Teacher Answer Key

Case Study

1. Leo subscribed based on aspirational use — what he imagined he would do — rather than based on actual documented need. The step from the framework that would have prevented this is the second: 'identify the specific limitation.' If Leo had asked himself 'What specific feature do I actually need that the free tier does not provide?' before subscribing, he likely could not have named one. The framework's honest self-assessment step is designed to separate genuine need from marketing-induced desire for the premium product.

2. Leo's experience illustrates that the pressure to upgrade from the free tier is primarily psychological and marketing-driven rather than based on a real capability gap for his actual use cases. The free tiers were functionally sufficient for his homework and essay writing — he just perceived them as inferior after seeing content promoting the paid versions. The reading's point that free tiers are 'deliberately not the best available experience' does not mean they are inadequate; it means the company has designed the experience to make users feel like they are missing something, even when they are not.

Multiple Choice

1. D
2. B
3. A

Matching

1-B, 2-E, 3-D, 4-A, 5-C

Fill-in-the-Blank

1) school, 2) limitation, 3) trial

Short Answer (Sample Responses)

Q1: The four differences are context window size (how much text can be processed at once), model capability (more powerful AI with better reasoning), usage limits (how many messages per day), and specialized features (data analysis, image generation, web browsing). For a typical high school student, usage limits are most likely to matter — running into a daily message cap during a study session is the most common practical frustration with free tiers.

Q2: The calculation changes based on intensity of use and the stakes of the output. A student doing occasional homework can get by with free tier limits and does not produce work where small quality differences have large consequences. A student building a portfolio for college admissions or freelance work, doing daily intensive research, or generating creative work that will be evaluated by professional standards can potentially get real, measurable returns from the higher capability and fewer limits of a paid tier.

Q3: The five steps are: exhaust free options (check school and discounts first); identify the specific limitation (is there actually a gap or just marketing pressure); calculate cost per use (does the frequency justify the price); consider alternatives (compare free tiers across tools); and use trial periods (test intensively during the trial and cancel if the upgrade does not improve outcomes). Answers will vary on which step is most important, but the second step — honestly identifying the specific limitation — is arguably most critical because it prevents spending money on upgrades that address imagined rather than real needs.