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Reading Lesson Plan -- Shopping for "big ticket" items

Part I: Introduction

1. Overview and class demographics

- a. Topic of lesson: comparison shopping for computers
- b. Primary skills: reading/writing/speaking
- c. Proficiency level of students: high intermediate
- d. Age range and gender of students: male and female adults
- e. Number of students and L1 background: 24 students with a variety of backgrounds
- f. Length of class time: 160 minutes, split into two segments of 80 minutes each
- g. Type of institution: adult education for immigrants in the U.S.

2. Objectives

a. Language skills

(i) terminal objectives:

- Students will be able to evaluate and compare quantitative and qualitative information about the features of expensive consumer items, such as processor speed and reliability, and make informed purchase decisions.
- Students will be able to use compound nouns to describe computers features.

(ii) enabling objectives:

- Students will scan text for specific information.
- Students will skim for the main idea.
- Students will read a text thoroughly and organize information in it by completing a table.
- Students will use tables to compare products as to their specific features and then as to their overall value.

- Students will analyze the fine print in an advertisement to assess the truthfulness of the ad.
- Students will deduce the meaning of words from context.
- Students will recognize a pattern in the ordering of words in compound nouns used to describe computer components.
- Students will create new compound words following the pattern they have identified.
- Students will describe the pattern they have identified.
- Students will carry on an open-ended conversation regarding the truthfulness of an advertisement.

b. Content knowledge and cultural understanding:

- Students will learn to evaluate advertising critically.
- Students will learn to use tables to organize information about consumer products and evaluate that information so as to make better-informed purchase decisions.

c. Learning strategies students will use:

(i) Cognitive

- Students will organize data.
- Students will use context to deduce the meaning of words.
- Students will recognize and use patterns in the formation of compound words.
- Students will evaluate an advertisement.

- Students will use prior knowledge about three products to evaluate information about a fourth product.

(ii) Socio-affective

- Students will work cooperatively in pairs and groups.

3. Relevant structural and organizational patterns

- print advertisements

- tables for organizing data
- patterns in the formation of compound words

4. Relevant vocabulary items

Computer-related vocabulary

at least

CD-ROM "big ticket" item

CD-RW drive consumer

graphics deceptive

hard drive fine print

processor speed (MHZ) good buy

SDRAM (random memory) honest

instant savings

manufacturer

model

rebate

retail company

5. Materials and equipment

- student lesson packets (containing work sheets, advertisement, and copy of rebate coupon)
- overhead copies of work sheets, projector, and markers or blackboard and chalk

Part II: Procedures

1. Transition and warm-up [5 minutes]

- Tell the students that you will be leading a reading lesson on shopping for "big ticket" items in the U.S.
- Ask for volunteers to explain the meanings of "item" and "big ticket."
- Ask the students for examples of "big ticket" items they have bought in the U.S., and where they have bought them. Make a list of the products and the store names on the overhead or the blackboard.
- Ask the students whether it matters what store you shop at. Are they all the same? How are they different? Do different stores have different prices?

- Ask the students whether they find very many product choices in the stores.
- Ask them how they decide which product to select. Is price the only thing that matters? If not, what else matters?
- Ask whether they look at products in more than one store before they buy.
- Tell the students that in today's reading lesson, they will be learning one way they can organize information about different products to help them decide what to buy -- so they can be smart consumers.
- Ask the students to form pairs. Partners should sit side-by-side.
- Hand out the lesson packets.
- Direct the students to put their names in the top right corner and advise them that the packets will be collected later so that you can make sure everyone participated in the lesson and understood it.

2. Pre-reading activities [15 minutes]

- Ask a student to read aloud the question under I.A. on p. 1: "What are some 'big ticket' items you have bought in the United States?" Ask a volunteer to rephrase the question. Note that each list will be different.
- Ask another students to read the questions under I.B.: "How did you get information to help you decide which product to buy? What else could you have done?" Ask for one or two volunteers to give examples of ways they got information to help them decide on a purchase.
- Give the students about three minutes to complete p. 1. They should complete the first question individually, then work with their partners to complete the second one. Circulate the room to make sure they are on task.
- Put student responses on the overhead or blackboard after students have completed p. 1. Prompts may be needed to assure full completion of the questions under I.B. Possible answers include: *talk to friends who have bought the product; talk to friends who sell the product or use it on the job; read about the product in books or magazines; do research on the Internet; consult Consumer Reports or other library resources; examine products in different stores; examine advertisements.* Elicit a definition for "consumer."
- Ask the students to imagine that they needed a new television set. What would they want to know about the different sets that are currently on the market? What features would they be willing to pay more for? What features are not worth the extra price?
- Give the students one minute, working in pairs, to list the features and qualities that would be most important to them if they were shopping for a TV (question C, p. 2).

