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Frugal vs. stingy

There is a big difference between being frugal and being stingy. The difference, however, depends mainly upon how your perceived frugality impacts others.

Each one of us must make informed choices about how we spend our money. What are the signals indicating frugality? What is the final crossover into outright Scrooge-like stinginess?

Naturally, many people believe that frugality or stinginess is in the eyes of the beholder. Often times, a stingy person is just called frugal behind his or her back. Stinginess is often thought of as something that most people would not do.

Perhaps such could be the case. There are some key indicators that can be logically pointed out. Here are some general benchmarks:

Using 2 for 1 coupons at a restaurant might label you as frugal. You are clearly stingy if you base the food server's tip on the discounted final bill.

Planning in advance what to spend on donating to charities is perfectly acceptable frugal behavior. If door-to-door charity solicitors throw rocks at your house, you're probably stingy.

You would be called frugal if you use the same teabag more than once. Offering a friend or guest the tea from that used teabag would make any stingy Scrooge take notice.

Most of the time, frugality is a virtue. Such implies you are being careful, not foolish in the management of your financial resources.

Stinginess is a mean and outright anti-social vice. Simply put, stinginess means a lack of generosity where the proper thing to do is to give.

Stinginess is to keep the loaf of bread for yourself, while giving everybody else the leftover crumbs.
Stingy people make mistakes that are costly to all who come in contact with them. Of course, they often hurt themselves the most with their stinginess.

Stingy people would not be caught dead leaving a decent tip. They always split the bill (never offering to pay for someone else’s meal) and they don’t give a second thought to returning something worn only once. Such people never donate to their church nor do they thank their mail carrier with a small Christmas gift. In short, they do everything possible to keep as much money as they can.

Giving and saving are a kind of magic. You could even say that giving is the antidote to greed. You’ll never become greedy or broke if you always make it a point to give and save first.

Naturally, not all people have the funds on hand to make a donation or to buy something for those hit by disaster. The point is that generosity of spirit shows through as does stinginess.

Looking within yourself can give you the needed answer to tell whether or not you're being stingy. A spirit of generosity should give you a good feeling inside. Angriness pointing outward might well be a good reason to understanding why you feel the way you do.

Always remember the golden rule. Are you treating others in the manner you would like to be treated? Are you doing something you would not want to have done to you? Are other people paying the majority of the costs while you receive the majority of the benefits?

Consider using some common sense while keeping your friendships together.

There’s no need to take your friends to a 5-Star restaurant you might not be able to afford, but you could always suggest a fun second choice. You do have to contribute your full share into the total bill, which includes: food, drinks, tax… and a tip for your hard-working server. You’ll certainly be thought of as a freeloader if you ask your friends to pay for your share of the dinner.

You don’t have to give to everybody you meet, but spreading a little extra money around can bring a lot of good into your life.
frugal : careful when using money or food, or (of a meal) cheap or small in amount.
stingy : unwilling to spend; not generous, especially with money.
in the eye of the beholder : varying from person to person, not the same in every case.
benchmark : something that is used as a standard by which other things can be judged or measured.
anti-social : not socially-oriented.
skirt around : to avoid mentioning a problem or subject.
2 for 1 coupon : used to buy one item and get another at a lower price or free.
label : to use a word or phrase to describe someone or something, but often unfairly or incorrectly.
crumb : a very small piece of dry food, especially bread or cake.
pull no punches : to tell the truth honestly.
would not be caught dead doing : something that someone would never do.
boost : to increase or improve something.
antidote : medicine.
miser : an extremely stingy person.
freeloader : a person who never pays for anything.

What does it mean?

