

SHOP TILL YOU DROP



Buying and selling goods has probably been a regular human activity for as long as people have lived together. Trade began the moment one person had more of one thing, say fish, and wanted something they had little of, say grain. They would exchange their fish for someone else's grain. This is known as bartering and it is the simplest and earliest form of economic activity.

The Babylonians are believed to have been the first to invent a **monetary** system. The advantage of money is that it is, in theory, endlessly transferable – in other words, you can always trade money for goods and services. You don't have to wait until someone wants to exchange what they have for what you have. Plus money doesn't **go bad** like food or **wear out** like clothes. The only problem is the occasional financial crisis.

With the invention of money came the invention of shops. The biggest difference between early shopping and shopping today is that customers haggled with the shopkeeper. In other words, the two people **negotiated** the price. Haggling is still typical in many parts of the world, from Asia to the Middle East, but in the Western world it is less typical. Which means shopping is certainly more efficient, though less fun.

Over time, the market places and fairs or bazaars, as they are known in Turkey, gave way to permanent **establishments**. Since the nineteenth century most people went to a shop. However, open shopping places still exist today in the form of **flea markets**, which are a great place to find a **bargain** or collector's item.

Until the beginning of the twentieth century, shops remained quite specialised. People went to a baker's for bread, a butcher's for their meat, the greengrocer's for vegetables, the fishmonger's for fish, a tailor if they needed a new suit and a cobbler for shoes. They might visit a carpenter to have furniture made or a blacksmith for something made from iron.

By the second half of the twentieth century, the nature of shopping changed again. It became common for people to do their shopping under one roof, going to different sections for the goods they needed, and so the supermarket was born. The first supermarket is dated back to 1916, but their **growth is linked to the spread of suburbs**

and the increased use of the automobile. Instead of walking around the corner and then **lugging** the groceries back home, people could drive and do a big shopping trip for the whole week or even month. With the introduction of trolleys, shopping became even more **convenient**. The size of supermarkets means they can buy goods in bulk and so sell them cheaper than smaller stores. However, many people feel that supermarkets lack the individual service offered by a smaller shop.

Along with supermarkets, many people do their shopping in a department store. Department stores range from the exclusive, like Bloomingdales in New York, to the cheap, such as Wal-Mart and Tesco. All kinds of goods can be found in a department store, from armchairs to zombie masks. Though in the US and Australia, you will have a hard time finding food. For that you will have to return to the supermarket. At least you used to in the old days.

For the last thirty years or so, all of our shopping needs have been concentrated into



shopping centres, also known as shopping malls in the US. These large buildings contain one or more department stores, a couple of supermarkets and many specialty stores. The range of shops to be found in a shopping centre **will vary depending on** size and region, but some typical shops include bookstores, pharmacy (drugstore), shoe shops, sporting wear stores, camping goods stores and fashion boutiques.

It's not surprising to find that many shopping centres are open around the clock, especially those located in major cities. In the past though, many shops in Britain didn't open on Sundays and closed at noon on Saturdays. This was called half-day trading. This practice is still typical in Austria and parts of Germany.

If what you want is not available in these modern stores, you can visit second hand shop, also called an op shop, thrift shop or Oxfam in the UK, after the charity responsible for running them. The range of goods in these shops can be huge, with things dating back

to the beginning of the twentieth century. Most of what you find there is **junk**, but if you **rummage about**, you can find some hidden **gems** for a very low price. There are also specialised antique stores, second hand book stores, furniture stores or record stores.

Soon it might not be necessary to leave the comfort of your own flat as online shopping becomes increasingly popular. All you need is a computer and a credit card. Shopping is as easy as pointing your cursor and clicking. No queues, no impolite staff, no parking problems and usually most things are cheaper than in usual stores, even with **postage**. Websites like eBay are the internet equivalent of second hand stores. The **downside** is that we lose the human touch. We also miss out on the opportunity to touch the products and look at them in more depth, which is for many people part of the enjoyment of shopping, even if it means **putting up with** other customers and pushy or **indifferent** sales assistants.

