for language about sailing.

Practice and Apply  Compare your ideas with other group members as you find and define these terms: observational data sets (line 70); observations (line 76); systemic context (lines 110–111).
Language Conventions: Eliminate Redundancy

When you write to inform and explain, your goal is to be clear and concise. Watch out for **redundancy**, the use of unnecessary words. Reread your sentences to make sure that every word has a purpose.

This list shows common redundancies; the unnecessary words are underlined.

- each and every person
- never before in the past
- the true facts
- may possibly exist
- big in size
- prepared in advance
- entirely complete
- connect together

Avoid using words that repeat what you’ve already said. Compare these two sentences:

Television has an impact on our behaviors and actions, affecting everything from what we purchase to what we talk about in our conversations.

Television has an impact on our behaviors, from what we purchase to what we talk about.

You can tell that the second sentence is stronger because it makes its point in fewer words. In the first sentence, **behaviors** and **actions** are synonyms; **impact** and **affecting** express the same meaning; and **in our conversations** repeats the meaning of **what we talk about**.

**Practice and Apply**  Rewrite each sentence to eliminate the redundancy.

1. Television sets are now essential items in our homes, as basic to our living spaces as refrigerators, stoves, and other necessary appliances.
2. Most American toddlers can turn on the TV without assistance or help from an adult and are also capable of changing a channel from one to another.
3. Although many people hold the belief and opinion that watching TV is a solitary activity, some researchers have evidence that families use the time in front of a TV as a way of spending time together.
4. The TV sets that we discard are enormous in number and will surely provide clues about how we live to archaeologists of the future looking back into the past.
Background  A writer on history, culture, and design, Thomas Hine coined the word populuxe as the title of his first book. The word has become commonly used to describe the enthusiasms of post-World War II America. Hine was born in a small New England town near Boston. He lived in a house that was built in 1770, a very different setting from the modern world he writes about now.

Always Wanting More
from I WANT THAT!

Informational Text by Thomas Hine

SETTING A PURPOSE  What keeps people in our consumer society always wanting more? And when is having more enough? As you read, consider how Thomas Hine answers these questions.

Throughout most of history, few people had more than a couple of possessions, and as a consequence, people were very aware of each object. Life was austere. The ability to be bored by a material surfeit\(^1\) was a rare privilege. There are many stories of kings and emperors who sought a simpler life, if only briefly. Now, that emotion has become widespread, and those who wish to simplify are identified as a distinct market segment. Whole lines of “authentic” products have been created to serve this market, and magazines are published to tell people what they need to buy to achieve a simpler life. In our age of careless abundance, austerity is a luxury, available

\(^1\) *surfeit* (sûr´fıt): an excessive amount.
only to multimillionaires, the occasional monk, and the really smart shopper.

“The standard of life is determined not so much by what a man has to enjoy, as by the rapidity with which he tires of any one pleasure,” wrote Simon Patten, the pioneering economist-philosopher of consumption, in 1889. “To have a high standard of life means to enjoy a pleasure intensely and tire of it quickly.” Patten’s definition of the standard of life was based on superfluity: He expected that people would always have more than they need and would never have all they might want. That was a novel idea in Patten’s time, and it is one that still makes many people uneasy. In material terms, it seems terribly wasteful, a misuse of the resources of a finite world. And in psychological terms, it seems to trap us in a cycle of false hope and inevitable disappointment. We work in order to consume, and we consume in order to somehow compensate for the emptiness of our lives, including our work. Indeed, there is some evidence that people who feel least fulfilled by their work are the most avid shoppers, while those who love their work find shopping a burden, though they don’t necessarily buy less.

Our materialism is oddly abstract, a path toward an ideal. The things we acquire are less important than the act of acquiring, the freedom to choose, and the ability to forget what we have and to keep on choosing. We don’t aspire, as people in China did during the 1970s, to “Four Musts”: a bicycle, a radio, a watch, and a sewing machine. We aspire instead to such intangibles as comfort and modernity, qualities for which standards change so rapidly that the buying can never stop. “Progress is our most important product,” Ronald Reagan used to say during his tenure as spokesman for General Electric. And in 1989, after the Berlin Wall fell, multitudes throughout Eastern Europe disappointed intellectuals in the West by behaving as if freedom was the same thing as going shopping. Even China moved on in the 1980s to the “Eight Bigs”: a color television, an electric fan, a refrigerator, an audio system, camera, a motorcycle, a furniture suite, and a washing machine. Now China is moving beyond the specific “Bigs” and aspires to more, a quest that will never end. A large super-store chain is opening stores there.

---

**superfluity**

(söōˈpar-flōˈə-tē) **n.** Superfluity is overabundance or excess.

**intangible**

(ˈin-tänˈja-bal) **n.** An intangible is something that is hard to describe because it cannot be perceived by the senses.
It is amazing to think that from the dawn of time until the time of Adam Smith, a bit more than two centuries ago, people believed that wanting and having things was a drain on wealth, rather than one of its sources. That doesn’t mean, however, that they didn’t want things or that they didn’t, at times, go to great lengths to attain them.

Now, as I move, mildly entranced, behind my cart at a super store, grabbing items I feel for a moment that I need, I am assumed to be increasing the prosperity not merely of my own country, but of the entire world. Indeed, in the wake of the World Trade Center attacks, Americans were exorted not to sacrifice, as is usual in wartime, but to consume.

