

Frozen by Freedom: The Modern Struggle to Decide

Standing in front of a supermarket shelf lined with twenty types of olive oil, Mia felt her brain freeze. Ten minutes later, she left empty-handed. In a world bursting with options, from career paths to online dating profiles, decision-making has become a daunting task.

Psychologists have coined this phenomenon *decision paralysis* — a state in which an individual struggles to make any choice at all, overwhelmed by the fear of making the wrong one.

Ironically, having more freedom doesn't always lead to greater happiness. On the contrary, it often brings anxiety, self-doubt, and regret. Faced with countless possibilities, we fear missing out on a better alternative — a phenomenon aptly named FOMO (Fear of Missing Out).

Learning to live with imperfect choices, setting limits, and trusting our instincts may be the antidotes.

Discussion questions:

- Have you ever experienced something like Mia's situation?
- Do you believe fewer options can lead to greater happiness?
- Which sentence or idea in the text stood out most to you?

A. Match the Expressions

Instructions: Match the expressions (1–7) with the correct meanings (A–G).

1. Bursting with options
2. Daunting
3. Decision paralysis
4. FOMO
5. Bombarded with
6. Stuck in limbo
7. Trust your instincts

Meanings:

- A psychological state of indecision caused by too many choices
- Surrounded by many choices
- Fear of missing a better opportunity
- To rely on intuition or gut feeling
- Difficult or intimidating
- Too many things thrown at you (e.g. info, ads)
- A state of being stuck and unable to progress

Answers:

1 → _____

2 → _____

3 → _____
4 → _____
5 → _____
6 → _____
7 → _____

B. Use in Personal Sentences

Instructions: Choose 5 of the expressions above and write/say one sentence from your own life experience for each.

Example:

- *I felt bombarded with work emails last Monday and couldn't focus.*
- *Sometimes I get FOMO when I see my friends traveling and I'm stuck working.*

GRAMMAR FOCUS – PARTICIPLE CLAUSES

A. Explanation

Participle clauses let us shorten sentences by using the **present**, **past**, or **perfect participle**.

Structure	Example	Meaning
Present participle (-ing)	<i>Walking into the room, she smiled.</i>	While she was walking
Past participle	<i>Overwhelmed by work, he took a break.</i>	Because he was overwhelmed
Perfect participle (having + past part.)	<i>Having finished dinner, they left.</i>	After they finished

B. Transformation Exercise: Instructions: Rewrite the following using participle clauses.

1. Because he was tired, he didn't go out.

2. After he had eaten, he felt better.

3. Since she had lived abroad, she spoke fluent English.

4. While he was watching TV, he fell asleep.

5. Because she was overwhelmed, she froze.

C. Choose the Correct Option

Instructions: Choose the correct option (a, b, or c) to complete each sentence.

1. _____ by the choices, she left the shop.
 - a. Overwhelming
 - b. Overwhelmed
 - c. Having overwhelm

2. _____ the news, he reacted with joy.
 - a. Hearing
 - b. Heard
 - c. Hear

3. _____ dinner, we went out.
 - a. Eat
 - b. Having eaten
 - c. Eating

4. _____ in traffic, she listened to a podcast.
 - a. Being stuck
 - b. Been stuck
 - c. Stuck

5. _____ for hours, he finally made a decision.
 - a. Think
 - b. Having thought
 - c. Thinking