

1 Read the article quickly. Which statement is not true?

- 1 Alison's parents know about her problem.
- 2 Alison's problem is a very modern one.
- 3 More people are shopaholics now than fifty years ago.

**HELP!**

I just can't stop ...

**SHOPPING!**



Have you ever bought something and then changed your mind? For Alison Jenson, 23, this used to happen several times a week. Alison was a shopaholic. She just couldn't stop shopping and she loved special offers.

### Alison's bedroom is full of stuff.

'I've been to every shop in Birmingham, I think,' says Alison. She picks up some trainers. The price tag is still on them. 'I paid £20 for these. They cost £40 originally, so they were half price,' she says. 'But I've never worn them.' Alison's problem wasn't just clothes. She bought jewellery, make-up and hundreds of other small things online. She hasn't used any of them!

### According to experts,

we all feel excited when we buy something new. For shopaholics, it's a little different. Soon after they buy something, they regret buying it and start to feel miserable. So they buy themselves something else to feel happier.

### Psychologists

first described the problems of shopaholics in 1915. However, there was very little research on the subject until recently. Now, doctors think thousands of people suffer from the problem, both men and women, and the situation is getting worse. There are also more teenage shopaholics now, although most young people don't have enough money to go shopping very regularly.

### Alison knew she had a problem.

'I often bought something every day. It was usually something small, but I just needed to buy it,' she says. 'When I ran out of money, I started using credit cards. Unfortunately, I couldn't pay them back and the charges quickly became a problem. When I couldn't go shopping, I felt anxious. Then one day, my mum just looked at all the stuff in my room and said, "Alison, this is crazy!" She was right. I needed some big changes in my life.'

### Alison's parents helped

with her problem and she now feels she has changed. She no longer thinks she's a shopaholic. 'When I want to buy something in a shop, I ask myself two questions,' she says. 'Do I need it? Can I afford it? The answer to both questions is usually "no", so I walk away. It's great!'



## 2 Read the article again. Choose the correct answers.



- 1 What is the purpose of the article?
  - A to persuade people to go shopping less
  - B to encourage people to get help if they have a problem
  - C to inform people about a problem
  - D to warn people about the dangers of shopping
- 2 What did Alison especially like buying?
  - A sneakers and other items of clothing
  - B discounted items
  - C anything she could take back to a local shop
  - D things she could order on the internet
- 3 What do experts say about shopaholics?
  - A They feel more excited than other people when they shop.
  - B They soon feel unhappy after they have bought something.
  - C Shopping is the only way they can feel happy.
  - D They feel unhappy when they are paying for things.
- 4 What is Alison's attitude to shopping now?
  - A She doesn't often want to buy things now.
  - B She doesn't enjoy shopping now.
  - C She still buys things she doesn't need.
  - D She is in control of her shopping now.
- 5 What advice might Alison give to someone who has a problem with shopping?
  - A Ask someone you are close to for help.
  - B Never borrow money from friends or family.
  - C Always look at the price carefully.
  - D Avoid going to shops.



## TALKING POINTS

How do you feel when you buy something new?

What was the last thing you bought that you didn't need?

What advice can you give for saving money?

## 3 Match the highlighted verbs to their meanings.

- 1 give someone the money that you borrowed from them
- 2 be able to buy or do something because you have enough money or time
- 3 feel sorry about a situation, especially something that you wish you had not done
- 4 finish, use or sell all of something so that there is none left
- 5 have an illness or other health problem

## READING

1 Read the first paragraph quickly. Tick (✓) what you think the article is going to be about.

- 1 The best places to shop online.
- 2 Staying safe when shopping online.
- 3 Bad stories about people losing money online.

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# Shopping online

Lots of people enjoy the benefits of online shopping. You don't have to sit in traffic jams or wait at bus stops or at train stations. Because online stores are open 24 hours, seven days a week, you can sit at your computer and shop **at your leisure**. And you don't have to collect your product because they deliver it right to your door.

But shopping online isn't all great – you need to be very careful when deciding what to buy and where to buy it. Here are some tips for shopping safely online.



### Use a secure connection

The easiest way of making sure the connection is secure is to look for the **lock** sign in the address bar. Another is to look at the start of the website address. If this starts with 'https', there is a secure connection because the letter 's' means 'secure'. If you see 'http' with no 's', don't enter the website or give your personal or bank details. It could be a false website that is trying to steal your money or personal information.



### Use a secure payment method

Only shop on sites that offer secure payment methods, like credit cards and other payment systems. This gives you protection in a situation where you and the shop disagree – the shop can't say you did anything illegal, like using another person's credit card to pay. Banks usually contact you if they think something is wrong.



### Create a strong password

A strong password is very important. It's usually a good idea to change your passwords every few months, just in case someone finds out what they are. Also, try to use a different password for different online shopping sites: once someone guesses one password, they can get access to everything you do online.



### Check other customers' comments

Always check the seller's history when using online sites. You can get an idea by looking at other buyers' comments. If you are not sure about a product, you can always send the **seller** a question and the good sellers will reply **fairly** quickly.

## 2 Read the article. Choose the correct answers.

- 1 What is the purpose of the article?
- A to help people save money when shopping online
  - B to stop people shopping online
  - C to make people think twice before shopping online
  - D to help people stay safe when shopping online
- 2 According to the author, what are the benefits of shopping online?
- A it's much cheaper
  - B there is less travelling involved
  - C payment time is much quicker
  - D there are more choices
- 3 What does the author say you can do to make sure the connection is safe?
- A go to a website where you can check the address
  - B contact the website by sending them a message
  - C look for a special icon on the screen
  - D look for the word 'secure' in the website address
- 4 According to the author, why is it important to create a strong password?
- A so only you and the shop know your password
  - B so no one can guess your password and see everything you do
  - C so you can shop happily online with no worries
  - D so only you and the bank know your password
- 5 Why does the author suggest you check other customers' comments?
- A so we can see if the seller is honest
  - B because they explain everything about the product
  - C because the seller might not tell the truth about the product
  - D so we can talk to them about the product or seller

## 3 Match the highlighted words in the text to their meanings.

- 1 when you want to and when you have time to
- 2 someone who sells something
- 3 the thing that you use when you close a door, window, etc. that needs a key to open it
- 4 more than 'quite', but less than 'very'

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