There are those who disagree. Can the massive deficit that the United States runs with other countries, which is driven by our hunger for ever more low-priced goods, be sustained indefinitely? Does our appetite for inexpensive goods from overseas exploit the low-wage workers who make them, or does it give them new opportunities? And more profoundly, are there enough resources in the world to provide everyone with this kind of living standard and still have enough clean air and clean water? How many super-store shoppers can one planet sustain?

2 Adam Smith: a Scottish economist who lived in the 18th century.
These are serious questions that need to be addressed, but those who raise such issues have rarely considered the power of objects and the fundamental role that acquiring and using objects has played since prehistoric times. In this story, the big box stores, boutiques, malls, Main Streets, Web sites, and other retailers that constitute the buyosphere represent the fulfillment of an ancient dream. The local super store is a wonder of the world. Never before have so many goods come together from so many places at such low cost. And never before have so many people been able to buy so many things.

Nevertheless, we yawn at a super store rather than marvel at it. That such a store could provoke apathy instead of amazement is a perverse tribute to the plenitude of our consumer society and the weakness of the emotional ties that bind us to the many objects in our lives. Never before has so much seemed so dull.

And even if a super store is not the noblest expression of personal liberty or the highest achievement of democracy, we should consider that it does provide a setting for exercising a kind of freedom that has threatened tyrants and autocrats for thousands of years. We go to a super store to acquire things that prove our own power. It is a place where people really do get to choose.

**COLLABORATIVE DISCUSSION** The author presents ideas about wanting and having things in the past, the present, and the future. What does he say about how wanting and having things change over time? Talk about your ideas with other group members.

---

3 **buyosphere**: a term the author uses to describe all the places that modern consumers buy things.
Determine Meaning

Often, a written work is a reflection of an author’s **style**, a manner of writing that involves how something is said rather than what is said. An author can share ideas or express viewpoints by using stylistic elements like these:

- **Word choice** is an author’s use of words. Well-chosen words help an author to express ideas precisely and artistically. Word choice is part of **diction**, which involves the use of vocabulary and word order. An author’s word choice can be formal or informal, serious or humorous.

- **Tone** is the author’s attitude toward a subject. Like word choice, a tone can convey different feelings. The tone of a work can often be described in one word, such as **playful**, **serious**, or **determined**.

- **Voice** is an author’s unique style of expression. The use of voice can reveal an author’s personality, beliefs, or attitudes.

Consider the word choices in this sentence from “Always Wanting More,” which describes the author’s feelings about being part of a consumer culture:

> Now, as I move, mildly entranced, behind my cart at a super store, grabbing items I feel for a moment that I need, I am assumed to be increasing the prosperity not merely of my own country, but of the entire world.

The tone in this sentence could be described as self-mocking, meaning the author is making fun of himself. What word choices are examples of this?

Make Inferences

To grasp an implied or unstated idea in a text, readers can make an **inference**—a logical guess based on facts and a person’s own knowledge. The chart shows an inference made from a section of the text you’ve just read.

- **Textual Detail**: “And in 1989, after the Berlin Wall fell, multitudes throughout Eastern Europe disappointed intellectuals in the West by behaving as if freedom was the same thing as going shopping.”

- **Knowledge**: The Berlin Wall separated East Germany, which was under Communist control, from West Germany, which had a democratic form of government and greater freedom.

- **Inference**: The fall of the Berlin Wall signaled freedom for East Germans. They focused on purchasing things that they had not been able to get before.

What inference can you make about the reason “intellectuals in the West” were disappointed?
Analyzing the Text

1. **Interpret** A contrast between what is expected and what actually happens is called **irony**. Authors who use irony are often adding a humorous touch in expressing their ideas. In the first paragraph, what words and phrases does the author use to show an ironic tone?

2. **Analyze** An author may express more than one kind of tone in a piece of writing. Reread lines 26–32. What word would you use to describe the author’s tone here? What words or phrases contribute to this tone?

3. **Summarize** Reread lines 65–78. How would you summarize the “serious questions” that the author refers to?

4. **Infer** Reread lines 85–90. What point is the author making when he says that we “yawn at a superstore”?

5. **Compare** Reread to compare the ideas in lines 1–13 with the ideas expressed in lines 91–97. What does an ordinary person in modern times now have in common with the kings and emperors of the past?

6. **Analyze** Based on this informational text, what are your impressions of the writing style of Thomas Hine? Explain how the author's word choice, tone, and voice support his style and express his ideas about consumerism.

**PERFORMANCE TASK**

**Speaking Activity: Discussion**
In small groups, prepare for a class discussion about the claims, or positions, that Thomas Hine shares about our consumer culture.

- First, identify a list of the claims.
- Consider the following questions: How well does the author support his claims? Are there any I would challenge? How does my own experience as a consumer connect to these claims?
- With your other group members, discuss responses to the questions.
- Participants who disagree with Hine’s ideas can present their own views. Be sure to support points with evidence.
- For the class discussion, each small group might choose a reporter to present your responses to the questions.
Critical Vocabulary

superfluity    intangible    exhort    apathy

Practice and Apply  Answer each question with yes or no. With your group, use examples and reasons to explain your answer.

1. Would you want a superfluity of luck?
2. Do intangibles bring success?
3. Can advertising exhort?
4. Is apathy like sympathy?

