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Huge discounts in New Year sales

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29th December, 2008

THE ARTICLE

Shoppers around the world are snapping up bargains in post-Christmas sales. Stores are trying to lure bargain hunters with discounts of up to 75 per cent. The run-up to Christmas is usually the best time for stores. However, the global recession has meant many people have spent much less this year and sales have been down. Many stores have reported sales fell by five percent from last Christmas. Sales of luxury goods such as brand bags and perfumes have been hit worst, falling by up to 35 per cent. Retailers are now struggling to attract customers, who know prices will fall more than in previous years. Many people have deliberately saved their money until the New Year sales, knowing stores will slash prices.

Several of the big department stores and retail chains in the UK and USA opened their doors at five o'clock in the morning. Shoppers started queuing in bitterly cold weather from midnight. Many said braving the cold was worth it to get the good bargains. Penny Owen, from Sale in England, said she would cut back on her spending in 2009: "We're worried about what will happen in the upcoming year. This will be our last big shop. Our new year resolution is to make our money go further, which means going shopping less." Many others echoed her feelings. On the other side of the Atlantic, Marlene Diarra, an accountant from New York, said: "I've lost confidence in money. I'll stock up in these sales for the rest of the year."

WARM-UPS

1. SALES: Walk around the class and talk to other students about shopping and sales. Change partners often. After you finish, sit with your partner(s) and share your findings.

2. CHAT: In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words from the article are most interesting and which are most boring.

shoppers / bargains / discounts / global recession / luxury goods / brand bags / saving / department stores / queuing / bitterly cold / cutting back / resolutions / confidence

Have a chat about the topics you liked. Change topics and partners frequently.

3. CUTTING BACK: Will you cut back in 2009? Complete the table below. Share what you wrote with other students. Change partners and share what you heard.

I will / won't cut back on	...because	Instead, I'll...
Buying clothes		
Eating sweets		
Going out		
Travelling		
Eating out		

4. BARGAINS: Students A **strongly** believe the bargains in sales are real bargains; Students B **strongly** believe the bargains in sales are still expensive. Change partners again and talk about your conversations.

5. RESOLUTIONS: What are your resolutions for 2009? Talk about these things with your partner(s). Change partners and talk again.

- Studying
- Exercise
- Money
- Habits
- Family and friends
- Shopping
- My personality
- Other _____

6. DISCOUNT: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word 'discount'. Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

1. TRUE / FALSE: Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

- | | |
|--|-------|
| a. There are many bargains to be had in the sales following Xmas. | T / F |
| b. The few days before New Year is usually the best time for stores. | T / F |
| c. Spending on all items fell by 35 per cent in the Xmas period in 2008. | T / F |
| d. Shoppers decided to save their money until after Xmas this year. | T / F |
| e. Some big department stores opened for business at 5.00 am. | T / F |
| f. The first bargain hunters started queuing at 3.00 am. | T / F |
| g. An English woman said she wouldn't go to any more big shops. | T / F |
| h. An American shopper has bought lots of things she needs for 2009. | T / F |

2. SYNONYM MATCH: Match the following synonyms from the article:

- | | |
|-----------------|--------------------|
| 1. snapping up | a. dropped |
| 2. lure | b. seconded |
| 3. fell | c. on purpose |
| 4. retailers | d. remainder |
| 5. deliberately | e. buying |
| 6. queuing | f. reduce |
| 7. cut back on | g. concerned |
| 8. worried | h. attract |
| 9. echoed | i. stores |
| 10. rest | j. waiting in line |

3. PHRASE MATCH: Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

- | | |
|---|-------------------------|
| 1. snapping up | a. to attract customers |
| 2. Stores are trying to lure | b. worth it |
| 3. Retailers are now struggling | c. money go further |
| 4. Many people have deliberately saved | d. bargains |
| 5. stores will slash | e. bargain hunters |
| 6. queuing in bitterly | f. their money |
| 7. braving the cold was | g. rest of the year |
| 8. Our new year resolution is to make our | h. cold weather |
| 9. Many others echoed | i. prices |
| 10. I'll stock up in these sales for the | j. her feelings |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

GAP FILL: Put the words into the gaps in the text.

Shoppers around the world are _____ up bargains in post-Christmas sales. Stores are trying to lure bargain _____ with discounts of up to 75 per cent. The _____ -up to Christmas is usually the best time for stores. However, the global recession has _____ many people have spent much less this year and sales have been down. Many stores have reported sales fell by five percent from last Christmas. Sales of _____ goods such as brand bags and perfumes have been _____ worst, falling by up to 35 per cent. Retailers are now struggling to attract customers, who know prices will fall more than in _____ years. Many people have deliberately saved their money until the New Year sales, knowing stores will _____ prices.

