

Chapter 17

Ordinary Level Questions

Q1. Circle TRUE or FALSE for each of the following statements:

Statement about consumer rights	TRUE / FALSE
EU digital service providers must notify consumers before changing their terms.	TRUE / FALSE
Consumers in the EU have a 14-day cooling-off period for digital services.	TRUE / FALSE
Consumers always have more legal protection when buying from outside the EU.	TRUE / FALSE
The Irish small claims procedure offers compensation up to the value of €5,000 to consumers	TRUE / FALSE

Q2. Based on current consumer legislation, explain two rights a person has when buying a digital streaming service like Netflix or Spotify.

The service must work as described.

This means the streaming service must match anything the seller claimed about it, including content, features, or trial descriptions.

For example, if Netflix advertised certain films or shows, these must be available once the customer signs up.

The service must include the most up-to-date version.

Consumers must get the latest version of the app or software, including any security or digital updates.

For example, if you buy access to Spotify, you must receive the newest version, not an older one.

Q3. List **three** ways a consumer running a household can actively contribute to the circular economy. *Tip: Think about how you shop, use, or dispose of everyday items.*

Use reusables instead of single-use items.

Choose products with minimal or recyclable packaging.

Repair, donate or recycle items rather than binning them.

Buy second-hand or refurbished items.

Plan meals and reduce food waste.

Q4. (i) Explain the term circular economy.

A model of production and consumption which extends the life cycle of products, reduces waste, and creates further value.

For example, items can be reused, repaired, shared or recycled instead of being thrown away.

(ii) Describe **two** ethical concerns Irish consumers may have when shopping for clothes online.

Fair treatment of workers

Consumers may worry that clothes are made in factories where workers are not paid fairly or do not have safe conditions.

For example, some fast-fashion brands have been linked to poor working environments for garment workers.

Animal-welfare concerns

Shoppers may be unsure whether materials or products were tested on animals or made using harmful animal practices.

For example, a consumer might look for cruelty-free or vegan-certified clothing or cosmetics when buying online.

Lack of transparency about how the clothes are made

Consumers may worry that some online retailers do not clearly explain where their clothes come from or how their suppliers operate.

For example, a website may not show information about environmental practices, leaving buyers unsure if the product is ethically made.

Q5. Tick (✓) whether each consumer action that helps or harms the circular economy:

Example	Helps	Harms
Choosing to buy energy-efficient lightbulbs, even if they cost more		
Replacing electronic items that are still working		
Refilling a reusable container instead of buying a new one		
Buying different fast fashion items for different events		

Q6. Outline **two** ways digital technology has influenced consumer behaviour.

Technology has made shopping quicker and more convenient.

Consumers can buy products at any time, compare options easily and get fast delivery, which changes how and when they shop.

Technology gives consumers more information before they buy.

Online reviews, comparison tools and product details help people make more informed decisions and feel more confident about their purchases.

Technology has increased impulse buying.

Targeted ads and constant promotion on social media can encourage consumers to buy items they did not plan to purchase.

Q7. (i) Identify **two** responsibilities of Data Controllers under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

Report data breaches within 72 hours.

Keep personal data safe and secure.

(ii) Describe **two** ways the Data Protection Commissioner (DPC) helps to protect rights of consumers.

The DPC investigates complaints from consumers.

The DPC checks whether businesses are following data-protection rules and takes action if they are not.

For example, if a company misuses personal data, the DPC can carry out an investigation.

The DPC raises awareness and provides guidance to the public.

It helps consumers understand their data rights and learn how to protect their personal information.

For example, the DPC publishes advice on safe online behaviour and how to manage privacy settings.

Higher Level Questions

Q1. (i) Explain three key rights that consumers have under current legislation when accessing digital services such as streaming, cloud storage, or e-books.

The service must work as described.

The digital service must match what the seller promised, including features, content and performance. This protects consumers from misleading information.

The consumer must receive the most up-to-date version.

Consumers are entitled to the newest version of the digital content or service, including updates that affect security or performance.

The service must include any necessary accessories.

If an item is needed to use the digital product, it must be provided as part of the purchase. This ensures the product is fully usable when supplied.

(ii) Using a suitable example, analyse how redress supports consumer protection when a digital product or service does not work as expected.

When a service is faulty or not delivered as agreed, consumers can receive a refund, a price reduction or have the issue fixed. This encourages businesses to supply accurate descriptions and maintain service quality. Redress ensures consumers do not lose out when a digital service fails.