1. Guess and write the meaning of the following expressions in your own words.
   
   Door-to-door charity solicitors
   
   A Self-declared cheapo is

Comprehension questions

1. Would using 2 for 1 coupons at a restaurant make you frugal or stingy?
2. Would basing your tip to the server on the coupon price make you frugal or stingy?
3. Would never giving to your church make you frugal or stingy?
4. Would asking your friends to pay for your dinner make you frugal or stingy?
Frugal vs. stingy

Questions for discussion

1. Compare frugal behavior to stingy behavior.
2. What do you think makes a person stingy?
3. Have you known any stingy people? Give some examples of their stinginess.
4. What would you say to a stingy friend of yours?
5. Have you ever been accused of being stingy? How did you feel?
6. What advice would you offer a stingy person?
7. Which may be a better way to save money, being frugal or being stingy?
8. Do you agree that being generous in spending money can bring a lot of good into your life? If you do, how?
9. What do you think about Scrooge? Has your opinion of him changed?
10. Is it possible to be generous in money matters while living in bad financial circumstances?
Cybershopping

Cyber shopping has become a dream come true for many consumers and marketers. It has become a brand new way of getting the things we want without requiring anything but our fingers. Cyber shopping started out as a fad in the late 1990s and became a trend starting in the early 2000s.

At first, people were afraid of online shopping because of the unknown risks. When online stores began to appear, there were only a select few “netizens” brave enough to purchase products online. There were many stories circulating about scams and only the adventurous users would take chances.

Lately, technological advances have made online shopping and purchasing much safer. By the year 2000, online shopping went mainstream.

Cybershopping, also known as e-commerce, isn’t just a slight change in the way we shop. It is a dream come true for both consumers and marketers.

From a shopper’s point of view, it couldn’t be more convenient. Anything and everything can be bought online nowadays, without even seeing or physically touching the items. All a person needs is their credit card. Comparison shopping online is much easier, and the selections are wider than any retail store can offer.

From the seller’s point of view, cybershopping, or e-commerce, must be the most precious and miraculous invention ever. Before the internet, sellers were only able to sell items that they could fit in their store. Also, in order to advertise their products, massive amounts of money had to be spent to let people know about their products.

Thanks to the rise of the internet, retailers can now serve a worldwide audience. In the case of department stores, they don’t have to spend money on overhead costs. The money they save can then translate into money passed onto the customers in the form of lower prices.

Of course, online retailers must know the rules of doing business on the internet. All indicators show that online shopping is here to stay. It is good for both consumers and retailers and can even help to reduce traffic congestion in shopping areas, making it easier for everyone. Selections are bigger, the prices are lower, and people can shop from anywhere in the world, right from the comfort of their home. Who would give up these advantages to go back to the old way of shopping?
fad: something that people do for just a short time and then stop.
trend: more and more people doing it.
“netizen”: very experienced Internet user
scams: people who pretend to sell products that they don’t have.
risk takers: people who enjoy doing dangerous things.
mainstream: become popular with most people.
consumers: buyers, shoppers.
marketers: sellers, retailers.
miraculous innovation: amazing improvement, change (from the old way).
massive: huge, extremely large.
overhead costs: such as electricity, rent, employees’ salaries, etc.
here to stay: will never go away.
traffic congestion: traffic jams.
selections: number of products to choose from.

What does it mean?

1. Guess and write the meaning of the following expressions in your own words.
   
   Comparison shopping is ____________________________________________
   A world wide audience is ____________________________________________

Comprehension questions

1. Who purchased products through online shopping sites when they first began to appear?
2. What is cybershopping known for?
3. If there had been no cybershopping, how would sellers have sold the things?
4. What are the advantages of cybershopping?
Questions for discussion

1. Is online shopping popular in your country? If so, what types of products can be purchased online?
2. Do you shop online? If so, how often do you buy things through the Internet? How long have you been shopping online? If not, why don’t you shop online?
3. What are the advantages and disadvantages of shopping online for the average person?
4. How should scam artists who are caught cheating people through false e-commerce websites be punished? Have there been any such cases in your country?
5. Some people don’t shop online because they are afraid to provide their credit card numbers over the Internet. Is that something to worry about or is online shopping completely safe? Tell why you think so.
6. Which of these items are available for purchase online? Would you rather buy these items in a regular store, or would you buy online? Please explain why.
   a. computer software  e. books
   b. a new car  f. a new printer
   c. a pair of jeans  g. CDs and DVDs
   d. exercise equipment  h. a new watch
7. Is there any way for an online shopper to be sure the website he or she wants to purchase from is safe? Is there any way to distinguish honest online companies from dishonest ones?
8. What should an online shopper do if he or she orders something, but it never arrives in the mail? What would you do?
9. Some people predict that online shopping will eventually replace the traditional way of shopping. What do you think? Is that a possibility or not? Tell why you think so.
Bookstores are filled with books on the subject of health and exercise because of the benefits.