Vocabulary Strategy: Synonyms and Antonyms

Synonyms are words with similar meanings, such as chilly and cool. Antonyms are words with opposite meanings, such as chilly and warm. Identifying synonyms and antonyms can help readers understand the meanings of unfamiliar words. Note the synonyms in this sentence from “Always Wanting More”:

We aspire instead to such intangibles as comfort and modernity, qualities for which standards change so rapidly that the buying can never stop.

Intangibles are like qualities—both are things that cannot be seen or touched, but still have value.

Note the antonyms in this quotation:
That such a store could provoke apathy instead of amazement is a perverse tribute to the plenitude of our consumer society . . .

Apathy is the opposite of amazement—apathy is a lack of interest.

Practice and Apply  Identify the synonym or antonym for the bold word in each sentence. Use it to make a logical guess about the meaning of the bold word. Verify the meaning in a print or digital dictionary.

1. We live in a finite world where resources are limited.
2. The abundance of products makes us forget that we didn’t always have such plenitude.
3. It is ironic that austerity should seem like luxury to wealthy consumers.
4. We were told not to sacrifice, as is usual in wartime, but to consume.
5. Individual freedoms have always threatened tyrants and autocrats.
Language Conventions: Noun Clauses

A **clause** is a group of words that has a subject and a predicate—the two main parts of a sentence. A **noun clause** is a subordinate clause that is used as a noun; it cannot stand alone and make sense. As the chart shows, the function of noun clauses can vary depending on the specific sentence.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Function</th>
<th>Noun Clause</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>subject</td>
<td>Shoppers’ choices are amazing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>direct object</td>
<td>We purchase things.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>object of preposition</td>
<td>Buy the dress for Mom.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>predicate noun</td>
<td>This place is a superstore.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These pronouns may introduce noun clauses: *that, what, who, whoever, which, whose*. These conjunctions may introduce noun clauses: *how, when, where, why, whether*.

The listed pronouns and conjunctions also introduce other kinds of subordinate clauses. To identify a noun clause, think about how the clause functions in the sentence. Ask: Can I replace the whole clause with a noun or the pronoun *someone or something*? If the substituted word fits, you’ve identified a noun clause.

The noun clause is underlined in this quotation from “Always Wanting More”:

**He expected that people would always have more than they need and would never have all they might want.**

The noun clause functions as a direct object of the verb *expected*. The pronoun *something* could replace the clause and fit in the sentence: “He expected something.”

**Practice and Apply** Identify the noun clause in each sentence. Tell how you know it is a noun clause.

1. Why we always want more things is an interesting question.
2. We see new products and buy them; this is how we live today.
3. Sometimes we buy more of what we already have.
4. Perhaps we believe that more is better, but we’re never content.
5. It’s time to step back and think about where all this shopping is leading us.
**Background**  Writers and poets alike often use their writing to make statements about important topics like consumerism. X. J. Kennedy and Gary Soto each examine our consumer society in their respective poems “Dump” and “How Things Work.”

---

**DUMP**

Poem by X. J. Kennedy

---

**How Things Work**

Poem by Gary Soto

---

X. J. Kennedy (b. 1929) has won many awards for his poetry collections, including the Robert Frost Medal. Kennedy has published numerous books for young people, including collections of poetry and novels. Traditional in form, Kennedy's poems often include narrative, wit, and humor, but he also explores themes about serious topics, such as growing up and loss.

Gary Soto (b. 1952) never dreamed about writing as a child. But after reading a book of poetry in college, he began to write his own poems and dedicated himself to the craft. While Soto has written poetry and novels for adults, he is probably best known as a writer for young adults and children. From his point of view, he is writing about the feelings and experiences of most American kids.

**SETTING A PURPOSE**  As you read, think about what each poet is saying about our consumer society and how that society works.
Dump
by X. J. Kennedy

The brink over which we pour
Odd items we can’t find
Enough cubic inches to store
In house, in mind,

Is come to by a clamber
Up steep unsteady heights
Of beds without a dreamer
And lamps that no hand lights.

Here lie discarded hopes
That hard facts had to rout:
Umbrellas—naked spokes
By wind jerked inside-out,

Roof shingles bought on sale
That rotted on their roof,
Paintings eternally stale
That, hung, remained aloof,

Pink dolls with foreheads crushed,
Eyes petrified in sleep.
We cast off with a crash
What gives us pain to keep.
As we turn now to return
To our lightened living room,
The acrid smell of trash
Arises like perfume.

Maneuvering steep stairs
Of bedsprings to our car,
We stumble on homecanned pears
Grown poisonous in their jar

And nearly gash an ankle
Against a shard of glass.
Our emptiness may rankle,
But soon it too will pass.

1 rankle: to cause constant irritation.
Analyze Poetry: Form

The form of a poem is its structure, including the arrangement of words and lines. The poem “Dump” has a fixed, or traditional, form because it follows fixed rules:

- The poem is divided into stanzas that include the same number of lines.
- The poem has a pattern of end rhymes, called a rhyme scheme. A rhyme scheme is noted by assigning a letter of the alphabet, beginning with a, to each line. Lines that rhyme are given the same letter. For example, in the first stanza, the end words are pour, find, store, and mind. The stanza’s rhyme scheme is abab.

The meter of a poem is the regular pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables. Each foot, or unit of meter, includes one stressed syllable. “Dump” has these characteristics of meter:

- Most lines have the same number of feet.
- Each metrical foot is the kind called an iamb—an unstressed syllable followed by a stressed syllable: duh-DAH, duh-DAH.

