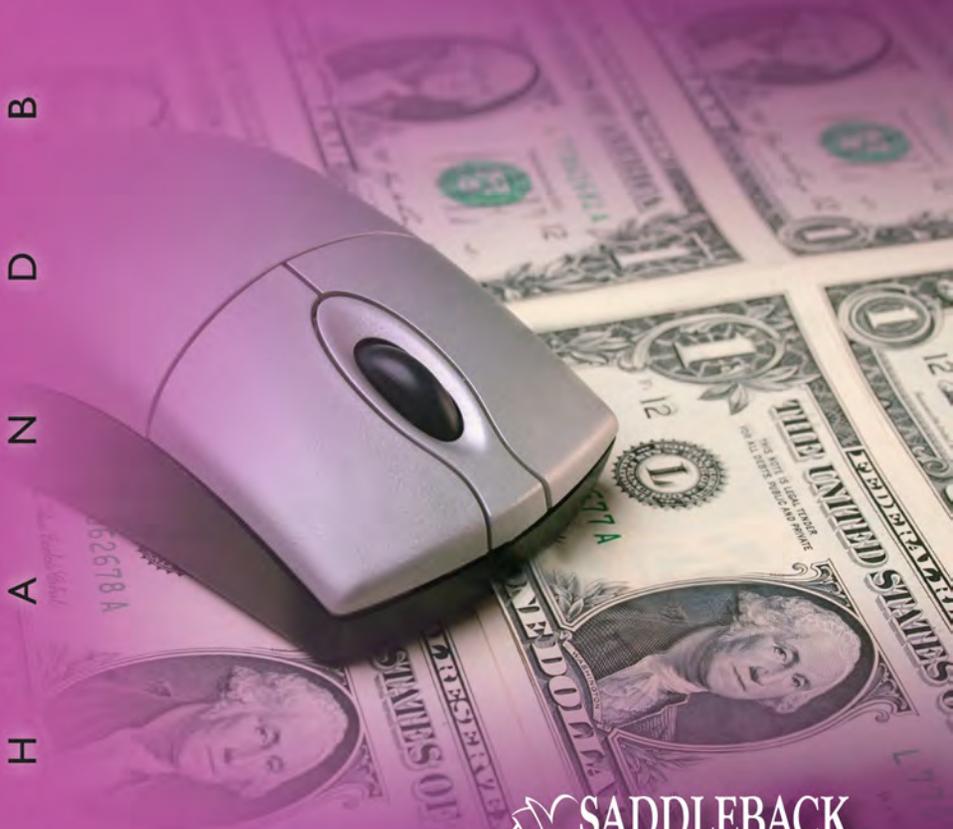




L I F E S K I L L S  
H A N D B O O K S

# Consumer Spending

The Wise Buyer  
Shopping for Goods  
Shopping for Services  
Consumer Rights



21st CENTURY

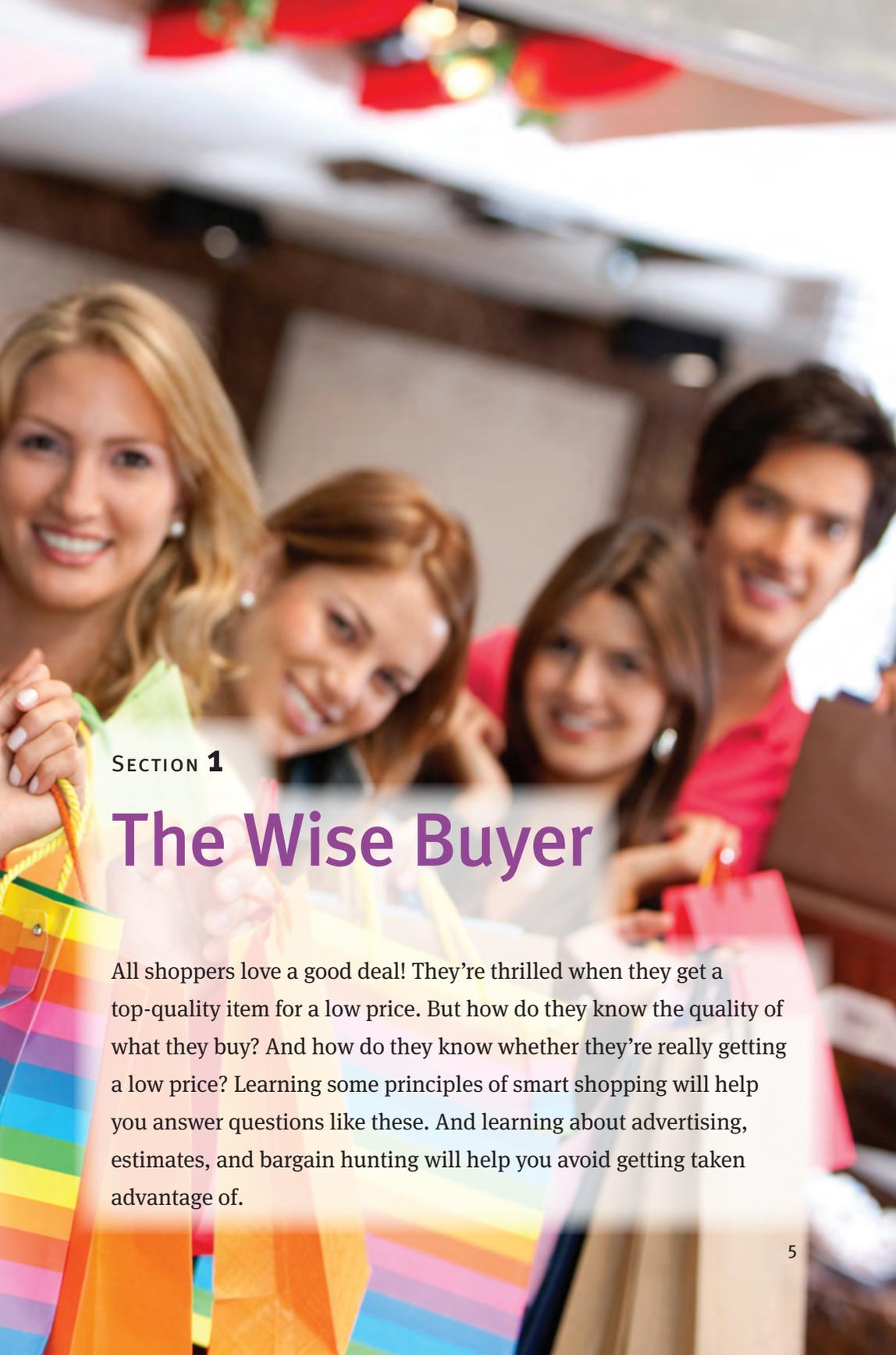
 **SADDLEBACK**  
EDUCATIONAL PUBLISHING



# Contents

<b>Section 1</b>	<b>The Wise Buyer</b>	5
Chapter 1	Principles of Smart Shopping	8
Chapter 2	Interpreting Ad Copy	14
Chapter 3	Avoiding Unexpected Costs	20
Chapter 4	Searching for Bargains	26
<b>Section 2</b>	<b>Shopping for Goods</b>	33
Chapter 1	Return Policies	36
Chapter 2	Buying Household Goods	42
Chapter 3	Assembling a Wardrobe	48
Chapter 4	Shopping from Home	54
<b>Section 3</b>	<b>Shopping for Services</b>	61
Chapter 1	Checking Out Reputations and References	64
Chapter 2	Comparing Life Insurances Policies	70
Chapter 3	Comparing Cable and Other Services	76
Chapter 4	Hiring a Professional versus Doing It Yourself	82
<b>Section 4</b>	<b>Consumer Rights</b>	89
Chapter 1	Credit Card Benefits	92
Chapter 2	Making Complaints	98
Chapter 3	Warranties	104
Chapter 4	Telemarketing, Internet, and Trial Offers	110
<b>Word List</b>		116
<b>Index</b>		118





## SECTION 1

# The Wise Buyer

All shoppers love a good deal! They're thrilled when they get a top-quality item for a low price. But how do they know the quality of what they buy? And how do they know whether they're really getting a low price? Learning some principles of smart shopping will help you answer questions like these. And learning about advertising, estimates, and bargain hunting will help you avoid getting taken advantage of.



## The Smartest Shopper

Lynne often met her friends at the mall on Saturdays. They loved to shop! And they especially loved to buy new clothes for going out Saturday nights.

Lynne's friend Kacie always told the group about the latest styles. She looked at lots of fashion magazines and watched fashion

shows on TV. But she didn't know much about the quality of clothes. And she never shopped around or waited for something to go on sale. She bought what she wanted, when she wanted to. She always paid full price, too!





Another friend, Grace, claimed to be a bargain hunter. She knew about all the stores that sold clothes for reduced prices. She also bought used clothes at a local shop from time to time. But Grace had made some bad choices. She didn't always get good quality in the clothes she bought. One time, she bought some jeans for a really low price. But the first time she wore them, the zipper broke. Another time, she bought a coat that didn't really fit just because it was on sale.