- Put student responses on the overhead or blackboard after students have completed their lists individually. Responses might include price, screen size, quality of picture, sound (stereo or not), closed captioning display, and reliability.
- Ask for questions. Express your satisfaction with the composite list. Tell the students that for the reading lesson they will be thinking about the important features of another big ticket item.

3. Scanning [10 minutes]

- Explain to the students that the text for this reading lesson is an advertisement. They will begin by scanning the ad for certain specific pieces of information, just as they would scan a newspaper article or a story before they start reading.
- Give the students a minute before they look at the ad to read silently the eight questions under Part II.A on p. 2.
- Ask for a volunteer to define "retail company." Ask another to define "wholesale."
- Ask the students whether they need definitions for any other words used in the seven questions. Try to elicit definitions from students.
- Give the students three minutes to look at the ad on p. 3 and answer the eight questions, working with their partners.
- Call on students for answers to the questions and put the answers on the overhead if using a projector. Answers may vary as to what the advertised prices are, and students may comment that the price information is confusing. Assure the students that this issue will be explored later in the lesson.

1. What is being advertised? computers or computer systems

2. How many choices are advertised on this page? 3

3. What retail company placed the ad? ___ Sears

___ CompUSA

x Best Buy

___ Circuit City

4. What brands are advertised? (You may check more than one.)

___ IBM

___ Hewlett Packard

x Compaq

___ Dell

x emachines

___ Apple

5. What are the prices? \$594.99/ \$49.99 \$999.99/ \$349.99 \$1449.99/ \$849.99

6. Do the advertised prices include monitors? x yes ___ no

7. Do the advertised prices include printers? x yes ___ no

8. Are the prices about the same or different? ___ same x different

- Ask for questions. Tell students that, now that they have a general understanding of the subject matter of the advertisement, you would like them to think about buying a computer.

4. Skimming [5 minutes]

- Draw the students' attention to the first question on p. 4:

What product features would be most important to you if you were shopping for a computer?

- Ask the students to work with their partners for about one minute to make a list of the three or four product features that would be **most** important to them.
- Ask for volunteers to share their responses to the question. Make a list on the overhead or blackboard of the product features the students consider to be most important.
- Now ask the students to skim the ad quickly and answer the next question:

Does the advertisement have information about the product features on your list (the features most important to you) for each of the three computers that are advertised? ___ yes ___ no, it doesn't have information about _____

Explain that they should not worry right now about exactly what the ad says but rather they should be concerned only with whether the ad includes any information about the features they consider most important. Give them half a minute to complete this task with their partners.

- Ask the students how they answered the question. If any students answered "no," find out why and ask them how they might go about finding information on a feature not addressed in the ad.
- Tell the students that, now that they have identified key features of computers, they are going to use the table on p. 4 to help them organize the information in the ad and compare the three products in the ad. You will probably need to point out that the table includes some features that the students did not include on any of their lists. They can decide later whether they think these additional features are important, too.

5. Reading for details: How are the three products different? [25 minutes]

- Assure the students that they do not have to understand all the technical computer terminology in the ad in order to complete the table, and you will be talking about the meaning of some of the words later in the lesson.
- Complete the first three categories for the Emachines computer as a class -- do more if the students find the task difficult.
- Give the students 10 minutes to finish the table with their partners.

- Circulate quickly throughout the classroom to make sure that everyone understands the task, then return to help students who are having difficulty. Enlist students who finish quickly to help those having problems.