Because a meter that follows a rigid pattern can sound as singsong as a nursery rhyme, poets often choose to work more loosely with meter. Listen for the meter in stanza 3:

Here lie discarded hopes
That hard facts had to rout:
Umbrellas—naked spokes
By wind jerked inside-out,

Analyzing the Text

Cite Text Evidence  Support your responses with evidence from the text.

1. Identify Patterns  How many stanzas does the poem have? How many lines are in each stanza? Why might the poet have chosen to organize the poem this way?

2. Identify Patterns  Choose and copy a stanza from the poem. Use stress marks to identify the stressed syllables in each line of the stanza.

3. Analyze  Which stanzas vary from the abab rhyme scheme? What impact does this variation have on the poem’s meaning?

4. Analyze  How does the poem’s form contribute to its meaning?
Today it’s going to cost us twenty dollars
To live. Five for a softball. Four for a book,
A handful of ones for coffee and two sweet rolls,
Bus fare, rosin¹ for your mother’s violin.

We’re completing our task. The tip I left
For the waitress filters down
Like rain, wetting the new roots of a child
Perhaps, a belligerent cat that won’t let go
Of a balled sock until there’s chicken to eat.

As far as I can tell, daughter, it works like this:
You buy bread from a grocery, a bag of apples
From a fruit stand, and what coins
Are passed on helps others buy pencils, glue,
Tickets to a movie in which laughter
Is thrown into their faces.
If we buy a goldfish, someone tries on a hat.
If we buy crayons, someone walks home with a broom.
A tip, a small purchase here and there,
And things just keep going. I guess.

COLLABORATIVE DISCUSSION  Both poems have speakers who share thoughts about their surroundings or situations. Which speaker expresses stronger reactions to the situation? What degree of control does either speaker appear to have over what they describe? Discuss your responses with other group members.

¹ rosin (rōz’ən): a sticky substance that comes from tree sap and is used to increase sliding friction on certain stringed instruments’ bows.
Analyze Poetry: Form

A poem's form is its structure and the way its words and lines are arranged. Some forms are also defined by poetic devices, such as rhyme, rhythm, and meter. A poem's form is closely linked to its meaning, which makes the poem's form important to its message.

The poem “How Things Work” is written in a form called free verse, which has natural rhythms rather than regular patterns of rhyme, rhythm, meter, or line length. A poet may choose free verse to make the language similar to natural speech.

Still, the sounds of words and the rhythms within lines matter in free verse. The poet has made choices about where to break lines, how to punctuate each line, and which words and phrases will best convey particular sound-meaning connections.

To analyze free verse, ask questions such as the following:
- What ideas is the poet expressing? How does the use of free verse support those ideas?
- What rhythms do the line lengths and the punctuation in the poem create? How do these poetic devices add to my understanding of the poem?

Analyzing the Text

Cite Text Evidence Support your responses with evidence from the text.

1. **Interpret** Reread the first sentence of the poem in lines 1–2. Where would you pause, and what words would you stress to give that sentence meaning and feeling?

2. **Interpret** In lines 5–7, what does the speaker compare to rain, and what does that comparison help readers picture?

3. **Interpret** Reread the last two lines of “How Things Work.” Where might be the best places to pause? What words should you stress to help convey the poem’s meaning?

4. **Analyze** Review lines 14–19 and examine how the poet arranges the words and lines. Describe the variations in line lengths. What is the poet trying to explain, and how does the form support those ideas?

5. **Analyze** How does the poem’s form contribute to its meaning?
Determine Theme

Poems like “Dump” and “How Things Work” often have a theme, or a lesson about life or human nature that the poet shares with the reader. A theme usually is developed over the course of a poem, rather than stated directly at the beginning or end. Readers can infer a poem’s theme by thinking about the title, the imagery, the form, and the language the poet uses to describe the subject.

Poets might give clues about the poem’s theme through the tone, or the speaker’s attitude toward the subject. One way they may convey the tone is through the use of irony, or the use of language to say the opposite of what is meant.

How can you tell that the speaker in “Dump” is using an ironic tone in these lines?

The acrid smell of trash
Arises like perfume.

Pay attention to text details as you dig deeper into the poems. Use text clues to determine the themes in each poem and to analyze how those themes are developed through the tones.

Compare Forms in Poetry

You have read two poems on a shared subject—the things we own. Each poet describes an everyday activity and reflects on it in a unique way. The poem’s form is the way the poet organizes ideas, including the arrangement of words and lines.

To compare the forms of these poems, analyze the structure that each poet uses. Use a chart like this to help you make comparisons between the two poems.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elements to Think About</th>
<th>“Dump”</th>
<th>“How Things Work”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>form of poem</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>setting</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lines and stanzas</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sensory and figurative language</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tone</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>theme</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Analyzing the Text

1. **Draw Conclusions**  What is the theme of “Dump”?
2. **Draw Conclusions**  What is the theme of “How Things Work”?
3. **Compare**  In what ways do the poems “Dump” and “How Things Work” seem most alike?
4. **Compare**  Reread lines 14–15 of “How Things Work.” In what way is the tone similar to the tone in “Dump”?
5. **Compare**  Reread the last two lines of each poem. How are the speakers’ statements alike, and what message, or theme, do they leave the reader with?
6. **Evaluate**  Why might the poet have chosen regular meter and rhyme to express the ideas in “Dump”? Why might the poet have chosen free verse for “How Things Work”?
7. **Connect**  Reread lines 1–8 of “Dump.” How might those ideas be expressed in language like that in “How Things Work”?

