

## Unpaid Item

Jake is a busy college student – taking classes during the day and working part-time at night to help pay for tuition. Jake has very little free time, so he values his free time a great deal. He also hates to go grocery shopping, and he tries to limit the number of trips he makes to the grocery store by shopping in bulk. One day after class, Jake goes to the grocery store, fills up his cart, goes to the checkout line, and piles the items onto the grocery belt. Jake leaves a 24-case of bottled water on the bottom of the cart, which is normal to do at the grocery store. He tells the checker that the case of water is on the cart, and the checker acknowledges him. Jake pays for his groceries, loads the groceries in his car, and drives home. It takes him 15 minutes to get home.

When Jake gets home, he puts away his groceries, and after cleaning out his paper bags, he finds his receipt and reviews it to check out the savings on the sale items. Then he realizes that the case of water is not on the receipt. He tells his roommate, “They didn’t charge me for the water. Should I go back to pay for it?”

His roommate says, “Of course not! You don’t need to make a special trip to fix their mistake.” Jake asks, “Well, should I pay for it the next time I shop there then?”

His roommate replies, “I don’t think you need to do that either. They made the mistake, not you. You would have paid for it if they had charged you. Also, you didn’t do it on purpose, and those big chain stores make so much money that a few dollars here or there won’t matter to them anyway.”

### STUDY QUESTIONS

1. What should Jake do?
2. How, if at all, would the case be different if Jake noticed the mistake while it was happening?
3. How, if at all, would the case be different if Jake was shopping at a small independent store rather than at a big chain store? Or if the item in question cost several hundred dollars?