There are also hundreds of videos that demonstrate different techniques which are available for people who want to follow exercise programs. The videos have different target areas and goals such as weight loss in the hips, abdomen, or thighs.

Health clubs are packed with people who want to live healthy lives or to get into shape. They are all huffing and puffing their way to new bodies. Health stores provide a number of protein powders and vitamins that claim to be the best formula ever invented. On television and the internet, new home exercise machines are marketed daily. These machines make promises to firm up the stomach, build biceps, and other such things. Health and fitness is a big business everywhere these days.

Even if a lot of money is made from selling health to people, it is still true that people can reap benefits from exercising and keeping physically fit.

Regular exercise can:
- Help you lose weight, especially weight from fat;
- Lower your cholesterol;
- Improve your body's ability to deliver oxygen to the muscles;
- Allow your heart to pump more blood per beat, so that the heart doesn't have to beat as fast;
- Reduce the risk of heart disease;
- Lower your blood pressure, saving your heart;
- Improve the ability of your immune system to ward off disease; and
- Make you look a lot better!

Of all of the benefits listed, many people care most about improving their appearance, especially with the opposite sex in mind. There are other benefits to what exercise can do for the body besides physical ones. Exercise can help you manage stress, make you sleep better, give you more confidence, and improve your overall quality of life.

Exercise can:
- Help you manage stress;
- Help in stopping smoking;
- Make you sleep better;
- Teach you about setting goals and reaching them;
- Give you more confidence;
- Improve the overall quality of your life.
variety of techniques: many different ways.
abdomen: below the stomach, the place that starts to get fat as a person gets older.
thighs: upper part of the legs.
firm up: make hard.
ward off: protect against.
manage: control.
exercise routine: a set of exercises to work different muscles.
work out: to exercise.

**What does it mean?**

1. Guess and write the meaning of the following expressions in your own words.
   - Huffing and puffing is ____________________________
   - With the opposite sex in mind is ____________________________

**Comprehension questions**

1. What benefits do most people realize from regular exercise?
2. What benefits do people most care about from regular exercise?
3. How does a person go about starting an exercise or fitness program?
4. What phenomenon can you see in bookstores, in health clubs and on TVs?
1. How would you describe your present physical condition? Excellent, good, or poor? Do you exercise? If so, how often? If not, why not?
2. Which of the following have the most effect on becoming overweight? Tell why you think so.
   - Eating too much fast food
   - No time for exercise
   - Using the computer too much
   - Laziness
3. In your opinion, what’s the main reason why most people exercise? Tell why you think so.
4. Do you own any home exercise equipment? If so, how long have you had it and why did you buy it? If you don’t have any, why not?
5. Where do you prefer to exercise? In a health club or at home? What are the advantages and disadvantages of each?
6. What do you think of protein powders or vitamins to increase your muscle size? Is it a good idea to use those kinds of muscle-building aids? Would you/do you ever use them? Why or why not?
7. How would you describe the overall health and fitness of the people in your country? How do they compare to people two generations ago? Are they getting healthier or lazier when it comes to exercise? Please explain.
8. How much of an effect does each of the following have on a person’s health? Tell why you think so:
   - Smoking cigarettes
   - Drinking alcohol regularly
   - The kind of food a person eats
   - Stress level
Alicia Hewitt always knew the Washington Department of Labor and Industries had rules governing the use of their work computers during the working day. Ms. Hewitt thought this only applied to web surfing and not general e-mails. So, she believed she was only using the internet for professional matters. She was more than surprised when she got fired after her office discovered 418 personal e-mails on her computer received over roughly a 5-month period. This averaged about 5 messages per day.

Hewitt is not alone in finding out about office computer policies the hard way. Managers across the country are cracking the whip on employee net activity by drawing up very strict rules and policies and enforcing them with special software that monitors ALL web surfing, checks e-mail, and controls the types of sites an employee may go to.

Hewitt was an experienced 8-year agency veteran who always received fantastic employee performance reviews in addition to receiving certificates for outstanding customer service in her now former position as a Workers' Compensation claims manager.