(iii) Evaluate the extent to which these rights are protected when buying from a business outside the EU.

Consumer rights are much weaker outside the EU.

EU rules on digital content do not apply, meaning consumers may not receive updates, refunds or quality guarantees. This increases the risk of poor service or misleading information.

Q2. Describe **four** ways a consumer purchasing household items can actively contribute to the circular economy.

Choose products with minimal or recyclable packaging.

This reduces waste and keeps materials in use for longer.

For example, choosing glass jars instead of plastic containers.

Buy long-lasting or repairable household items.

This cuts down on replacing products often and lowers waste.

For example, choosing a repairable kitchen appliance.

Use reusables instead of disposables.

This helps keep materials in the cycle and reduces landfill waste.

For example, using reusable cleaning cloths instead of disposable wipes.

Donate, repair or recycle old household items.

This keeps products in use and reduces the need for new materials.

For example, repairing a lamp or donating furniture.

Q3. (i) Explain the term circular economy

A model of production and consumption which extends the life cycle of products, reduces waste, and creates further value.

A circular economy aims to keep products and materials in use for as long as possible and reduce waste through reuse, repair and recycling.

(ii) Describe **two** ethical and **two** sustainability concerns for Irish consumers when purchasing from online retailers.

Ethical concern: Fair treatment of workers

Consumers may worry clothing is made in factories with unsafe conditions or unfair pay.

For example, some fast-fashion brands have been linked to poor labour standards.

Ethical concern: Animal welfare

Some shoppers worry clothing or products involve harmful animal practices or testing.

For example, concerns about leather, fur, or animal-tested cosmetics.

Sustainability concern: Excess packaging

Online shopping often uses large amounts of packaging, increasing waste. For example, clothing arriving in multiple layers of plastic bags.

Sustainability concern: High carbon footprint

Long-distance delivery increases transport emissions. For example, shipping fast-fashion products from overseas.

Q4. Analyse how technology impacts **both positively and negatively** on the consumer. Provide **two** points for each.

Technology gives consumers more information, which leads to better decisions.

Online reviews, comparison tools and product details allow consumers to study options in more depth before buying. This reduces the risk of choosing poor-quality goods and increases confidence in the final decision. As a result, consumers are more likely to get value for money and avoid misleading claims.

Technology increases convenience and changes how consumers organise their shopping.

Shopping apps and online stores allow consumers to buy at any time, which reduces the need to travel and saves time. This convenience can influence purchasing habits, as consumers may switch from weekly in-store shopping to smaller, more frequent online purchases. It also gives wider access to goods that might not be available locally.

Technology increases impulse buying, which can affect spending decisions.

Targeted advertising and constant online suggestions can influence consumers to buy items they did not plan to purchase. This pressure can reduce rational decision-making because choices are made quickly and with less evaluation. Over time, this can lead to overspending and reduced financial control.

Technology reduces in-person interaction and limits the ability to judge products physically.

Buying online means consumers cannot see or test products before purchasing, which increases uncertainty about quality, size or suitability. This can lead to returns, inconvenience and disappointment. It also weakens the traditional relationship between consumers and retailers, as people rely more on digital information than face-to-face advice.

Q5. (i) Outline three rights that consumers have under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) when they share their personal data with a business.

Right to access their personal data

Consumers can ask a business to tell them what personal data it holds about them and how it is being used. This helps consumers understand and check how their information is being managed.

Right to have incorrect data corrected

If a business holds personal information that is wrong or out of date, the consumer has the right to get it corrected. This ensures decisions or actions taken by the business are based on accurate information.

Right to have their data erased (right to be forgotten)

Consumers can ask for their personal data to be deleted when there is no legal reason for the business to keep it. This gives consumers more control over where their information is stored and for how long.

(ii) Describe **two** responsibilities that businesses or data controllers must follow when collecting or using consumer data.

Report data breaches within 72 hours.

Businesses must inform the DPC quickly when personal data is exposed. For example, a company must notify customers if its database is hacked.

Keep personal data safe and secure.

They must protect personal information using security measures such as encryption or access controls.

For example, a healthcare provider must secure patient records.

(iii) Suggest **two** ways consumers can make more informed decisions about sharing their data online, particularly when using apps or websites.

Check the privacy policy before signing up.

This helps consumers understand what data is collected and how it will be used.

Limit the amount of personal data shared.

Providing only necessary information helps reduce the risks if a breach occurs.