	#1	#2	#3
Brand name	<i>emachines</i>	<i>Compaq (on the left)</i>	<i>Compaq (on the right)</i>
processor speed	<u>633_MHZ</u>	<u>750_MHZ</u>	<u>933_MHZ</u>
type of processor	<u>Intel Celeron</u>	<u>AMD Duron</u>	<u>Intel Pentium III</u>
SDRAM memory	<u>32_MB</u>	<u>64 MB</u>	<u>128_MB</u>
hard drive size	<u>10 gigabytes</u>	<u>30 gigabytes</u>	<u>60 gigabytes</u>
CD-ROM	<u>48_X</u>	<u>40 X</u>	<u>48 X</u>
CD-RW drive	yes <u>x_no</u>	yes <u>x_no</u>	<u>x_yes</u> <u>no</u>
graphics	<u>3D AGP</u>	<u>8 MB TNT2 card</u>	<u>integrated 3D AGP</u>
monitor size	<u>15 inches</u>	<u>15 inches</u>	<u>17 inches</u>
type of speakers	<u>stereo</u>	<u>JBL Platinum</u>	<u>JBL Platinum</u>
printer	<u>Lexmark color</u>	<u>Compaq color</u>	<u>Compaq color</u>
price after "instant savings"	\$ 594.99	<u>\$ 999.99</u>	<u>\$ 1449.99</u>
dollar value of the mail-in rebates	<u>\$ 145.00</u>	<u>\$ 250.00</u>	<u>\$ 200.00</u>
the price after the mail-in rebates ⁽¹⁾	<u>\$ 449.99</u>	<u>\$ 749.99</u>	<u>\$ 1,249.99</u>

- After the students have had sufficient time to complete the table, review the answers as a class, putting them on the overhead or blackboard. Check for questions.
- Explain that, now that the information in the ad has been organized in the table, the students will see how they can use the table to compare the three products.

6. Comprehension check

a. Comparing the advertised products [20 minutes]

- Now it is time to talk about the meaning of some of the computer terms in the ad. Ask for

volunteers to give general definitions for the following terms (which are used in the table):

processor speed (MHZ) CD-RW drive

SDRAM (random memory) graphics

hard drive instant savings

CD-ROM rebate

- Make sure that the students understand that higher numbers mean faster products or greater memory.
- Explain to the students that they are now ready to compare the three products, using the table. Ask a volunteer to read the first question on p. 5: "1. Which computer(s) have a processing speed of at least 666 HMz?" Ask a volunteer to explain the meaning of "at least." Give the students one minute to look at the ad and answer question 1. Elicit the correct answer and put it on the overhead or blackboard.
- Give the students 10 minutes to read and answer the remaining six questions on p. 5 with their partners. Again, circulate the room quickly to make sure everyone is on task.

1. Which computers have a processing speed of at least 666 MHZ? #2, #3

2. Which ones have an Intel processor? #1, #3

3. Which ones have at least 64 MB of SDRAM memory? #2, #3

4. Which ones have at least 20 gigabytes of memory on the hard drive? #2, #3

5. Which ones have a 17 inch monitor? #3

6. Which one is the most expensive? #3 Why is it the most expensive one?

This one has the fastest processor, the most SDRAM, the largest hard drive, and the

biggest screen. It is also the only one that has a CD-RW drive.

7. Does the advertisement show the prices you calculated? Explain your answer.

The prices are not the same. The prices in the ad are each \$400 less. The prices in the ad include a \$400 "MSN instant rebate."

- Review the answers with the class, putting the correct answers on the overhead or the board. Ask for a volunteer to explain the advantages of higher-speed computers and why some consumers do not need them. (A higher speed is needed for extensive graphics and video; it's not important for word processing.) Ask for questions.
- Tell the students that they will be talking more about the "MSN instant rebate" later in the lesson.
- Explain to the students that they are now finished comparing the three computers in the ad. In the next phase of the lesson they are going to use what they have learned about those three computers to evaluate the price of a fourth computer.

Note: You are now beyond the half-way point in the lesson. This is a good place to stop for the day.

b. Using the information to evaluate other options [15 minutes]

- Paraphrase or read aloud the paragraph at the bottom of p. 5:

Suppose that a friend of yours who knows a lot about computers told you that Hewlett Packard computers are more reliable than emachines and Compaq computers. You went into a Best Buy store to look at computers, and you found a Hewlett Packard computer that you liked. On the next page is a picture of the Hewlett Packard computer and information you collected about the features of that computer.

- Ask a volunteer to read the two questions on p. 6:

1. Which computer in the ad on page 3 is most similar to this computer? Explain your answer.
2. Do you think this computer would be a good buy for the money? Explain your answer.

- Ask for a volunteer to define "good buy." Restate the questions and ask the students if they need any further direction. Give them five minutes to write their answers working with their partners.
- Have a class discussion about the questions. Student answers will vary, since the Hewlett Packard computer is somewhere between the emachine and the #2 Compaq computer in speed and size of hard drive. It matches the #2 Compaq's higher SDRAM but has the emachine's faster CD-ROM speed. It has an Intel Celeron processor, like the emachine, which some consumers may think is superior to the AMD Duron processor in the #2 Compaq (or vice versa). Ask the students which

product features they think are most important in comparing different computers.