Most of the seemingly innocent personal e-mails she received were messages about birthdays or lunch dates with co-workers. None of this meant anything when Hewitt's employer checked her entire office's e-mail after one of her co-workers filed a sexual harassment complaint against a supervisor in the department. Hewitt found herself one of 8 people fired from the department for improper use of department equipment.

Vernon Wills, who works at the Virginia Department of Business Assistance, earned himself a 10-day unpaid suspension for excessive Internet use on the job. Wills' employer was well aware of his blogging about various state issues at the Commonwealth Conservative's Virginia political blog. Even the governor of Virginia read and used his various blogs; Mr. Wills was punished after posting some humorous photographs as part of a local newspaper's contest. His photos made fun of a Virginia county and also aggravated a local Democrat. Whether in the form of streaming video or risqué adult websites slowing down the company's bandwidth (and exposing the company to sexual harassment charges), companies have many reasons to limit employee Internet access and activity.

A survey conducted jointly by the American Management Association and the E-Policy Institute in 2005 asked 526 businesses about their online policies and found that 76% record the sites their staff visit, and 65 percent block selected sites. In addition, some 55% review and retain employee e-mails, and 36% track all content on staff PC's, their
keystrokes, and the total time spent on the keyboard. Lost **job productivity** due to web surfing is a serious concern. Earlier this year, numerous companies blocked streaming video during the Vancouver 2010 Olympics. Despite this, well over 14 million fans found a way to access the streaming video. Most of the accessed streaming video had to come from work based upon the starting times of the games.

Networks Unlimited is a Massachusetts based Internet auditing company that specializes in auditing Internet surfing for their corporate clients. In addition, the company also sells specialized technology to block and regulate employee Internet usage. According to the company, many executives are shocked and surprised at what their employees do while surfing online. A monitoring box is installed on client companies' networks for a week and then the company statistically estimates longer-term usage to figure out the number of hours per year employees surf on line.
crack the whip: to use your authority to make someone else behave better or work harder.
enforce: to make people obey a rule or law.
veteran: someone who has had a lot of experience of a particular activity.
sexual harassment: sexual remarks, looks, or touching done to someone who does not want it.
aggravate: to make someone angry or annoyed.
retain: to keep something or continue to have something.

What does it mean?

1. Guess and write the meaning of the following expressions in your own words.
   An unpaid suspension is ____________________________
   Job productivity is ________________________________
**Comprehension questions**

1. Who is Ms. Hewitt? Why was she fired from her job?
2. Did Ms. Hewitt receive bad evaluation on-the-job?
3. Why did Mr. Wills receive a 10-day suspension without pay?
4. What percentage of businesses monitors websites visited by employees?
5. What is the business of Networks Unlimited?

**Questions for discussion**

1. Should employees' Internet usage be monitored?
2. Is Internet monitoring on-the-job common in Japan?
3. Do Japanese companies have any kind of Internet auditing systems? Should they?
4. What are your thoughts of software that can track where you go on-line?
5. Why are companies interested in monitoring employees' on-line usage?
6. What are your opinions of a company such as Network Unlimited?
7. If you were a boss of a company and saw an employee surfing the Internet, what would you say to him/her?
8. Do you think a person can still bring out good performance even though s/he spends quite a bit of time on the Internet surfing?
9. Should any internet usage policy apply to employees differently in accordance with their position?
10. If one of your co-workers was addicted to Internet surfing, how would you help him get over his/her internet addict?
Birth rates across the EU are falling at a record pace. To be called childless or childfree? These days, an increasing number of women (as well as men) are strongly insisting on the term ‘childfree’ – with the main emphasis on freedom.

An increasing number of women believe parenting leads to a loss of freedom, reduced professional prospects, and great financial burdens.

Recent research has shown a great rise in the numbers of couples who have actively chosen to not have children. As many as 1 in 10 women in Europe reach the age of 45 without having any children.

The number of women without children will double in a number of countries to as much as 20%—except Germany, where the numbers are at the 30% level due to the fact that Germany has some of the most family unfriendly policies in Europe. Mainstream media is also beginning to recognize the childfree lifestyle.