Several of the big department stores and retail _____ in the UK and USA opened their doors at five o'clock in the morning. Shoppers started queuing in _____ cold weather from midnight. Many said braving the cold was _____ it to get the good bargains. Penny Owen, from Sale in England, said she would cut _____ on her spending in 2009: "We're worried about what will happen in the upcoming year. This will be our last big _____. Our new year resolution is to make our money go further, which means going shopping _____." Many others _____ her feelings. On the other side of the Atlantic, Marlene Diarra, an accountant from New York, said: "I've lost confidence in money. I'll _____ up in these sales for the rest of the year."

run
hit
snapping
luxury
previous
slash
hunters
meant

back
stock
worth
less
chains
echoed
bitterly
shop

LISTENING: Listen and fill in the spaces.

Shoppers around the world are _____ in post-Christmas sales. Stores are trying to lure bargain hunters with discounts of up to 75 per cent. _____ Christmas is usually the best time for stores. However, the global recession _____ people have spent much less this year and sales have been down. Many stores have reported sales fell by five percent from last Christmas. Sales of luxury _____ bags and perfumes have been hit worst, falling by up to 35 per cent. Retailers are now struggling _____, who know prices will fall more than in previous years. Many people have deliberately saved their money until the New Year sales, knowing stores _____.

Several of the big department stores _____ the UK and USA opened their doors at five o'clock in the morning. Shoppers started queuing in bitterly cold weather from midnight. Many said _____ was worth it _____ bargains. Penny Owen, from Sale in England, said she would cut back on her spending in 2009: "We're worried about what will happen in the upcoming year. This will be _____. Our new year resolution is to make our money go further, which means going shopping less." Many others _____. On the other side of the Atlantic, Marlene Diarra, an accountant from New York, said: "I've lost confidence in money. I'll _____ sales for the rest of the year."

AFTER READING / LISTENING

1. WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words 'bargain' and 'hunter'.

bargain	hunter
----------------	---------------

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS: Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

3. GAP FILL: In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the activity. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

4. VOCABULARY: Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

5. TEST EACH OTHER: Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall how they were used in the text:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• snapping• meant• fell• luxury• attract• slash	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• chains• cold• cut• last• echoed• stock
--	---

STUDENT SHOPPING & SALES SURVEY

Write five GOOD questions about shopping and sales in the table. Do this in pairs. Each student must write the questions on his / her own paper.

When you have finished, interview other students. Write down their answers.

	STUDENT 1 _____	STUDENT 2 _____	STUDENT 3 _____
Q.1.			
Q.2.			
Q.3.			
Q.4.			
Q.5.			

- Now return to your original partner and share and talk about what you found out. Change partners often.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

SHOPPING & SALES DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a) What did you think when you read the headline?
- b) What springs to mind when you hear the word 'discount'?
- c) Do you like shopping in the sales?
- d) How much of a bargain hunter are you?
- e) Did you spend less money this year than in previous years?
- f) How often do you buy luxury goods?
- g) Have you noticed stores are doing more this year to attract customers?
- h) Has the global recession made you think about money more?
- i) What should stores do to weather the storm from the global recession?
- j) Are you more interested in saving more money now?

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SHOPPING & SALES DISCUSSION

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a) Did you like reading this article?
- b) What's the best bargain you've ever had?
- c) Have you ever queued outside a shop to buy something?
- d) Do you think people buy things in sales they don't really need?
- e) What do you think of people who queue outside a store at 5.00 am in freezing cold weather?
- f) Are you worried about what will happen in 2009?
- g) What are your New Year's resolutions?
- h) Have you lost confidence in money?
- i) What kinds of things would you like to stock up on?
- j) What questions would you like to ask the bosses of department stores?

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LANGUAGE

Shoppers around the world are (1) ____ up bargains in post-Christmas sales. Stores are trying to lure bargain hunters (2) ____ discounts of up to 75 per cent. The run-up to Christmas is usually the best time for stores. However, the global recession has (3) ____ many people have spent much less this year and sales have been down. Many stores have reported sales (4) ____ by five percent from last Christmas. Sales of luxury goods such as brand bags and perfumes have been hit worst, falling by up to 35 per cent. Retailers are now struggling (5) ____ attract customers, who know prices will fall more than in previous years. Many people have deliberately saved their money until the New Year sales, knowing stores will (6) ____ prices.