- The students have now learned a technique for organizing and comparing information. Ask them to name other "big ticket" consumer products that they might evaluate using this technique.

c. Activity for thinking about the \$400 "instant rebate" [20 minutes]

- Tell the students they are now finished working with tables, but you want to go back to the ad on p. 3 to look at some of the "fine print."
- Ask a volunteer to define "fine print."
- Draw the students' attention to the price tags in the ad and tell them you will read the instructions on p. 7 for the beginning of the next exercise:

Take another look at the advertisement on p. 3. It shows a \$400 "instant rebate" subtracted from the price of each computer. Read carefully the "fine print" in the upper left corner of the ad below the words: "Instantly Save Up To \$400 TOWARD ANY BEST BUY PURCHASE." What do you think "instant rebate" means?

- Give the students two minutes to read silently the information on the "instant rebate" offer and write down their own ideas about what "instant rebate" means (working alone). Then ask for a volunteer to answer the question. The students should understand that "instant rebate" means that consumers receive a \$400 credit at the check-out counter, compliments of MSN, if they sign up in the store for 36 months of Internet service.
- Ask the students to form groups of 4 to 6 people. Ask them to discuss the four numbered questions on p. 7 within their groups and try to agree on answers to the questions, if they can. After five minutes of discussion, the students should work with their partners for an additional five minutes to write out answers to the questions. Circulate among the groups.

1. What would you have to do to get the "instant rebate"? sign up for 36 months (three years) of internet service with MSN
2. How much money would you have to spend to get the "instant rebate"? \$21.95 x 36= \$790.20
3. Is the MSN "instant rebate" offer a good deal? ___ yes ___ no. Explain your answer.
4. Would you sign up for the "instant rebate"? Explain your answer.

- Elicit the answers to questions 1 and 2. Then ask one volunteer from each group to give his or her answers to questions 3 and 4. Ask whether everyone in the group agreed on the answers.
- Ask for questions and any additional thoughts on the MSN "instant rebate."
- Tell the class that they are finished with the "instant rebate" issue; next they will be analyzing some other the language that was used in the ad.

7. Exploiting the text: Compound words [20 minutes]

- Ask the students to turn back to the ad on p. 3 and look at the description under the picture of the emachines computer. This computer has a **10.0 gigabyte hard drive**. Ask the students to find the descriptions of the hard drives of the two Compaq computers. Write those descriptions on the overhead or blackboard. (The students should do the same on p. 8 of their lesson packets.) Then ask for a volunteer to say how he or she would write the description of a hard drive with 60 gigabytes of memory, and write that description on the overhead or blackboard.

1. Look at the description of the emachines computer in the ad on p. 3. The ad says that the computer has a **10.0 gigabyte hard drive**. How does the ad describe the hard drives of the two Compaq computers?

30.0 gigabyte hard drive

60.0 gigabyte hard drive

How would you write the description of a hard drive with 80 gigabytes of memory?

80.0 gigabyte hard drive

Can you create a general rule for writing the description of a hard drive? What comes first? a number What comes second? a kind of measurement (gigabytes) What comes next? type of drive (hard) What comes last? name of the feature or piece of equipment (drive)

- Ask the students how the three descriptions are similar and how they are different.
- Ask the students whether they think it is important for the words to follow a certain order.
- Ask the student how many parts there are to the descriptions. Then ask them to think of words to describe each of the four parts of the descriptions, so that they will have a "rule" for how to describe any hard drive.
- Ask the students to work with their partners to complete pp. 8 and 9. Give them ten minutes.
- Go over the answers with the students, writing them on the overhead or the blackboard. Ask for volunteers to define "manufacturer" and "model" when you get to those words.

2. One of the Compaq computers has **64 MB SDRAM memory**.

How is the memory of the other Compaq computer described?

128 MB SDRAM memory

How would you describe the memory of a computer if the SDRAM were 32 MB?

32 MB SDRAM memory

Can you create a general rule for writing the description of a computer's SDRAM memory?

#1 a number , #2 a measurement (MB) ,

#3 the type of memory (SDRAM) , #4 name of the feature (memory)

3. The Compaq computer on the left side of the ad has an **AMD Duron 750 MHZ Processor**. (AMD is the name of the manufacturer. Duron is the model of the processor.) Using this description of the Compaq computer as your model, how would you describe a processor with a speed of 866 MHZ if it is manufactured by Intel and is a Pentium III model?