People across Europe and the world are beginning to feel they are not deviant for being different from the majority.

Despite such ideas, in strongly pro-natal childless France, the idea of women actively choosing not to have children remains an anathema to the majority of the people. Of note, it was also quite difficult for both men and women to obtain sterilization.

Many women believe the topic of not having children is taboo, and that there is a lack of open and honest debate. Amanda, a 33 year-old French woman, shuns the belief that only those who are work-driven avoid parenthood. Amanda is of the opinion that she has made a lifestyle choice. She also very much enjoys working only on a part-time basis. In Europe, 2.1 children per each woman are needed to maintain populations at their current levels. The following countries are below replacement averages: Ireland (1.99), France (1.9), Norway (1.8), Sweden (1.75), United Kingdom (1.74), Netherlands (1.73), Germany (1.37), Italy (1.33), Spain (1.32), and Greece (1.29).

The governments of France, Sweden, and Norway have good pro-natal attitudes. True or not, the governments of each of these countries believe that voluntary childlessness does not exist.
Marianna is a 30-year-old living in Linköping, Sweden, and has met many fellow Swedes making the childfree choice.

Marianna has known for some time that she never wanted to have children and had herself sterilized at the age of 25.

She is happy with her decision and is also supported by her long-term live-in boyfriend. Marianna says that in Sweden there exists much pressure from family and friends to have children.

She notes an ever increasing number of people in Sweden who are seriously questioning if children are really for them.

43-year-old Londoner Julia hears "selfish and irresponsible" on almost a daily basis. She is becoming used to hearing these words and they do not register with her. In the United Kingdom, roughly 25% of the population will either be childless or childfree.

Julia made an active choice not to have children. She decided she could not fully devote 100% of her time to another person. "The world's population continues to grow— it is only people in the West who are thought of as not producing enough children. People will keep right on having children," Julia says.

Julia is employed in the media and says there is an ever increasing tension in the workplace because many employees without children feel they are getting the short end while parents get a much better deal. This is why Europe is now following the American example with the establishment of groups who actively demand a better deal in the workplace for their members.

Jonathan McCalmont has founded Kidding Aside (The British Childfree Association) to fight for equality for people without children.

Mr. McCalmont is really angry at how the government is trying to buy parental votes with longer maternity pay, paternity leave, family tax breaks, and even flexible hours. He thinks the whole thing is nothing more than a tax break pretending to be a social policy.

He's also angry at what he thinks is money being transferred from those without children to those with children.

There are childfree people who have serious responsibilities such as looking after an aging parent. Mr. McCalmont thinks these people should receive equal benefits as parents do.
fall like a stone off a cliff: to decline very rapidly.
mainstream media: large and traditional media sources.
deviant: different, in a bad way.
anathema: something which is greatly disliked or disapproved of.
taboo: exclusion from use, practice, or social relations.
shun: to avoid something.
sterilize: to have an operation to stop them producing babies.

What does it mean?

1. Guess and write the meaning of the following expressions in your own words.
   A pro-natal attitude is ____________________________
   A long-term live-in boyfriend is ____________________________

Comprehension questions

1. What is happening to birth rates in Europe?
2. What choices are women in their 30's making?
3. Is mainstream media beginning to recognize the childfree lifestyle? If yes, how?
4. When did Amanda change her mind about having children?
5. How many countries in Europe are below replacement population averages?
Questions for discussion

1. What is the long-term effect of fewer women having children?
2. Do you believe a smaller population just might be better for the world?
3. Are the Childfree "selfish and irresponsible" or are they just honest in truly not wanting children?
4. Do you have any married friends without children? How do you feel about them?
5. Should people without children be penalized in some way or another?
6. Do you believe people without children on the job are discriminated against or vice versa?
7. What should a woman consider before she obtains sterilization?
8. How would this world be if only a small number of women choose to have children?
9. How can the Japanese government support couples who want to have babies but can't?
10. What would you do if your spouse changes his/her mind not to have children? How would you persuade him/her?
Homelessness

Homelessness is an issue that every country must deal with. It has no racial or national boundaries. Statistics for homelessness are more staggering than people know. Over 700,000 people are homeless on a given night in the richest country in the world, the United States.

