

ProTalk

Discussion Files

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Language Center

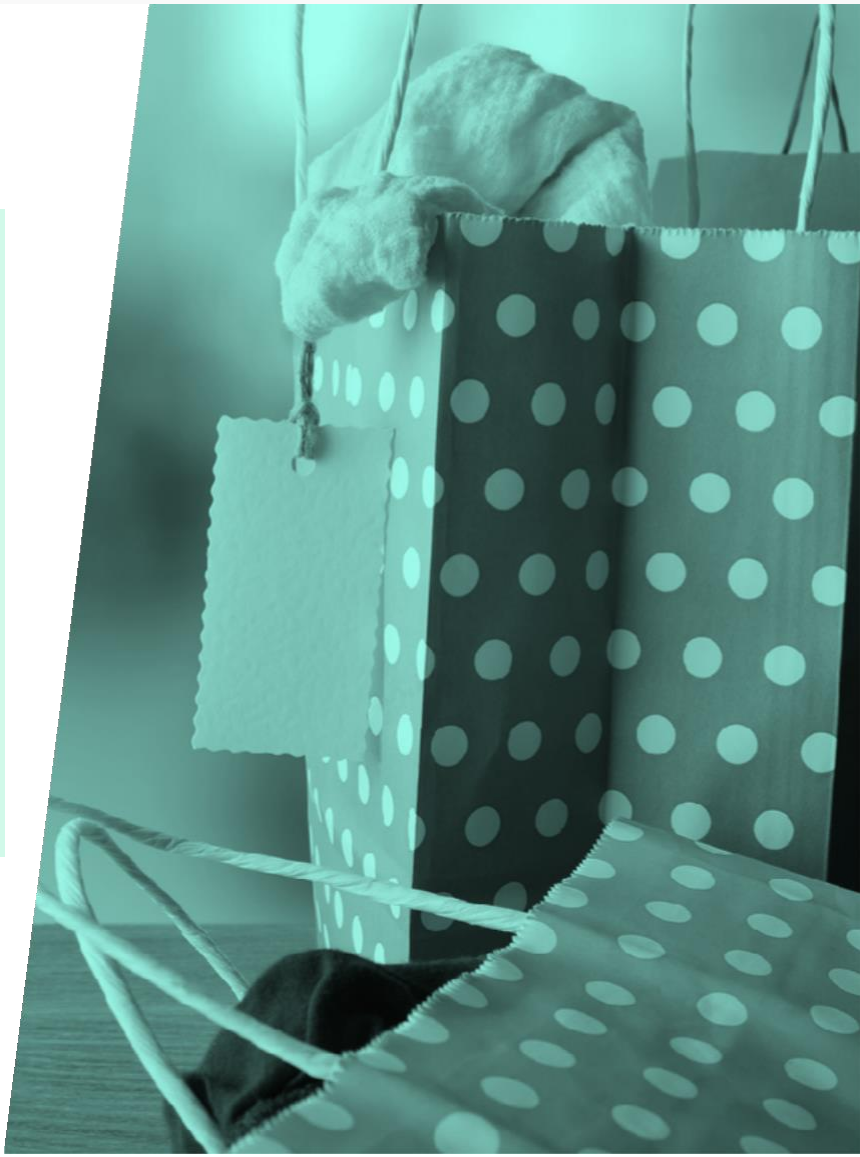
C2. Consumerism

Afaq Language Center

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Goals

- Can read and understand a text about consumerism.
- Can identify and discuss the problems that are related to consumerism and modern society in depth.



What do you think?

We all live in a **consumerist** society, and we buy, buy, buy, with little regard for whether or not we need something. In this lesson we can stop to think about whether **consumerism** is good or bad for us.

Buying things

How many things did you buy yesterday? Do you remember? Were they basic necessities or treats?



Conscious consumerism

Think about the last item of clothing that you bought.



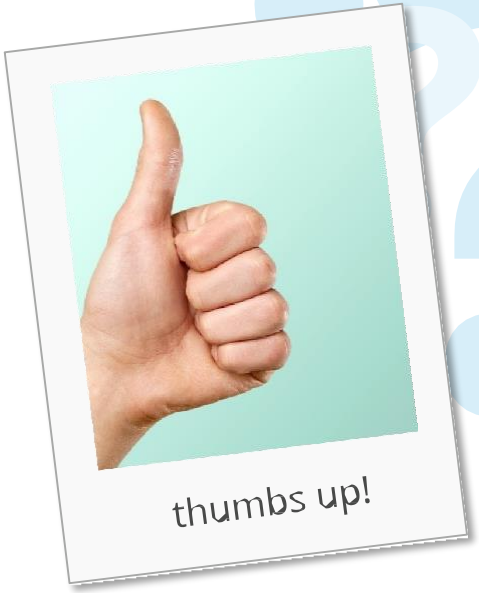
Where did you buy it?

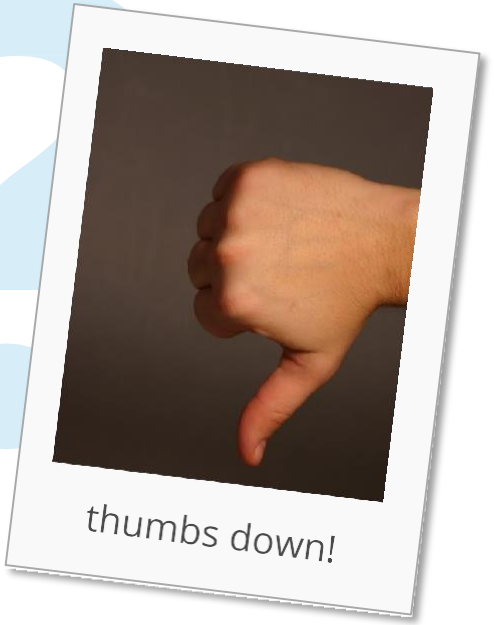
Why did you buy it?