Several of the big department stores and retail (7) ____ in the UK and USA opened their doors at five o'clock in the morning. Shoppers started queuing in bitterly cold weather from midnight. Many said (8) ____ the cold was worth it to get the good bargains. Penny Owen, from Sale in England, said she would cut (9) ____ on her spending in 2009: "We're worried about what will happen in the upcoming year. This will be our last big (10) _____. Our new year resolution is to make our money go further, which means going shopping less." Many others (11) ____ her feelings. On the other side of the Atlantic, Marlene Diarra, an accountant from New York, said: "I've lost confidence in money. I'll stock (12) ____ in these sales for the rest of the year."

Put the correct words from the table below in the above article.

- | | | | | |
|-----|-------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|
| 1. | (a) snaps | (b) snap | (c) snapped | (d) snapping |
| 2. | (a) for | (b) with | (c) at | (d) from |
| 3. | (a) meant | (b) meaning | (c) meanie | (d) means |
| 4. | (a) fallen | (b) fell over | (c) fell | (d) felled |
| 5. | (a) at | (b) for | (c) to | (d) by |
| 6. | (a) clash | (b) slash | (c) flash | (d) trash |
| 7. | (a) chains | (b) ropes | (c) cords | (d) ribbons |
| 8. | (a) brave | (b) bravery | (c) braved | (d) braving |
| 9. | (a) up | (b) back | (c) sideways | (d) forward |
| 10. | (a) market | (b) stall | (c) store | (d) shop |
| 11. | (a) echoing | (b) echoes | (c) echoed | (d) echo |
| 12. | (a) up | (b) down | (c) in | (d) out |

HOMework

1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION: Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

2. INTERNET: Search the Internet and find out more about the discounts on offer in stores around the world. Share what you discover with your partner(s) in the next lesson.

3. LURE: Imagine you are the boss of a department store. Make a poster to lure shoppers into your store. What are the differences between your store and your competition? Show your work to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all have similar things?

4. WORRIED: Write a magazine article about what the year 2009 will be like. Include imaginary interviews with a person who is positive about 2009 and a person who is negative.

Read what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Write down any new words and expressions you hear from your partner(s).

5. LETTER: Write a letter to the boss of your favourite store. Ask him/her three questions about how business is going. Give him/her three suggestions on what he/she can do to increase sales and profits. Read your letter to your partner(s) in your next lesson. Your partner(s) will answer your questions.

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

- a. T b. F c. F d. T e. T f. F g. F h. T

SYNONYM MATCH:

- | | |
|-----------------|--------------------|
| 1. snapping up | a. buying |
| 2. lure | b. attract |
| 3. fell | c. dropped |
| 4. retailers | d. stores |
| 5. deliberately | e. on purpose |
| 6. queuing | f. waiting in line |
| 7. cut back on | g. reduce |
| 8. worried | h. concerned |
| 9. echoed | i. seconded |
| 10. rest | j. remainder |

PHRASE MATCH:

- | | |
|---|-------------------------|
| 1. snapping up | a. bargains |
| 2. Stores are trying to lure | b. bargain hunters |
| 3. Retailers are now struggling | c. to attract customers |
| 4. Many people have deliberately saved | d. their money |
| 5. stores will slash | e. prices |
| 6. queuing in bitterly | f. cold weather |
| 7. braving the cold was | g. worth it |
| 8. Our new year resolution is to make our | h. money go further |
| 9. Many others echoed | i. her feelings |
| 10. I'll stock up in these sales for the | j. rest of the year |

GAP FILL:

Huge discounts in New Year sales

Shoppers around the world are **snapping** up bargains in post-Christmas sales. Stores are trying to lure bargain **hunters** with discounts of up to 75 per cent. The **run**-up to Christmas is usually the best time for stores. However, the global recession has **meant** many people have spent much less this year and sales have been down. Many stores have reported sales fell by five percent from last Christmas. Sales of **luxury** goods such as brand bags and perfumes have been **hit** worst, falling by up to 35 per cent. Retailers are now struggling to attract customers, who know prices will fall more than in **previous** years. Many people have deliberately saved their money until the New Year sales, knowing stores will **slash** prices.

Several of the big department stores and retail **chains** in the UK and USA opened their doors at five o'clock in the morning. Shoppers started queuing in **bitterly** cold weather from midnight. Many said braving the cold was **worth** it to get the good bargains. Penny Owen, from Sale in England, said she would cut **back** on her spending in 2009: "We're worried about what will happen in the upcoming year. This will be our last big **shop**. Our new year resolution is to make our money go further, which means going shopping **less**." Many others **echoed** her feelings. On the other side of the Atlantic, Marlene Diarra, an accountant from New York, said: "I've lost confidence in money. I'll **stock** up in these sales for the rest of the year."

LANGUAGE WORK

- 1 - d 2 - b 3 - a 4 - c 5 - c 6 - b 7 - a 8 - d 9 - b 10 - d 11 - c 12 - a