

MATHEMATICS SUPPORT ACTIVITY BARGAIN HUNTERS

LEARN HOW TO CALCULATE REAL COSTS TO FIND THE TRUE BARGAIN.

Ages: 10 AND UP

Time: 30-45 minutes

Materials Needed: Internet Access, Paper and Pencil, Microsoft Excel (or other word processing software)

Instructions:

1. Start by asking participants which is the better deal (i.e. costs less), a 12-pack of soda on sale for for \$3.99 or a liter of soda at the full price of \$1.29. (Hint: Figure out the cost per ounce of each item.)
2. Follow up with a discussion of costs for typical grocery items and what constitutes a sale. Sometimes it is cheaper to buy in bulk, but sometimes it is not. Sometimes a sale is not really a sale. Why do participants think it is more expensive to buy the 12-pack?
3. Instruct participants that they have \$100 dollars to spend on a party for the Club. Have them search local grocery ads to find the best deals on food and drink for the party.
4. The items purchased should be recorded in the spreadsheet in 3 columns, item descriptions, cost per unit, units purchased.
5. Next, have participants calculate the total cost of the items purchased by using the SUM or AUTOSUM function in Excel. For an added challenge, have participants calculate the tax on the items purchased. Did tax make the total exceed \$100? If so, what items would the participants remove to make the total lower?
6. Finally, have the participants share the items they would have purchased



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as a group. Discuss whether some purchases were good deals or not-so-good deals.

Extension Ideas: If possible, have participants actually plan a “party” and go on a shopping field trip to purchase party supplies. At the grocery store, show participants how to read item labels to determine the true cost of items.

For older participants this can be modified to items more age-appropriate such as personal computers, gaming consoles or cars. Older participants can learn the value of features and the quality of product purchase using consumer websites.

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