

★ READING COMPREHENSION

SHOP LESS, LIVE MORE

When did you last buy something? Maybe you are looking forward to a shopping trip at the weekend, but will it make you happy? In the short term, the answer might be yes. However, some people think it might not be good for our health and happiness in the long term.

One of the busiest shopping days of the year in the USA is Black Friday, the day after Thanksgiving, when many shops have special offers. Black Friday has spread around the world as large retailers try to increase consumer spending. In many countries, it is the start of the Christmas shopping period. However, not everyone will be queuing for a bargain. In 1992, Buy Nothing Day started in Canada as a protest against consumerism and the shopping frenzy that takes place at this time of year. The anti-consumerist organization Adbusters promoted Buy Nothing Day and now more than sixty countries take part. Their message is simple: 'Participate by not participating'. For twenty-four hours on the fourth Friday of November, people leave their purses and wallets at home and do not buy anything at all. Some people choose to spend time with friends and family instead. Others join protests. But what's the point?

'Over-consumption has ecological consequences,' says Kalle Lasn, co-founder of Adbusters. 'Every single purchase that you make has some kind of an impact on the planet.' Making the products and transporting them to the shops uses a lot of natural resources. When they are no longer in fashion, the products will end up on the rubbish heap. It all contributes to air and water pollution, the destruction of our environment and social inequality.

Reports suggest that the social impact of our spending habits is also serious. People in consumerist cultures are more likely to suffer from financial problems, stress and obesity. In order to pay for expensive products, people work long hours and therefore spend less time with family and friends.

Critics of Buy Nothing Day say it's meaningless because people will just buy more the following day. But the organizers argue that Buy Nothing Day makes people think about the consequences of consumption and maybe make some changes to their lifestyle.



1. Read the article. Check the meaning of the combinations in blue. Then, match 1-6 with a-f to make NEW combinations

- | | |
|------------|----------------------------|
| 1 shopping | a media, life, issues |
| 2 special | b sports, bill, filter |
| 3 water | c goods, rights, society |
| 4 consumer | d disaster, gas, world |
| 5 natural | e basket, centre, list |
| 6 social | f effects, event, occasion |

2. Read the article again and write TRUE or FALSE.

- 1 American shops are very busy on Black Friday.
- 2 Retailers in many countries offer lower prices on Thanksgiving Day.
- 3 The Adbusters organization wants people to participate in Black Friday shopping.
- 4 Buy Nothing Day is always in November.
- 5 Kalle Lasn thinks that consumerism causes environmental problems.
- 6 The organizers of Buy Nothing Day don't expect people to change their way of life.