Intel Pentium III 866 MHZ processor

Can you create a general rule for writing the description of a computer's processor?

#1 name of manufacturer , #2 name of model ,

#3 number, #4 measurement (MHZ), #5 name of feature (processor)

4. The two Compaq computers come with the same printer. How is that printer described?

Compaq IJ-600 color printer

How would you write the description of a BJC-250 model printer that prints in color and is made by Cannon?

Cannon BJC-250 color printer

Can you create a general rule for writing the description of a printer?

#1 name of manufacturer, #2 name of model, #3 type of printer (color), #4 name of product

5. You have written rules for creating 4 different kinds of **compound words**. Can you put those rules together to make one rule that would work for all the compound words you have studied in this lesson?

#1 name of manufacturer

#2 name of model

#3 number

#4 type of measurement

#5 type

#6 name of feature or product

6. Does your rule work for the products in these advertisements? ___ yes ___ no

- Ask for questions.
- Tell the students that you would like to wrap up the lesson with a more general discussion about the ad on p. 3.

8. Discussion and closure activity [20 minutes]

- Ask a volunteer to read the paragraph at the top of p. 10:

Discuss the ad on page 3 with a small group of your classmates. What do you think about the way the prices are advertised? Is the cost of the emachine really \$49.99? How much would you have to pay at the check-out counter for that computer if you decided not to sign up for MSN Internet Access? Is the MSN Instant Rebate really a rebate? Is the ad honest or deceptive? Take notes and share your group's conclusions with the class.

- Ask for a volunteer to summarize what the groups will be talking about. Ask volunteers to define "honest" and "deceptive."
- Explain to the students that each small group will have to report its conclusions to the entire class. Suggest that each group begin its discussion by appointing a chairman to lead the discussion and make sure everyone contributes something, a secretary to record the group's conclusions, and a spokesperson to report to the class.
- Give the students 10 minutes to discuss the questions in their small groups.
- When you circulate among the groups, make sure that each group is focusing on the questions asked. At the 8 minute point, remind the students that each group is supposed to reach a consensus opinion that the secretary can write down and give to the spokesperson.
- Ask each group to report its conclusions. Have the class respond to each report with a show of hands as to how many people agree with the report.

9. Related text: Homework assignment [5 minutes]

- Remind the students that their cost comparisons for the three advertised products were based on the assumption that rebates would be collected from the manufacturers.
- Ask a volunteer to explain how a consumer collects a manufacturer's rebate.
- For homework, require the students to read the Compaq rebate coupon and instructions on the final page and answer the questions on p. 10.
- Remind the students that you will be collecting their lesson packets at the beginning of the next class.

10. Evaluation

- Collect the students' lesson packets at the beginning of the next class. (Do not go over the answers to the homework assignment in class until after you have reviewed the packets, so that you will know whether students did the homework and whether they completed it successfully.)
- Review the packets to see whether the students completed all sections correctly. Answers to the homework questions should be approximately as follows:

1. What is the deadline for mailing the coupon? May 7, 2001

2. How big should the envelope be that you use to send the coupon?

no larger than 4" X 9 1/2"

3. If you buy a computer, a monitor, and a printer, what must you include in the envelope with the coupon?

a bar code for each product and a proof of purchase (sales receipt) for everything

4. What will Compaq do if you forget to include the bar code for the printer with your coupon?

Compaq will not give me a rebate for the printer

5. How long will it take for Compaq to send you the rebate money?

up to 8 weeks

- In a subsequent class, present the students with an advertisement for three or four models of another electronic product, such as stereo receivers or microwave ovens. Ask the students to create a table that organizes the data about the products' features and prices. Give the students several specific questions to answer similar to the questions on p. 5 of the lesson packet.

Vocabulary overhead sheet

item

big ticket

consumer

retail company

wholesale

processor speed (MHZ)

SDRAM (random memory)

hard drive

CD-ROM

CD-RW drive

graphics

instant savings

rebate

at least

good buy

fine print

manufacturer

model

honest

deceptive

Overhead sheet for p. 1

A. What are some "big ticket" consumer items you have bought in the United States?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

B. How did you get information to help you decide which product to buy? What else could you have done?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

1. You have to calculate this number. Subtract the value of the mail-in rebates from the price after "instant savings."