Homeless doesn't mean lazy.
The most common reason for homelessness in poorer, undeveloped countries is poverty. In advanced countries, this is usually not the case for homelessness. Many misunderstandings arise on the part of the public when it comes to the subject of homelessness, especially in richer countries. There is a misconception that the homeless are lazy and do not want to work. This is not true. Many homeless people have jobs but they do not make enough money to pay for both housing and food.

Food always wins out if the choice is between a roof over your head or an empty stomach. A big problem is the housing prices. Most homeless people live in large cities where the rent is highest and living expenses are costly.

Welfare Systems
A welfare system helps people who are homeless for one reason or another. Most countries have these programs set up for homeless people. Places such as soup kitchens, homeless shelters, and food stamp programs are given from the government. They also issue monthly welfare checks to those with the greatest need. Many American citizens argue that the U.S. welfare system is too generous and makes recipients of these monthly checks lazy. Some think that it takes away their incentives to work. The welfare systems in European countries are even more generous. These systems are beginning to become a drag on their economies.

Racism, runaways and abuse
There are many other reasons behind homelessness such as domestic violence, dissatisfaction with home life, and racism. Women who are abused by their husbands try to escape to places where they can't be found and usually end up on the street.
Glossary
no racial or national boundaries: There are homeless people in every country, regardless of whether rich or poor.
wins out: is more important.
domestic violence: wives beaten by their husbands (or vice versa).
racism: Discriminated against because of their race.
abused: be beaten.
soup kitchens: places that give free food to homeless people.
homeless shelters: places that give a bed to sleep in at night.
food stamp programs: coupons that can be used like money for buying food.
incentives: desire, reason.
feeling the effects in their economy: There is less money to spend for other things.
universal health care coverage: health care for all the citizens.

What does it mean?
1. Guess and write the meaning of the following expressions in your own words.
   Staggering is _____________________________________________________________________
   A drag on their economies is ____________________________________________________________________

Comprehension questions
1. What sort of welfare system do most countries have?
2. Why has the U.S. welfare system been criticized by many Americans? (Which group of people has criticized the U.S. welfare system?) Who has criticized the U.S. welfare system?
3. What is the most frequently mentioned reason for having many homeless people in poor countries?
4. What are the other reasons for homelessness?
1. Are there many homeless people in your country? If so, where can they be seen?

2. Where do most of the homeless people in your country sleep at night? Are they allowed to sleep in the parks or other public places?

3. What is the reason for most of the homelessness in your country? Are all homeless people just poor, or do some people become homeless for other reasons too? Explain.

4. What help is provided for homeless people in your country...
   ...from the government?
   ...from private sources?
   ...from churches and other groups?

5. Do you think the welfare programs in your country are sufficient to take care of all the poor and homeless people? If not, what more should the government do?

6. Are there many beggars in your country? Do you ever give money to beggars? Why or why not?

7. Some people feel that giving money to homeless and other poor people takes away their incentive to work. Do you agree? Why or why not?

8. Which is a better way to spend money for homeless people? Tell why you think so.
   Just give money and good to people who need it.
   Spend the money on programs to teach skills to homeless people so that they can get jobs.
   Spend the money to build cheap housing for homeless people to rent.

9. Countries in Europe are now spending over half their GDP on welfare programs for the homeless and poor. It is hurting their economies. What should those countries do?

10. Will homelessness ever be eliminated, or is it something that will always be a problem in the world? Why or why not.
It was predicted by a French prophet in 1556 that China would absorb almost the whole of Northern Russia and Scandinavia after completing her industrial and economic expansion. Michel de Nostradame, also known as Nostradamus, wrote this prediction for the year 2025.

In 1997, the IMF predicted that China’s economy would be larger than even those of the U.S. and the European Union by 2010. Economists predict that China’s economy will be three times larger than that of Japan’s in the 21st century. They also agree that China, not Japan, will be the dominating force in Asia.

This is due to a couple of reasons. Japan has limited land and almost no natural resources. China has plenty of both. China has unlimited resources with the world’s largest population of over 1.3 billion. China has the potential to become a superpower not only in Asia, but also in the whole world.

