

Reading Practice

Credit card or cash?

Which is better for your pocket?

1 Recently, I went on holiday abroad. I thought about getting some local currency but decided to withdraw cash at the airport when I arrived. You can often find a cash dispenser in the baggage area. But I forgot, and it was only when I got on the bus that I remembered. 'No problem,' said the driver. 'You can use your card.'

2 Incredibly, I was away for a whole week and I never used cash once. I paid for everything, from a cup of coffee to the hotel bill, using my card. It was convenient and easy, and it was secure. I had no cash on me – only cards. If I lose my card or if somebody steals it, I ring the bank and cancel it immediately. If I lose cash, then it is lost and I never see it again.

3 'But,' you ask, 'isn't it easy to spend more when you are using a card? With cash you always know how much you have.' That's true, but it's easy to check your bank balance and make sure that you haven't spent more than you can afford. You can go online or even check at a cash dispenser.

4 So what other advantages are there to using credit cards instead of cash? Well, we've discussed security and that is a really big advantage. Not only if you get robbed, but also if you buy something that is broken or faulty. If you pay by credit card, the credit card company can help you get your money back. If you pay cash, it's you against the seller and you will have to fight very hard to get your money back.

5 Then there are all the credit card rewards that you get every time you use your card. For example, you can earn points on some store cards every time you buy something, so eventually you get a small discount in that store; or there are travel rewards that mean you can get free flights on a future holiday.

6 Finally, using a credit card means that you begin to have a credit history, which you'll need if you want to get a mortgage or borrow money to buy a car. The secret is to pay your credit card bill immediately – this avoids interest charges or getting into debt on your credit card. Then you'll have all the benefits and none of the disadvantages of using a credit card.

1 Read the article and tick the correct column in the table.

| | Cash | Credit card |
|---|------|-------------|
| 1 less secure | | |
| 2 you have to pay interest | | |
| 3 easier to see how much you've got | | |
| 4 harder to get your money back on faulty goods | | |
| 5 you get rewards | | |
| 6 you create a credit history | | |

2 Read the text again. Which paragraph (1-6) mentions the following?

a what you need to do in order to be able to borrow in the future _____

b an advantage of using only cash _____

c buying a bus ticket with a credit or debit card _____

d an advantage of using a credit card when you buy something that isn't perfect _____

e why credit and debit cards are safer than carrying cash _____

f a disadvantage of using credit and debit cards _____

g not remembering to get any cash at the airport _____

h a disadvantage of paying for things in cash _____

i ways that you can save money if you use credit cards _____

3 Decide if these sentences are *true* (T) or *false* (F).

- 1 The author of the article thinks it's better to use credit cards than cash. _____
- 2 She doesn't think you need to pay your credit card bill in full every month. _____
- 3 It makes no difference if you pay for things with cash or a credit card. _____