



## Consumer Decision Making

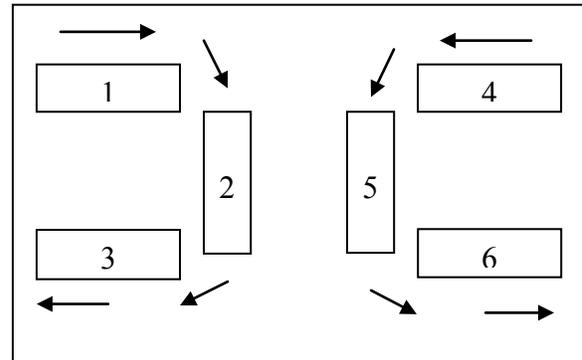
*Consumer Decision Making is a competitive event that teaches youth financial management, consumerism, and decision making skills. The event consists of six classes with two sets of reasons. What should you expect when you participate in the contest?*

Youth compete as a team of three or four members. If a team has four members, the lowest score is dropped in determining awards. Some teams may choose to dress in matching outfits, but this is not a requirement.

When youth arrive they will go through a basic orientation. At this time each contestant will receive a number based on their county. Each team member will have the same number, followed by a letter A-F. This letter signifies their judging group: for example, all A's will form a group, all B's, etc.

Youth will be provided scantrons to mark their placings on and may have their own clipboard. No other paper will be allowed into the judging room. Note cards will be provided for reasons classes. Each member is responsible for providing their own pencils. It is recommended that they bring at least two.

Following orientation, contestants will be taken into the judging room by group. In the judging room(s), there will be six tables, (three on each end) with four items on each table. (Based on facilities, the classes may be in two separate rooms, with three classes in each room.) **Figure 1** is a diagram of the basic room layout.



**Figure 1**

Each group will be placed at a different table with their backs to the items. When time is called, contestants may turn and begin judging. They will need to read the situation and place the class accordingly. Contestants have 8 minutes to complete judging and mark their scantron. A two-minute warning is given, and time is called. Members must mark their scantrons rotate to the next class.

Within each set of three classes, a reasons class is identified. The reasons classes will be published in the rules. Youth should take notes on the note cards provided while they are judging that class. They will not be able to go back to that class once time is called. One set of reasons will be given after each set of three classes. Contestants are allowed 10 minutes study time prior to giving reasons and are allowed 2 minutes to present reasons. For example, contestant A judges at tables 1, 2, and 3; The reasons class is at table 2, where they take notes on the items and their placing; after completing these three classes turning in all three cards, contestants line up to give reasons on class

2. Once the first round of reasons have been given, the contestants return to judge the remaining three classes and the entire process starts over, only now, the contestant will be on the opposite side of the room. For example, contestant C judges at tables 1, 2, and 3; gives reasons on class 2; returns to judging room and judges classes 4, 5, and 6; then give reasons on class 6.

Reasons classes are staggered on each side and the order for contestants to present is shuffled to allow each contestant a fair chance in preparing their reasons. For example, D's may be first in line to give reasons in round one, but E's will be first in round two. **Figure 2** shows a sample reasons order.

Sample Reasons Order			
Class 1			
Round 1		Round 2	
1A	3B	1D	3E
2A	1C	2D	1F
3A	2C	3D	2F
1B	3C	1E	3F
2B		2E	
Class 2			
Round 1		Round 2	
3B	1C	3E	1F
2B	3A	2E	3D
1B	2A	1E	2D
3C	1A	3F	1D
2C		2F	

**Figure 2**

Prior to youth judging, officials are set on each class. That means a judge decides how the class should be placed. The judge also sets cuts. Cuts are basically negative points, or the number of points lost based on how difficult the official judge feels it is to place one item over another, based on the situation and product standards. For example, consider a class that is placed 4-3-2-1 with cuts of 3-4-7. The top pair, 4-3, was closer in value and more difficult to determine than the middle pair, 3-2. The bottom pair, 2-1, had a cut of 7; this is a high cut, telling us that the bottom should be obvious. Not placing

1 at the bottom will result in the loss of 7 points. A perfect score on a class is 50.