China is already the world’s manufacturer of low-tech and hi-tech goods. Almost all discount stores sell products that have the label “made in China” on it. These products range from clothing, toys, sunglasses, hair dryers, and almost all home appliances.

China has won its place as manufacturer of the world thanks to a huge labor force who gets paid mere pennies a day.

Other Asian countries with higher standards of living cannot compete with China’s low prices. Both South Korea and Japan feel that their own economic futures depend on what happens in China so they have worked hard to maintain good political relationships. Every major multinational company in the world has factories located in China.
prophet: someone who can see into the future.
dominating force: most powerful, most important country.
home appliance: small machines used in the house.
pennies a day: very low wages.
multinational: big companies that have offices in many foreign countries.

What does it mean?

1. Guess and write the meaning of the following expressions in your own words.
   - **Being flooded is**
   - **Limited free enterprise is**

2. Share what you write with your teacher.
**Asia in the 21st Century**

**Comprehension questions**

1. How has China become the world's manufacturer?
2. What have South Korea and Japan done to compete with China's low prices?
3. How did the IMF predict China's economy in 1997?

**Questions for discussion**

1. Most economic experts think China will become the leader of Asia by 2015, but other experts disagree. Which do you think will be right? Tell why you think so.

2. Would you like to see a unified Asia with a common currency similar to that of the European Union? Why or why not?

3. What are the future goals of China's present leaders? What are they mostly interested in—money, power, or both? Tell why you think so.

4. Will China's citizens ever be richer than people in Japan, South Korea, or Taiwan? Why or why not?

5. What, if anything, do you think could happen to Taiwan in the future? Could it become a part of China again?

6. What is going to happen to Japan in this century? Will the country continue to be the richest in Asia, or will other countries catch up? Tell why you think so.
The Western world, as many of us know, is full of fat kids. What is not fully clear, however, is why. Could it be due to the insidious power of advertising aimed squarely at kids? How about the fear of traffic and child snatchers, which persuades parents to keep their children indoors? Or maybe we should just blame the steady spread of fast food? Actually, all three are guilty—or so say economists, who over the past few years have published an extensive line-up of explanations for the obesity epidemic.

Mike Grossman, Shin Yi-Chou, and Inas Rashad have published serious research putting the effects of fast food in the limelight. The natural difficulty of any project of this type is the number of causal factors. A child who is watching Ronald McDonald with his partner in crime, Hamburglar on an afternoon TV show is a child within easy reach of snack food; a child who isn’t playing baseball, and possibly a child whose parents have no motivation to help him keep healthy. The child may also be watching TV to begin with because he’s too fat to be playing outside.

Grossman, Rashad, and Chou believe they have found a very clear effect by examining local variations in advertising across the U.S. They believe that if a child watches 30 minutes of fast-food advertising on TV, that child will become fatter, with an increased body mass index (BMI) of roughly one percent.

The impact is doubled on teens, which does make sense simply because they have more control over what they eat than do younger kids. Still, the question is not fully answered as to why children are becoming fatter.

Philip Levine, Kirstin Butcher, and Patricia Anderson have put forth the idea that working families may well be to blame. They have found that children are fatter if their mothers work longer hours. The sibling who spent the most time as a latchkey child will tend to be the fatter one, perhaps due to the mother being unable to manage outdoor play or she may have less time to cook, and therefore purchases unhealthy fast-food. Unfortunately for many working mothers who are already guilt burdened, the effects are serious. Just 10 hours at work increases the chance of childhood obesity by roughly 10 percent. Even in spite of concerns about childhood obesity, most of the world’s fat people are certainly old enough to look after themselves.

Just what is going on here? Modern economics offers up a very reasonable pair of explanations. First, the cost of exercise has increased. Most of us used to be paid to do physically demanding work that burned calories. Of course, it is difficult to undercut exercise that does pay you, and modern health clubs haven’t tried. Second, food technology has tipped the balance in favor of an increased level of snacking.
Consider the potato, which was once eaten boiled or in a stew. Making fries was a very messy and time consuming job. Fries and potato chips are now easier to eat than ever thanks to the technological wonders of industrial processing, freezing, and vacuum packing. The fact is that potato chips are more caloric than boiled potatoes, but they can be eaten at pretty much any time of day. Despite all the attention given to extra large “supersize” portions, calories eaten at main meals have actually declined.

