

1 Look at the title of the unit and the photograph of the two women. Then discuss questions a, b and c.

- a. Where do you think the women have been?
- b. Do men and women enjoy shopping for the same things or different things?
- c. Are there differences in the ways that men and women shop?



2 Quickly skim the magazine article to find the answer to this question: What is a 'shopaholic'?

1 Vanessa Williams and her friend Katy Barnes are career women with top city jobs and huge salaries. Vanessa is a **corporate** lawyer, who works for a big international company. Katy is an accountant. Their working hours are long and stressful, and their free time is very limited. So they fill it with their greatest passion – shopping. But these two women don't go shopping in an ordinary way. Vanessa and Katy are **'shopaholics.'** In other words, they are **compulsive** buyers who are addicted to shopping.

This passion for over-shopping **afflicts** men as well as women. One reason for this craze for excessive spending is that modern companies aiming to make a profit are very clever at marketing their products. So **consumers** feel they need to buy more and more things. Do Vanessa and Katy feel bad about spending all that money on themselves? 'Not at all,' says Katy, who has just bought her fourth pair of designer shoes this week at two hundred pounds a pair. 'I deserve a treat for working hard. And I just adore shopping. It gives me such a **buzz.'** Vanessa's weakness is designer dresses. 'I've got about a hundred,' she told our reporter. 'But I haven't worn most of them yet.'

People often buy things they don't need when they are in need of **consolation**. Perhaps something bad has happened, or they are feeling lonely or depressed. So they head for the bright lights of the shopping malls. The attractive **bargains** make it very easy to spend money. But although shopping can improve our mood, it can make us feel bad for months afterwards when our credit card debts increase. Shopping may be a short-term fix, but it can also create more problems than it solves.

Much research has been done into this interesting feature of modern-day life. One **theory** is that, as women have become more **financially independent**, they no longer need men to buy them jewellery, clothes and perfume. They can buy their own luxury products. But although professional women may be more **affluent**, has shopping made them happier? Has the quality of their lives improved? Not always. As spending habits get more out of control, the lack of financial **self-restraint** can sometimes result in **bankruptcy** and even divorce.



Now read the article in detail. Can you suggest a title?