

NO MORE PLASTIC BAGS!

by Environment Correspondent Jack Marshall

In 2011 a new law, the first of its kind in the UK, was passed in Wales. Shops were no longer allowed to give away free plastic bags to their customers. Instead, they had to charge 5p per bag. The money was collected and given to charity. The results were amazing – within a year, the demand for supermarket bags fell by about 96%. The extra charge was enough to get Welsh shoppers to remember to take their own bags whenever they went shopping.

The law was the result of a huge campaign, which was supported by a national newspaper as well as various politicians and also green campaigners. It has become increasingly popular too. When it was introduced, it was supported by about 59% of the Welsh population, but after only six months the figure was 70%.

There is no doubt that plastic bags are bad news for the environment. Every year in the UK, about 18 billion plastic bags are supplied by supermarkets – that's about 290 bags per person. Then, when they have been used (for an average of 20 minutes each) they're thrown away. Some of them end up being buried underground in landfill sites, and that's where they do the damage. They remain there for hundreds of years, poisoning the soil and polluting the environment. It's important to remember, too, that before they even reach the shops, the plastic bags have already travelled thousands of miles – many are produced in China or India and then shipped to countries in Europe, including the UK.

The solution to this problem is obvious – stop producing so many plastic bags, and stop giving them away, but shoppers in the UK have been very slow to change their ways. However, the success of the new Welsh law shows that it is possible to change people's shopping habits. According to researchers from Cardiff University, part of the reason for the popularity of the law is that the money it raises goes to charity, not the government. Certainly, hundreds of thousands of pounds have been raised since the law was introduced. The money has gone to a variety of good causes, including local children's charities and wildlife conservation organisations too.

Choose the correct answer, A, B or C.

1 The new law meant that in Wales

- A** customers were no longer allowed to use plastic bags.
- B** customers needing plastic bags in shops had to pay for them.
- C** shops stopped supplying plastic bags for customers' shopping.

2 After the law was introduced, many people

- A** stopped asking for plastic bags in supermarkets.
- B** refused to accept it at all.
- C** stopped shopping so much at supermarkets.

3 The article says that every year in the UK,

- A** 18 billion plastic bags are put into landfill sites.
- B** almost 300 are used by each supermarket shopper.
- C** a plastic bag is thrown away every 20 minutes.

4 The new law has been popular in Wales because the money raised

- A** helps the government.
- B** goes to a number of good causes.
- C** is used to teach children about conservation.

5 In this article the writer shows his

- A** support for the supermarkets.
- B** sympathy for shoppers.
- C** approval of the new law.

Monster Malls

All around the world, people are shopping more and more! And bigger and bigger malls are giving them more of what they want. How many shops do you think you can visit in one day? The Mall of the Emirates has 400, the West Edmonton Mall has 800, and finally the South China Mall has 1500! Don't worry, though – these monster malls also have hotels, so you can stay over night and continue shopping the next day. In fact, buying lots of things is just the beginning. In addition to cinemas and restaurants, top malls offer everything from roller coasters to dance clubs, ski hills to theatres.

For many years, the West Edmonton Mall in Canada was the world's biggest mall. There are bigger ones now, but West Edmonton still says it is 'the eighth wonder of the world.' Shoppers usually agree. They especially like that you can shop both for quality goods and for bargains, depending on how much you want to spend. After shopping, you can try the high-speed waterslide at the World Waterpark and watch the dolphins perform in the indoor lake. Finally, you can sleep in the Fantasyland hotel, which has got rooms with themes such as Hollywood and Ancient Rome.

On the other side of the world, people come to Dubai for the sun, sand and sea – and for the Mall of the Emirates. Popular with travellers, it's got the world's biggest collection of brand names. People from England in particular will recognise many of their high-street favourites. There is also a centre for the arts complete with a theatre. Apart from that, the Mall of the Emirates is famous for its indoor ski hill. So when it's 50°C outside, you can go skiing on real snow inside. Don't forget your warm gloves.

Finally, there's the world's biggest mall – so far. The South China Mall tries to be a mall for the world. It's got seven shopping areas based on different places: Amsterdam, Paris, Rome, Venice, Egypt, the Caribbean and California. Each area is so well done that shoppers feel like they are really in that place. For example, the security guards dress like the policemen in the different countries. Walking around a huge mall can be tiring, but at the South China Mall you can go by boat instead – the mall's got many waterways. Careful not to lose any shopping bags overboard!

Is there anything else you would like to do at a mall? With billions of shoppers around the world to please, these monster malls are just adding more and more attractions. If you can dream of it, you can probably find it at a mall.

Read the text and decide whether the statements are true, false or not mentioned at all.

Write T, F or DS in the boxes.

1. West Edmonton Mall used to be the biggest in the world. _____
2. You can find bargains at West Edmonton Mall. _____
3. Lots of English people visit the Mall of Emirates. _____
4. The temperature at the indoor ski hill is 50°C. _____
5. There are lots of South China Malls around the world. _____