Do you know where it was made? Is it important to you?

Consumerism

When you hear the word *consumerism*, is your initial reaction positive or negative?





Buy Nothing Day



There is one day a year called *Buy Nothing Day*, when people are not supposed to buy anything. Would you want to take part in it? What do you think about it?

Read the text and summarize it.

Consumerism



The theory of consumerism is that a country will be economically better off if society consumes goods and services in large quantities. Few argue against the idea that in pure economic terms, consumerism is positive for a country. However, during the twentieth century consumerism came to mean something more negative: it became associated with **greed**, with a connection between happiness and things, with seeking **fulfilment** through material goods.

Read the text and summarize it.

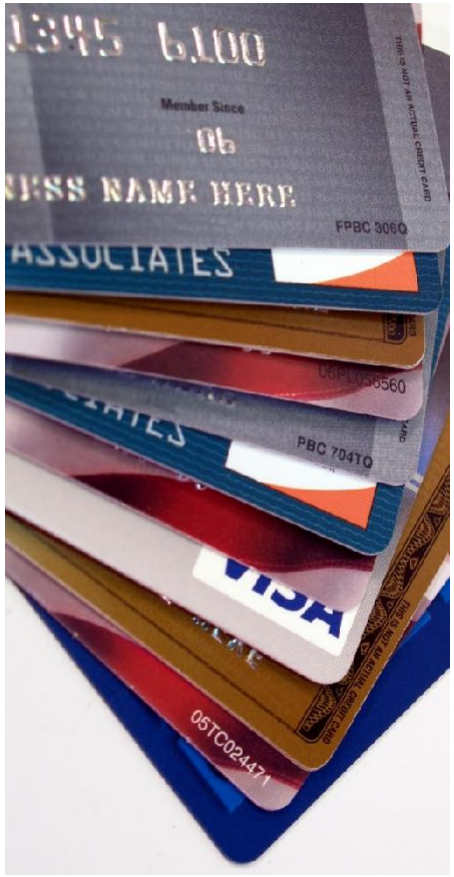
Consumerism



Consumerism first developed apace in the eighteenth century. In Britain, with the rise of the middle class, more people had money to spend on things not deemed basic necessities. The appetite of the middle classes for things such as sugar, tobacco, tea, and coffee grew **exponentially**, as **disposable** income created the need for the display of status symbols, which included the aforementioned goods, as well as things such as silk and glassware.

Read the text and summarize it.

Consumerism

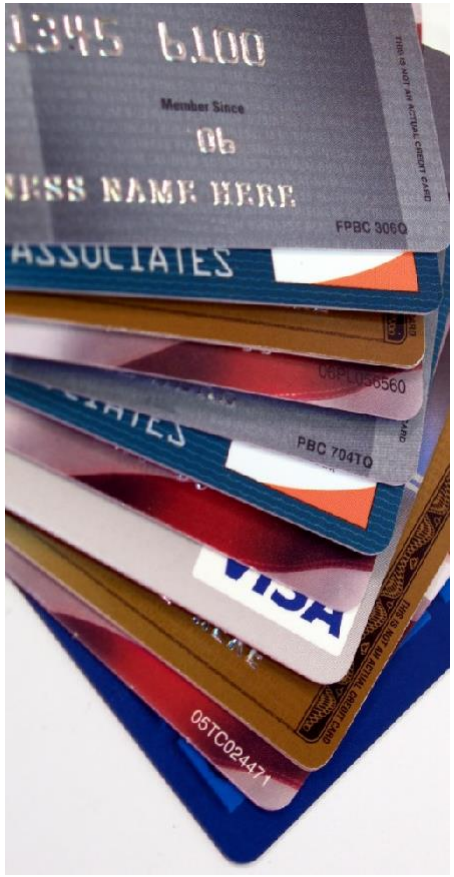


It was in the twentieth century that mass production of goods for the average consumer really took hold, **exemplified** by Henry Ford's production of the motor car in any colour.

In the 1920s, the 'buy now, pay later' model allowed people to buy more and more without having to have the money immediately, and this further intensified in the 1950s with the introduction of credit cards.

Read the text and summarize it.

Consumerism



In the twenty first century, consumerism has developed further and is now associated with having a huge choice of goods. The **adage** that we should be 'keeping up with the Joneses' created a need to always have the latest products.

Vocabulary

Do you remember these words and phrases from the text?
What were they referring to?



greed

fulfilment

disposable

exponentially

Have you heard the phrase *keeping up with the Joneses* before? Is it something you feel pressure to do?

Payment methods

Do you use either of these methods of payment? Are they good or bad for society and for consumers, in your opinion?



buy now, pay later

credit cards

Choice

Do you like having a large choice of goods when you are shopping? Can choice ever be overwhelming?





Black Friday



Have you heard about Black Friday in the USA? Do you have a similar day in your country when there are lots of sales?

Criticisms of consumption

Below are some of the common criticisms of consumption. Do you agree with these criticisms? Do you have any concrete examples?



displaying material wealth

environmental factors

conflating materialism with happiness

Write two lists

Write two lists of the positive and negative effects of consumersim.

Positive effects	Negative effects

Presentation

Prepare a two-minute presentation about your view of consumerism, using the words below.
Include several reasons to support your point of view.
Give your presentation to the class. Answer questions and get feedback.

greed	fulfilment
proclivity	peers
rampant	disposable income