



Dupe Detector : What Doesn't Belong?

Surf's up dudes! Tides are turning, and kids are learning. Show off your 'fake finding' skills, skim our quiz, and identify which one of these summery items is not like the other. Identify the sketchy item in each story. Answers below.

1. Max is going sailing with his friends. He lives in the moment, and never plans. So, he left the preparation to them. When he arrives, they hand him an old, raggedy towel, a generic-label energy drink, a Coast Guard-approved life jacket, and a Personal Flotation Device (PFD) his friend bought online, as part of a cheap bulk order from an unpronounceable country he's never heard of. Max is just glad he didn't have to do a thing, grabs the stuff, and hops onboard. Is there a potentially counterfeit item he should be nervous about?



2. Keisha has never worked out, but she's been trying to get in shape for soccer tryouts. Her athletic cousin, Zoey, is the same age and the same shoe size. Zoey invited Keisha to join her on her daily run. Zoey said not to worry about anything – she'd supply some old running shoes, a water bottle she received for running a charity road race, and a smart watch she bought on vacation in a New York City alleyway. Which thing should Keisha worry most about?



3. Elle, Ethan, their parents, and teething puppy Snarls Barkley, are packing for a weekend camping trip. Ethan is efficient and responsible – but Elle has her driver’s license – so their mom tasks Elle to pick up some vacation necessities at the local shopping plaza. She gives specific instructions on the list below.



The Marketplace -

marshmallows

graham crackers

chocolate bars

Naturally Yours Pet Store -

organic fabric chew toy

Taylor's Hardware -

2 flashlights

Late Thursday night, when everything was closed, Ethan asks Elle if she got all of the items on the list. Of course she didn't! There was so much else to do! (Like her nails, and checking TikTok!) Quickly, she orders many of the items online, from places that offer next-day delivery.

Elle ordered a stuffie-looking chew toy, with plastic hands and feet, from CannadianDogys.com, graham crackers and marshmallows from The Marketplace's national competitor GroceryStop.com, flashlights from a well-known online camping goods store, and she ran down to the community park to buy chocolate bars out of a sheltered vending machine. (GroceryStop.com was out of stock.) Were any of these purchases questionable?

Answers:

1. The PFD. Generic simply means products that do not bear a name brand. All food and drink products, even generic products, are regulated by the U.S. Food & Drug Administration. A raggedy towel is gross, but not illegal. However, question legality when you hear a personal safety item was cheap, bought online, in bulk, from another country.
2. Most cities require street vendors to post government-approved permits that prove their business is legitimate. An alleyway vendor sounds sketchy, and if they sell counterfeit electronic devices, those devices could be unusable, inaccurate, or even catch fire.
3. Poor Snarls Barkley! Although pet toys are not regulated in the U.S., it was clear Elle and Ethan's mom wanted to buy a safe teething toy for their little pup. Not much is known about pet products made in other countries, and even less is known when they're bought from a shady-sounding, incorrectly spelled online store.