**PERFORMANCE TASK**

**Writing Activity: Literary Analysis**  Write a one-page analysis of the poems. In your analysis, compare and contrast the views and experiences of consuming expressed in each poem.

- Complete the graphic organizer from the Compare Forms in Poetry section. Use the completed chart to organize your ideas.

- Include words and lines from the poems to support the key points and ideas in your analysis.
- Organize your analysis clearly, using a compare-contrast structure.
- Sum up each speaker’s central idea, or theme, and the tone, or attitude toward the subject.
Charles Yu (b. 1976) wrote his first short story in college, but he didn’t write another one until years later after he graduated from law school. During the day, he works as a lawyer for a visual effects company in southern California. He does most of his writing at night, after he has spent time with his family and his children have gone to bed. Yu has written two short story collections and a novel.

SETTING A PURPOSE As you read this science fiction story, think about the author’s portrayal of Earth’s future and how he creates this portrayal.

Come to Earth! Yes, that Earth. A lot of people think we’re closed during construction, but we are not! We’re still open for business.
Admittedly, it’s a little confusing.
First, we were Earth: The Planet. Then life formed, and that was a great and good time.
And then, for a little while, we were Earth: A Bunch of Civilizations!
Until the fossil fuels ran out and all of the nation-states collapsed and a lucky few escaped Earth and went out in search of new worlds to colonize.
Then, for what seemed like forever, we were Earth: Not Much Going On Here Anymore.
And that lasted for a long time. Followed by another pretty long time. Which was then followed by a really long time.
Then, after a while, humans, having semi-successfully established colonies on other planets, started to come back to Earth on vacation. Parents brought their kids, teachers brought their classes on field trips, retirees came in groups of twenty or thirty. They wanted to see where their ancestors had come from. But there was nothing here. Kids and parents and teachers left, disappointed. *That’s it?* they would say, or some would even say, *It was okay I guess, but I thought there would be more.*

So, being an enterprising species and all, some of us got together and reinvented ourselves as Earth: The Museum, which we thought was a great idea.

We pooled our resources and assembled what we could find. To be sure, there was not a whole lot of good stuff left after the collapse of Earth: A Bunch of Civilizations! One of us had a recording of Maria Callas singing the Violetta aria in *La Traviata.*¹ We all thought it sounded very pretty, so we had that playing in a room in the museum. And I think maybe we had a television playing episodes of *The Tonight Show Starring Johnny Carson.* The main attraction of the museum was the painting we had by some guy of some flowers. No one could remember the name of the guy or the painting, or even the flowers, but we were all pretty sure it was an important painting at some point in the history of paintings and also the history of people, so we put that in the biggest room in the center of everything.

But parents and teachers, being humans (and especially being descendants of the same humans who messed everything up in the first place) thought the whole museum was quite boring, or even very boring, and they would say as much, even while we were still within earshot, and we could hear them saying that to each other, about how bored they were. That hurt to hear, but more than that what was hurtful was that no one was coming to Earth anymore, now that it was a small and somewhat eclectic museum. And who could blame them? After the collapse of civilization, school just has never been the same. By the time kids are done with their five years of mandatory schooling, they are eight or even nine years old and more than ready to join the leisure force as full-time professional consumers. Humans who went

---

¹ Violetta aria in *La Traviata*: a song from the famous opera by Giuseppe Verdi in which the character Violetta sings joyfully about love.
elsewhere have carried on that tradition from their days on Earth. They are ready to have their credit accounts opened, for their spending to be tracked, to get started in their lifelong loyalty rewards programs. Especially those humans who are rich enough to be tourists coming back here to Earth.

Eventually one of us realized that the most popular part of the museum was the escalator ride. Although you would think interstellar\(^2\) travel would have sort of raised the bar on what was needed to impress people, there was just something about moving diagonally that seemed to amuse the tourists, both kids and adults, and then one of us finally woke up and said, well, why not give them what they want?

So we did some research, in the few books we had left, and on the computer, and the research confirmed our hypothesis: Humans love rides.

So Earth: The Museum was shuttered for several years while we reinvented ourselves and developed merchandise and attractions, all of the things we were naturally good at, and after another good long while, we finally were able to reopen as Earth: The Theme Park and Gift Shop, which did okay but it was not too long before we realized the theme park part of it was expensive to operate and kind of a hassle, really, as our engineering was not so good and we kept making people sick or, in a few cases, really misjudging g-forces,\(^3\) and word got out among the travel agencies that Earth: The Theme Park and Gift Shop was not so fun and actually quite dangerous, so we really had no choice but to drop the theme park part and that is how we became Earth: The Gift Shop.

Which was all anyone ever wanted anyway. To get a souvenir to take home.

We do have some great souvenirs.

\(^2\) interstellar: between stars.

\(^3\) g-forces: the amount of force someone experiences when he or she accelerates at the same rate as every unit of his or her mass.
Our top-selling items for the month of October:
1. *History: The Poster!* A 36" × 24" color poster showing all of the major phases of human history. From the Age Before Tools, through the short-lived but exciting Age of Tools, to the (yawn) Age of Learning, and into our current age, the Age After the Age of Learning.


3. *Art: The Poster!* Beautiful painting of a nature scene. Very realistic-looking, almost like a photograph. Twenty percent off if purchased with History: The Poster!