Lynne was the smartest shopper. She looked around at several stores before she bought anything. She checked prices and watched for sales. She knew how to spot good quality, too. She didn't buy everything she wanted.

But what she bought was well made and looked good on her. When Lynne bought a new outfit, she knew that she'd like it and wear it for longer than a weekend.





**CHAPTER 1**

# Principles of Smart Shopping

## How to Shop

Are you a smart shopper? If not, you should learn how to make wise buying decisions. Follow these simple steps:





1. **Learn about a product before you buy it.** Read the product's label to find out what's inside the package. Also ask people who own the same product or something similar for their opinions. Do they recommend the product? Do they have any complaints about it? Ask where they purchased the product and if they got a good buy.

Newspaper, magazine, and online ads or professional reviews can also give you facts about different **brands**. Compare the prices of different products using ads. Read articles and customer reviews to learn more about how products perform. **Consumers'** or buyers' reports are also helpful. These reports often test and grade products, showing which ones you can trust to last.



### **Brands**

Product names or manufacturers. One product, such as a hairdryer, can be available in many brands.

### **Consumers**

Shoppers or buyers. People who purchase goods or services for their own use.



## [FACT]

### Where to Find Consumer Information

Look at consumer magazines or visit their Web sites to learn the latest consumer news. Here are some well-known sources of information:

*Consumer Reports* magazine:

<http://www.consumerreports.org/cro/index.htm>

AOL money and finance Web sites:

<http://www.dailyfinance.com/>

<http://money.cnn.com/>

*Money* magazine:

<http://money.cnn.com/magazines/moneymag/>

*Fortune* magazine:

<http://money.cnn.com/magazines/fortune/>

*Financial Times*:

<http://www.ft.com/intl/companies/retail-consumer>

*Wall Street Journal*:

<http://www.smartmoney.com/>



- 2. Compare what you learn about different brands.** List the advantages and disadvantages of each brand. This will help you compare different products. For instance, Tom is looking for a lightweight, waterproof watch. He's a lifeguard and needs a watch he can count on. He's made a list to help him compare features of different watches.





3. **Consider your wants and your needs.** Your wants and needs are as important as the price you pay for something. Tom's decided to buy a watch that has fewer features and costs more than the others because it's waterproof. Being waterproof is a key feature for his work.

## Where to Shop

Where you shop can make a big difference in how much you pay. Discount stores and buyer warehouses usually offer the lowest prices. But be sure you know what you want and how much it costs before you shop at one of these stores. They may sell a mix of high- and low-quality brands. You won't be able to get much customer service or advice. And you often can't try on clothes at these stores.

**Retail** and specialty stores charge the highest prices. But they usually sell top-quality brands and offer good service. If you shop at a retail store, ask about upcoming sales. You can save a lot by waiting for sales, when prices are lower.

### Retail

A kind of store that sells products one at a time for individuals' use.





## When to Shop

When you go shopping is important, too. Don't rush out to buy a new type of product the minute it's introduced. Wait for several months, when the price has probably gone down. It often pays to wait!

Prices changes on seasonal items, too. For instance, you'll pay less for a swimsuit at the end of summer than at the beginning. And you'll save money on a space heater if you buy it in the summer, not the winter.

Smart shoppers also wait for sales that occur after holidays, such as Christmas and the Fourth of July. You can often learn about these sales through newspaper or TV ads or mailers.





## [FACT]

### Top US Retail Chains

The following stores are listed in order of their yearly sales, from highest to lowest:

Walmart	Walgreens	Safeway
Kroger Company	CVS Caremark	SuperValu
Costco	Best Buy	Rite Aid
Home Depot	Lowe's	Publix
Target	Sears	Amazon.com

### When Can You Get the Best Deals?

Products that are used at certain times of the year cost less in the off-season. Others go on sale during particular months. Plan to buy these products during these months:

#### January

Bedding  
CDs and DVDs  
Computers  
TVs

#### February

Indoor furniture  
Winter clothing

#### March

Winter coats  
Winter sports gear

#### April

Computers  
Spring clothing

#### May

Athletic clothing and shoes  
Camping gear

#### June

Computers  
Indoor furniture  
Summer sports gear  
Swimwear

#### July

Furniture  
Swimwear

#### August

Air conditioners  
Backpacks  
Outdoor furniture

#### September

Bikes

#### October

Bikes  
Computers  
Winter coats

#### November

Bikes  
TVs

#### December

Bikes  
TVs