



Activity 1a Answers

Task Answers

1. **Apart from dental-care products, which other sectors might benefit from using the principle of authority to try and persuade people to buy their products?**

Answer: medicine, diet supplements, weight-loss products, baby products.

2. **Why do you think people are so willing to follow orders from those in authority and to trust their judgement?**

Answer: It's natural to have order within the society, where some people are in charge and others follow their orders. We are therefore very sensitive to authority and we rarely take the time to wonder whether the authority is legitimate (is it *really* a doctor, or just an actor?), or whether we should be doing what the person in authority is asking us to do. Also, we tend to trust authority on topics we don't have expertise on, or when the answer is not clear, because this seems like a good way of making a decision (the person in authority should know what the best thing to do is, so we trust them).

Activity 1b Answers

Task Answers

1. **Imagine you wanted to ask your parents to get a dog. How could you use the consistency and commitment principle to try and persuade them?**

Answer: you could use the foot-in-the-door technique, to get your parents to agree to a smaller request first, before agreeing to a larger one. For example, you might ask them if you can help a friend out by taking their dog into your home for a few nights, as they are going on holiday. This is a much smaller commitment than buying a dog. If your parents agree to that, you might then ask if they would be willing to buy you a dog, if you can show that you will take care of your friend's dog. Alternatively, you could use the 'labelling' technique. You might ask your parents whether they think that young people should learn to be responsible before they start their adult lives. If your parents agree, you might then ask if they think it's true that young people are not getting enough opportunities to learn responsibility before they leave school. They might once again agree. You might then say that you should therefore get the opportunity to learn responsibility, by taking care of a dog they will buy for you.

Activity 1b) Answers

2. How can you protect yourself from being persuaded by the commitment and consistency principle?

Answer: you can protect yourself from being persuaded by this principle by remembering that it's okay to change your mind. Realising this technique is being used on you might already be a good way of protecting yourself from saying 'yes' when you really want to say 'no'. If you spot you are being low-balled or that you are being offered a bait-and-switch then you might decide to walk away from the 'deal' and to look for more honest sellers. If you feel like you are being pressured to say 'yes' to something just to seem consistent with what you previously said, you can always say the situation has changed and that you are no longer able to agree to the request. If possible, ask people for time to think before agreeing to larger requests, or decide what your response to some of the most frequent requests will be. For example, if you are frequently being persuaded to donate to charity, you might decide that you will only donate £5 to one charity and you will decline a donation to all the others. Or, if you are frequently persuaded to give up your time to do something, you might set a limit for the amount of time you are willing to give up (e.g. I will spend no longer than one hour per week on this). Deciding on such matters before a request is made will help you say 'yes' only when you want to.