5. *Science: The Video Game.* All the science you ever need to bother with! Almost nothing to learn. So easy you really don’t have to pay attention. For ages three to ninety-three.

6. *Summer in a Bottle.* Sure, no one can go outside on Earth anymore because it’s 170 degrees Fahrenheit, but who needs outside when they have laboratory-synthesized Summer
in a Bottle? Now comes in two odors: “Mist of Nostalgia” or “Lemony Fresh.”

7. **Happiness: A Skin Lotion.** At last you can be content and moisturized, at the same time. From the makers of Adventure: A Body Spray.

Other strong sellers for the month include Psychologically Comforting Teddy Bear and Shakespeare: The Fortune Cookie. All of the items above also come in ring tones, T-shirts, cups, and key chains.

And coming for the holidays, get ready for the latest installment of Earth’s greatest artistic work of the last century: **Hero Story: A Hero’s Redemption (and Sweet Revenge)**, a computer-generated script based on all the key points of the archetypal\(^4\) story arc that we humans are.

Which brings us back to our original point. What was our original point? Oh yeah, Earth: The Gift Shop is still here. Not just here, but doing great! Okay, maybe not great, but okay, we’re okay. We would be better if you came by and shopped here. Which is why we sent you this audio catalog, which we hope you are reading (otherwise we are talking to ourselves). Earth: The Gift Shop: The Brochure. Some people have said the name, Earth: The Gift Shop, is a bit confusing because it makes it seem like this is the official gift shop of some other attraction here on Earth, when really the attraction is the gift shop itself. So we are considering changing our name to Earth (A Gift Shop), which sounds less official but is probably more accurate. Although if we are going down that road, it should be pointed out that the most accurate name would be Earth = A Gift Shop, or even Earth = Merchandise, since basically, if we are being honest with ourselves, we are a theme park without the park part, which is to say we are basically just a theme, whatever that means, although Earth, an Empty Theme Park would be an even worse name than Earth = A Gift Shop, so for now we’re just going to stick with what we’ve got, until something better comes along.

So, again, we say: Come to Earth! We get millions of visitors a year, from near and far. Some of you come by accident. No shame in that! We don’t care if you are just stopping to refuel, or if you lost your way, or even if you just

---

\(^4\) **archetypal**: having the qualities of an original model or prototype. Common archetypes include the hero, the trickster, the wise old man, and the Earth mother.
want to rest for a moment and eat a sandwich and drink a cold bottle of beer. We still have beer! Of course, we prefer if you come here intentionally. Many of you do. Many of you read about this place in a guidebook, and some of you even go out of your way and take a detour from your travels to swing by the gift shop. Maybe you are coming because you just want to look, or to say you were here. Maybe you are coming to have a story to tell when you get back. Maybe you just want to be able to say: I went home. Even if it isn’t home, was never your home, is not anyone’s home anymore, maybe you just want to say, I touched the ground there, breathed the air, looked at the moon the way people must have done nine or ten or a hundred thousand years ago. So you can say to your friends, if only for a moment or two: I was a human on Earth. Even if all I did was shop there.

**COLLABORATIVE DISCUSSION**  In what ways is this a serious story? In what ways is it not at all serious, and why did the author choose to do both with his portrayal of Earth’s future? Talk about your ideas with other group members.
Analyze Stories: Science Fiction

Written works that come from an author’s imagination fall in the broad category called fiction. In science fiction, an author explores unexpected possibilities of the past or the future. The author combines knowledge of science and technology with a creative imagination to present a new world. “Earth (A Gift Shop)” has elements found in other science fiction stories:

Elements of Science Fiction
- descriptions of how humankind’s technologies have altered planet Earth
- colonization of other planets
- impossible events and settings like those in a fantasy story
- a future world with many features and issues common in today’s world

Science fiction writers create fantasy worlds, but they often include familiar elements to make these worlds seem believable. Characters usually speak and behave the way real people do. They often have the same goals and motivations as real people, but they pursue them in fantasy worlds set in the future, the past, or a time completely separate from history.

Choose one of the elements in the list and tell how it is shown in “Earth (A Gift Shop).”

Determine Theme

A theme is a message about life or human nature that the author shares with the reader. In works of fiction, themes are the “big ideas” that readers can infer based on the story the author tells.

While the topic of a science fiction story might be time travel, its theme might be about humans’ responsibility for future generations. The following are examples of themes found in science fiction:

Themes in Science Fiction
- Technological advances will make us smarter and happier.
- Technological advances will cause us to lose control over our lives.
- Tampering with biological systems brings ruin.
- Humanity will survive only if we conquer our urge for war.

To identify the theme in a science fiction text, look at the details the author presents. Do certain characters make significant statements about science and technology? Is technology presented as a positive force that benefits mankind, or is it shown as a potentially threatening force? Consider these questions in the context of “Earth (A Gift Shop).”
Analyzing the Text

**Cite Text Evidence** Support your responses with evidence from the text.

1. **Identify** What elements of science fiction does the story “Earth (A Gift Shop)” have?

2. **Infer** To whom might the narrator be referring when using the pronoun we throughout the story?

3. **Cite Evidence** In the list of “top-selling items,” what are some descriptions that convey ideas about today’s consumer culture?

4. **Draw Conclusions** The narrator tells how “Earth: The Planet” has undergone several name changes. What point might the author be making?

5. **Draw Conclusions** What is the theme of this story?