**Figure 3**

Sample of Official Placings	
Official Placing: 4 – 3 – 2 – 1	
Cuts: 3 4 7	
1234 – 4	3124 – 19
1243 – 7	3142 – 26
1324 – 8	3214 – 22
1342 – 15	3241 – 40
1423 – 14	3412 – 40
1432 – 18	3421 – 47
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2134 – 11	4123 – 28
2143 – 14	4132 – 32
2314 – 22	4213 – 35
2341 – 36	4231 – 46
2413 – 28	4312 – 43
2431 – 39	4321 – 50

If the contestant placing was 2-3-1-4, find that placing on the officials sheet. In this case, their score would be 22.

**Example Class:**

**MENU Class**

Tom is planning a romantic dinner with his girlfriend. She is a picky eater, and tries to eat as healthy as possible. He has decided to have:

- ❖ Chicken fajitas
- ❖ Flour tortillas
- ❖ White rice
- ❖ Ice tea
- ❖ Sopapillas (Mexican fried dessert) with honey

Help Tom adjust his menu to be more nutritious and colorful to look good in the candlelight.

#1- Trade tortillas for whole-wheat tortillas. Use beef instead of chicken and add onions. Keep the rice, but add refried beans and trade the ice tea for Dr. Pepper.

#2- Add salad and black beans. Trade white rice for low sodium Spanish rice. Provide salsa and cheese as fajita toppings. Serve low-fat flan (a Mexican custard dish) with apples and caramel sauce for dessert.

#3- Add multi-colored bell peppers and purple onions to chicken for fajitas. Offer salsa, guacamole, cheese and sour cream on the side. Add lettuce and tomatoes for garnish, change the white rice to Spanish rice (rice with tomato sauce and spices) and substitute strawberry shortcake with low-fat whipped cream for dessert.

#4- Serve baked sopapillas, not fried, and top with berries instead of honey. Add salad with low-fat French dressing and provide chopped tomatoes and lettuce for fajita toppings. Mix beef and chicken and add green bell pepper. Skip the rice, but add cheese for the fajitas.

Official Placing:      3 – 4 – 2 – 1  
                                   $\swarrow$      $\swarrow$      $\swarrow$   
Cuts:                        2      3      5

Reasons:

#3      Added color: peppers and onions, side items & veggies, Spanish rice, strawberries; Added food groups: vegetable, dairy, and fruit- this is a balanced meal with servings from all food groups.

#4      Added color: berries, salad w/ dressing, veggies, beef and green pepper, cheese (mostly just added green, but better than original); Added food groups: baking sopa makes it a bread, (not a fat), fruit, vegetables and dairy, this also has all the food groups, but not as much color or nutrients than #3.

#2      Added color: salad, black beans, Spanish rice, salsa, cheese, apples and caramel. Added food groups: fruit, vegetables, dairy- this gives all the food groups, but not the variety of color and texture that you have in #3 and #4.

#1      Added color: whole-wheat, beef, onions and beans (all that was really added was brown.) Added food groups: None- still only proteins and grains, soda adds sugar and sodium.

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**Example Reasons:**

Ma'am, I place this class of menus 3, 4, 2, 1.

Overall, this was a fairly easy class. In my top pair I placed 3 over 4. I grant that 4 did add a grain, a fruit, a vegetable and dairy to have a balanced meal with all food groups, however, 3 also had all food groups and added more color and textures to the menu than 4.

In my middle pair I placed 4 over 2. 2 being the menu with the least color and texture added when compared to 4. I grant that 2 did include all the food groups.

In my bottom pair I placed 2 over 1. Number 1 was the obvious bottom as no additional food groups were added, leaving the meal with only proteins and grains. Sugar and sodium were added by the soda. I grant that 1 had some added color, but I criticize 1 in that the only color added was brown.

For these reasons I place this class of menus 3, 4, 2, 1. Thank you.

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Senior age 4-H'ers will use the judging scantron used at the State Contest. Novice and Junior members will use judging cards to record their placings at District Contests.

**References:**

*Texas 4-H Consumer Decision Making Guide*  
*New Mexico 4-H Consumer Decision Making Guide*  
*Minnesota 4-H Consumer Contest Guide for Educators and Coaches*