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TASK

Read about somebody's shopping plans and fill in the missing words. Try to fill as many words as you can think of into each space.

- 1) My mother wants to clean the floor, I must go to the chemist's and buy some And also some as she intends to wash my clothes later.
- 2) My father wants to put up a new shelf on the wall, I must get him
- 3) It's my turn to make dinner tonight. I should go to the greengrocer's to get some..... then the butcher's for the and I must not forget from the baker's.
- 4) School starts next week. I should go to the stationery shop and buy some
- 5) My sister is renovating her flat and going to buy some new furniture. She said she needs a new
- 6) I want to make some back-up files. I must go to the computer store to get some
- 7) I have a runny nose and a cough. I should go to the pharmacy to buy some

Here are some words you can use:

aspirin, beef, bookcase, bread rolls, buns, carrots, CDs, chest of drawers, chicken, cold and flu tablets, detergent, dining table, flash drives, floor cleaner, herbal tea, nails, notepads, paper clips, cough syrup, pens, planks of wood, pork, potatoes, rulers, sausages, floor polish, screws, spinach, swivel chair, tomatoes, wardrobe, washing powder

Solution on p. 3

VOCABULARY

- monetary** ['mʌnɪt(ə)rɪ] - peněžní
- to go bad** - kazit se
- to wear out** - obnosit se, opotřebovat se
- to negotiate** [ni'gəʊʃɪeɪt] - smlouvat, dohadovat se
- establishment** [ɪ'stæblɪʃm(ə)nt] - podnik
- fllea market** [fli:] - bleší trh
- bargain** ['bɑ:gɪn] - výhodná koupě
- growth is linked to the spread of suburbs** [grəʊθ sprɛd 'sʌbɜ:bz] - rozmach souvisí s rozšiřováním předměstí
- to lug** [lʌg] - vláčet
- convenient** [kən'vi:nɪənt] - pohodlný
- will vary depending on** ['vɛəri] - se liší podle
- junk** [dʒʌŋk] - harampádí, staré krámy

- to rummage about** ['rʌmɪdʒ] - přehrabovat se
- gem** [dʒɛm] - poklad
- postage** ['pəʊstɪdʒ] - poštovné
- downside** ['daʊnsaɪd] - nevýhoda
- to put up with sth** - vydržet něco, smířit se s něčím
- indifferent** [ɪm'dɪf(ə)r(ə)nt] - lhostejný

GLOSSARY

- to give way to sth** - to be replaced by something, usually because it is better, cheaper or easier (*Over time, open-air market places gave way to permanent establishments.*)
- to buy in bulk** - it means that if you buy a lot of the product, the price per unit is reduced. For example, buying one tub

- (= container) of yoghurt might cost ten crowns. If you buy twenty, each tub might be reduced to six or seven crowns.
- drugstore** - (US) typically a shop where you can buy not only medicines, but also make-up, sweets, cigarettes, etc.
- around the clock** - all the time (*Some supermarkets are open around the clock.* = they are open all day and all night)
- pushy** - behaving in an unpleasant way by trying to persuade you to do something (for example to buy products)

BRE X AME

- trolley** (BrE) x **cart** (AmE)
- supermarket** (BrE, AmE) x **grocery store** (AmE)

shopping centre (BrE) x **shopping mall** (AmE)

LANGUAGE POINTS

The word "**goods**" (things for sale) can only be used in plural (*The internet shop will deliver all the goods to your doorstep.*)

The word "**say**" can be used to give an example of something (*Trade began the moment one person had more of one thing, say fish.*) or to introduce a suggestion (*Come to my place in the evening, say 7 p.m.*) It's a short form of "**let's say**", and the whole phrase can be used in such cases as well (... *let's say fish* / ... *let's say 7 p.m.*).