



1.2 Making Choices: Our Needs and Wants

Because your resources are limited, you cannot have everything you would like. So you must make choices and to make the right choices, you must know the difference between your **needs** and **wants**.

Needs are things that are essential and must be put first. **Examples:** Food, the mortgage or car insurance.

Wants are things that you can only have after all of your essential needs have been taken care of. **Examples:** Holiday, a smartphone upgrade or membership of a golf club.

Some things can be both a need and a want, such as food:

- Everybody needs food to survive, but for us to be healthy our food should consist of a balanced diet of proteins, vitamins and minerals.
- Foods like fruit, vegetables, bread, rice and cheese, and liquids such as water and milk are **needs**. They are healthy and provide you with the nutrients your body needs.
- Foods such as hamburgers, chips, chocolate, cakes and fizzy drinks are **wants**. They are not necessary for you to survive and grow up healthy.



Take the Challenge

In your copybook, create a table with two columns headed 'Needs' and 'Wants'. Put each of the following items under the correct column:

- Food
- Water
- Smartphone
- School textbook or eBook
- Washing machine
- Concert ticket
- Sports package TV subscription
- Clothes
- Designer clothes
- Childcare
- Heat/light
- A place to live
- TV set
- Flat-screen HD TV set
- Shower
- Jacuzzi
- Antique brass light switch




Types of needs and wants

Our needs and wants can be divided into four main types:

Basic	The important things for your daily life. Examples: Food, clothes, shelter (a home)
Material	Physical things you use in daily life. Examples: House, car, bicycle, schoolbooks
Social	Your family, friends and relationships. Examples: Having a family meal, Going to the cinema with friends
Technological	Any piece of technology you use in your daily life. Examples: Smart devices, laptop, apps

What Influences Your Needs and Wants?

 Did you ever wonder what causes people to need and want different things? In other words, what **influences** your needs and wants? The table below explains the different factors.

Your health and wellbeing	This influences the foods you purchase. Examples: Sugar-free drinks, foods with more protein and less fat
Your interests and hobbies	You want and need things relating to your interests and hobbies. Example: Someone who loves music might decide to buy a guitar
Your age	Your wants and needs vary depending on your age. Example: A five-year-old might want a cuddly toy, but a 12-year-old would be more interested in a new smartphone
Current trends and fashions	You can be influenced by the latest styles. Example: If a fashion influencer promotes a new brand, more people are likely to want it
Concern for the environment	You might want to purchase items that are environmentally friendly. Example: You buy one reusable bottle rather than buying plastic bottles every day
Your peers/friends	You often want what your friends have, especially if they are the same age as you.
Your financial resources	How much money you have available to spend will determine what you can afford.



Quick Quiz 1.2

1. Explain what is meant by a **need**. Give **one** example.
2. Explain what is meant by a **want**. Give **one** example.
3. The following items were identified as main areas of expenditure for Irish consumers. Classify each as a need or a want: food, holidays, clothing and footwear.
4. Identify **three** factors that might influence someone to make the following purchases:
 - A top-of-the-range Mercedes car
 - Schoolboy Soccer weekly magazine
 - Installing solar panels on your roof
 - A new hoodie from Penneys



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