6. **Analyze** How does the narrator’s use of language reveal the author’s attitude toward the story topic?

**PERFORMANCE TASK**

**Writing Activity: Narrative** In the science fiction world of “Earth (A Gift Shop),” humans no longer live on Earth. What would it be like to vacation in that world? How and why might someone have had to escape Earth to find a home on another planet? Pick a part of that plot to expand into a fictional narrative of your own.

- Create an outline of your story, including the narrator, characters, setting, and plot events with a conflict and resolution.
- List the gadgets or technologies that the characters will encounter.
- Include a theme that leaves readers with a message about technology.
- Use your plan to draft and then revise a 2–3-page fictional narrative.
Critical Vocabulary

enterprising  mandatory  hypothesis  misjudge

Practice and Apply  Use your own knowledge and experiences to answer each question.

1. Who is an enterprising person you know? What makes him or her enterprising?

2. What is mandatory at your school? Why?

3. What hypothesis can you make about human nature? Why is it a hypothesis?

4. When have you misjudged someone or something? How did you find out the truth?

Vocabulary Strategy: Verifying Meaning

When you come across an unfamiliar word in a text, there are a number of steps you can take to verify the word’s correct meaning.

Step 1  Determine the likely meaning using context, the surrounding words and sentences.

Step 2  Substitute the likely meaning for the word in the sentence to see if it makes sense.

Step 3  Look up the word in a print or digital dictionary to verify the likely meaning.

Step 4  Determine which definition after the entry word best fits with the context.

Use the steps to consider and verify the meaning of enterprising in this sentence from “Earth (A Gift Shop)”:  

So, being an enterprising species and all, some of us got together and reinvented ourselves as Earth: The Museum, which we thought was a great idea.

The context shows that being enterprising has to do with a great idea and inventing something again, so it might mean “creative” or “cooperative.” Both of those meanings make sense in the sentence. The dictionary offers this definition: “Showing initiative and willingness to take on new projects.” To be enterprising is to be willing to take on the project Earth: The Museum.

Practice and Apply  Find the sentence with the word eclectic in line 50 of “Earth (A Gift Shop).” Complete the four steps in the chart to verify the meaning for this context. Then restate the sentence using the dictionary meaning you have identified.
Language Conventions: Spelling

When you proofread your writing for accuracy, always check that every word is spelled correctly. If you are using a computer, the spellcheck feature catches most misspellings—but not all. Be especially attentive to homophones, words that sound alike but have different meanings and spellings. These descriptions of souvenir items come from “Earth (A Gift Shop)”: 

- painting of a nature scene 
- never-before-seen footage 

The words scene (“something to view”) and seen (a form of the verb to see) are homophones. Knowing that a word has one or more homophones helps you check for correct meaning-spelling matches. You can verify the spelling and meaning of a homophone in a digital or print dictionary.

Some commonly misspelled homophones are threw/through, right/write/rite, their/there/they’re, and your/you’re.

This chart shows other commonly misspelled homophones.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>affect (to cause a change)</th>
<th>cents (pennies)</th>
<th>peace (calm state)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>effect (result)</td>
<td>scents (smells)</td>
<td>piece (part)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aisle (pathway)</td>
<td>sense (feeling; intelligence)</td>
<td>principal (chief)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’ll (I will)</td>
<td>cereal (of grain)</td>
<td>principle (standard; belief)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>isle (island)</td>
<td>serial (in a series)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>capital (city; money)</td>
<td>current (present time; flow of water)</td>
<td>rain (precipitation)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>capitol (lawmakers’ building)</td>
<td>currant (small raisin)</td>
<td>reign (period of control)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cite (quote; summon to court)</td>
<td>it’s (it is)</td>
<td>rein (strap for horse)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sight (what is seen)</td>
<td>its (belonging to it)</td>
<td>wait (stay)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>site (location)</td>
<td></td>
<td>weight (heaviness)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Practice and Apply  Correct one or more spelling errors in each sentence.

1. Its time for tourists to visit there old planet, Earth.
2. One affect of the collapse of civilizations was the end of national capitols, such as Paris and Washington, D.C.
3. Earth is at piece now, and our principle activity is selling things.
4. Walk through the isles of the gift shop and sniff the sense “Mist of Nostalgia” and “Lemony Fresh.”
Create a Multimedia Presentation

This collection focuses on the proliferation of consumerism and how it has affected American culture and our environment. In this activity, you will research a topic related to consumerism. You will draw from Life at Home in the Twenty-First Century, other texts in the collection, and your research findings to write an informative essay about the topic you chose. Then you will prepare and give a multimedia presentation on that topic.

**A successful multimedia presentation**

- uses technology to share information through text, graphics, video, music, and/or sound
- organizes ideas logically in a way that is interesting and appropriate to purpose and audience
- presents findings in a focused manner, with relevant facts, definitions, and examples
- emphasizes salient points from a variety of sources and media
- concludes with a section that summarizes the findings presented

**Determine Your Topic** Review the texts in the collection. Think about the points each author makes about consumerism. Brainstorm a list of possible topics, such as how TV ads influence consumers or how purchasing behavior in reality TV might affect consumerism. Choose a topic that will interest you and others.

- Transform your topic into a research question you want to answer, such as *What kinds of TV ads influence teenage consumers?* or *How does reality TV change people's attitudes toward and increase consumerism?*
- Make sure your question is open-ended and cannot be answered in a single word.
- Generate further questions that will help you find evidence.
Gather Information  In the collection’s texts, look for information related to the topic you chose. Take notes on key points, observations, and events that will help you understand your topic, answer your questions, and support your ideas.