Read the following and then answer the questions that follow

The Business World – Nia’s Shopping Saga

Nia, a 17-year-old student in Cork, loves finding good deals online. Recently, she ordered a wireless speaker from a US-based website after seeing an ad on Instagram. The price was low and the reviews seemed positive.

But when it arrived, the sound quality was poor, the instructions were missing, and the Bluetooth wouldn’t connect properly. When Nia contacted customer support, they said returns weren’t accepted for “opened electronics.” She was frustrated and surprised to learn on the CCPC website that her consumer rights weren’t the same as if she’d bought from an Irish or EU-based seller.

A few weeks later, she saw a €12 hoodie on a Chinese fast-fashion app. It looked good, but she hesitated. Would it arrive? Would it fit? Could she return it? She remembered a talk at school about fast fashion’s impact on the environment and factory workers.

This time, Nia did some research. She looked up reviews, checked return policies, and read about ethical alternatives. She eventually chose to buy from a small Irish clothing brand instead. It cost more, but offered clear policies, local delivery, and information about how the clothes were made.

Q1. *Nia didn’t have the same rights when buying the speaker from a website outside the EU.*

Outline three rights she would have had if she purchased a branded speaker from a business based in the EU.

The speaker must be fit for purpose.

This means the speaker must work for its normal use, and if Nia explained she needed it for something specific (e.g. Bluetooth connection), it must be suitable for that purpose.

The speaker must work for a reasonable amount of time.

The product should last for a normal length of time based on its price and quality. If it stops working too soon, this would breach her rights.

The speaker must match its description or any sample shown.

Any information given online such as sound quality, Bluetooth features, size or colour, must be accurate and reflect the product she receives.

The speaker must include instructions and essential accessories.

A branded speaker must come with its manual, charger or any other required parts needed to use it. Missing instructions would breach this right.

Q2. Before buying a hoodie from a Chinese fast-fashion app, Nia hesitated.

Outline two ethical concerns she might have had about buying cheap clothes from a non-EU business.

Fair treatment of workers

Nia may worry that the hoodie was made in factories where workers are not paid fairly or do not have safe working conditions. Many fast-fashion suppliers have been linked to poor labour standards.

Lack of transparency about how the clothes are made

Some online retailers give very little information about where their products come from or how they are produced. This makes it hard for consumers to know whether the clothing is made in an ethical and responsible way.

Q3. Analyse one positive and one negative impact that digital technology (e.g. websites, social media, shopping apps) has had on Nia's shopping behaviour.

Positive impacts

Technology helps Nia make more informed decisions.

Access to websites, reviews and comparison tools lets Nia study products before she buys them. This changed her behaviour when she researched the hoodie by checking reviews, return policies and ethical alternatives before choosing the Irish clothing brand. Technology helped her slow down, compare options carefully and avoid another disappointing purchase.

Technology gives Nia more choice and convenience.

Online stores and apps allow Nia to browse a wider range of products than what is available locally, and she can shop at a time that suits her. This increases the number of brands she can consider, including Irish businesses with clear ethical policies. Technology therefore shapes her behaviour by giving her easier access to different sellers and delivery options.

Negative impacts

Technology exposes Nia to targeted advertising that can influence impulse buying.

The Instagram ad for the wireless speaker encouraged her to buy quickly without researching the seller. This shows how digital advertising can affect her decision-making by creating pressure to buy on the spot. The result was a poor-quality product and limited consumer rights, showing the risk of acting on targeted ads.

Technology reduces Nia's ability to judge products before buying.

Because she cannot see or test items in person, Nia depends on images, descriptions

and reviews that may not always be accurate. This contributed to her receiving a speaker with poor sound quality and missing instructions. It also made her question whether the hoodie from the fast-fashion app would fit, arrive on time or be returnable.

Q4. When Nia shops online or uses apps and websites, she shares her personal data.

(i) Name the law that covers her.

General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

(i) Outline three rights she has under that law.

Right to access her personal data

Nia can ask any business to tell her what personal data they hold about her and how it is being used. This helps her understand who has her information.

Right to have incorrect data corrected

If a business has information about her that is wrong or out of date, she can request that it is updated. This ensures her data is accurate.

Right to have her data erased

Nia can ask a business to delete her data when she no longer wants them to keep it or if there is no legal reason for holding it. This gives her more control over her information.

(ii) Suggest one way she can help to protect her personal data when shopping online.

Check the privacy settings before using a website or app.

This allows Nia to control what information she shares and limit unnecessary access to her personal data.