Do Research  Use print and digital resources to find additional information that addresses your research question.

- Search for credible sources. Use keywords or subject searching in the library to find books related to your topic. Use a search engine to find Internet sources.
- Take notes on facts, details, and examples that explain and support your main points.
- Identify multimedia components, such as graphics, maps, videos, or sound that could emphasize your main points.

Organize Your Ideas  Think about how you will organize your information. Create an outline showing the information you will present in each paragraph. Make sure each idea follows from the previous idea and leads into the next idea.

Consider Your Purpose and Audience  Think about your audience as you prepare your presentation. Your goal is to use multimedia to get your points across most effectively to this particular audience.

Draft an Informative Essay  Use your notes and your outline to draft an informative essay that you can use to create your presentation.

- Begin with an attention-grabbing introduction that defines your topic. Include an unusual comment, fact, quote, or story.
- Organize your information into paragraphs of related ideas.
• Include supporting facts, details, and examples.
• Make sure your ideas transition logically.
• Write a conclusion that follows from and supports your main ideas and leaves the reader with a lasting impression.

**Prepare Your Presentation** Think about what you want your presentation to look like. Choose a presentation tool to create a slideshow.

• Use text from your essay that explains each topic and subtopic. Revise the text to keep your presentation brief and clear.
• Integrate multimedia components that emphasize your main points. Each component should have a clear purpose.
• Check that all text and visuals are large and clear enough that everyone in the audience can see them.

**Practice Your Presentation** Try speaking in front of a mirror, or make a recording of your presentation and listen to it. Then practice your presentation with a partner.

• Speak clearly and loudly.
• Maintain eye contact. Look directly at your audience.
• Use gestures and facial expressions to emphasize ideas.

**Evaluate Your Presentation** Use the chart on the following page to determine whether your presentation is effective.

• Check that your ideas are clearly and logically presented.
• Verify that your text includes specific and accurate information.
• Examine your audio and visual components to make sure they are relevant and well integrated.

**Deliver Your Presentation** Finalize your multimedia presentation. Then choose a way to share it with your audience. Consider these options:

• Use your presentation to give a news report about your topic.
• Create and share a video recording of your presentation.
### PERFORMANCE TASK RUBRIC
#### MULTIMEDIA PRESENTATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ideas and Evidence</th>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• The introduction is appealing and informative.</td>
<td>• The organization is effective and logical throughout the essay.</td>
<td>• The language reflects a formal style.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The topic is well developed with relevant facts, concrete details, interesting quotations, and examples from reliable sources.</td>
<td>• Text, visuals, and sound are combined in a coherent manner.</td>
<td>• Sentence beginnings, lengths, and structures vary and have a rhythmic flow.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The conclusion capably summarizes the information presented.</td>
<td>• Transitions successfully connect related ideas.</td>
<td>• Grammar, usage, and mechanics are correct.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• The introduction could do more to grab the reader’s attention; the introduction states the topic.</td>
<td>• The organization is confusing in a few places.</td>
<td>• The style becomes informal in a few places.</td>
<td>• The introduction is missing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• One or two key points could use more support in the form of relevant facts, concrete details, quotations, and examples from reliable sources.</td>
<td>• Text, visuals, and sound are mostly combined in a coherent manner.</td>
<td>• Sentence beginnings, lengths, and structures vary somewhat.</td>
<td>• Facts, details, quotations, and examples are from unreliable sources or are missing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The concluding section summarizes the information presented.</td>
<td>• A few more transitions are needed to connect related ideas.</td>
<td>• Some grammatical and usage errors are repeated in the presentation.</td>
<td>• The conclusion is missing.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• The introduction is only partly informative; the topic and purpose are unclear.</td>
<td>• The organization is logical in some places but often doesn’t follow a pattern.</td>
<td>• The style becomes informal in several places.</td>
<td>• The introduction is missing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Most key points need more support in the form of relevant facts, concrete details, quotations, and examples from reliable sources.</td>
<td>• Text, visuals, and sound are combined in a disorganized way.</td>
<td>• Sentence structures barely vary, and some fragments or run-on sentences are present.</td>
<td>• Facts, details, quotations, and examples are from unreliable sources or are missing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The concluding section partially summarizes the information presented.</td>
<td>• More transitions are needed throughout to connect related ideas.</td>
<td>• Grammar and usage are incorrect in several places, but the speaker’s ideas are still somewhat clear.</td>
<td>• The conclusion is missing.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• The introduction is missing.</td>
<td>• A logical organization is not used; information is presented randomly.</td>
<td>• The style is inappropriate for the presentation.</td>
<td>• The introduction is inappropriate for the presentation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Facts, details, quotations, and examples are from unreliable sources or are missing.</td>
<td>• Text, visuals, and sound are missing.</td>
<td>• Repetitive sentence structure, fragments, and run-on sentences make the presentation hard to follow.</td>
<td>• Repetitive sentence structure, fragments, and run-on sentences make the presentation hard to follow.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The conclusion is missing.</td>
<td>• Transitions are not used, making the presentation difficult to understand.</td>
<td>• Several grammatical and usage errors change the meaning of ideas.</td>
<td>• Several grammatical and usage errors change the meaning of ideas.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>