Harvard economists Jesse Shapiro, David Cutler, and Edward Glaeser make the argument that advances in food technology have reduced the money cost and time of nibbling on junk food all day. That certainly does look like an opportunity a great many of us have jumped upon based upon the ever-expanding waistlines of the developed world.
insidious: sneaky, deceitful.
limelight: a situation in which someone receives a lot of attention, especially from newspapers, television, etc.
partner in crime: person who helps someone do something that is usually bad.
body mass index: percentage of body fat based upon weight and height.
tip: to (cause to) move so that one side is higher than another side.
vacuum packing: a type of pressurized packing that keeps food fresher longer.
supersize: an extra-large portion often found at fast-food restaurants.
nibble: to eat small amounts of food by taking very small bites.

What does it mean?
1. Guess and write the meaning of the following expressions in your own words.
   Obesity epidemic is _______________________________
   A latchkey child is _______________________________
2. Share what you write with your instructor.
1. What are some reasons modern kids are so fat these days?
2. What are some effects of fast-food advertising?
3. What is the result of a child who watches 30 minutes of fast-food advertising?
4. What is another big reason for why today's kids are so fat?

Questions for discussion

1. Estimate the percentage of obese children you see daily in Japan.
2. Do you agree with the assertion that working families are to blame for the childhood obesity problem these days?
3. How can working parents have control over what their kids eat while they are at work?
4. Do you also think that food technology is part of the problem?
5. Discuss some reasons why both parents often have to work.
6. What are some solutions that you would put forward to solve the problem of fat kids?
7. Would you be willing to pay your kids to do rather physically demanding work to keep them healthy?
8. Do overweight parents have more possibility of raising overweight kids?
9. Do you think this phenomenon of increasing overweight people is only confined to the Western World?
10. Have you ever tried to be on a diet? What are your strategies to lose weight?
Three children were at a restaurant in upstate New York when it came time to order their meals. The three European-born American children, aged 13, 9, and 8 put in their orders: spaghetti carbonara, seafood linguini, and pasta primavera – and then proceeded to turn down the waitress’s offers to leave out the spices or to bring the various sauces on the side.

The waitress was truly flabbergasted by the experience. “This is the first time in five years of working at this place where I have seen children order an unaltered adult dish,” she said. “Just where do you come from?”

Kathy Kinsbrook, an American mom living in London and former developer of family recipes for a well-known magazine, truly believes picky eaters are the result of non-cooking parents. Kinsbrook said, “I personally know of one young American woman in Italy who found the grocery stores quite strange.” “There isn’t any food here,” the confused American said. “There are only things to make food from.” Kinsbrook presently teaches family cooking classes, with the hopes of giving the parents the confidence to serve their children a fresh fish pie rather than frozen fish fingers.

Most Americans sincerely think their children eat better abroad because the traditional ritual of family dining is still alive and well in many cultures, especially where after-school activities have not yet invaded the family dinner hour. Maria Hollander, an American mother of three who lives in Paris said, “We sit down together for dinner at least four times a week.”

Ruth Van Reken, Co-Author of “Third Culture Kids: The Experience of Growing Up Among Worlds,” has quickly noticed the passing of the family meal since returning to America. “When you move abroad, you usually spend much more time together as a family, and that also includes meal times,” stated Van Reken, who lived in Liberia for nine years with her children. She believes the adventure of living abroad also carries over to what parents feed their children. Van Reken is also of the opinion that trying new foods is part of learning about a culture and gaining a sense of global community.

Van Reken continues to serve palm butter and greens, a popular African dish, when her family gets together for dinner.

Beth Coben, a British mother living in London, couldn’t help but notice a big change in her children’s eating when they bought a vacation home in Spain. “I’m happy to say they now love mussels, grilled fish, and oysters,” she said. The only hard time for Mr. and Mrs. Coben is when her American or British friends come for a visit. Mr. Coben says, “Their children will usually eat only ‘white food’, or bangers and mash. I am quite embarrassed to ask the chef at our favorite fish restaurant to make plain bowls of pasta for them.”

Thus, in the end, expatriate children learn that experiencing new foods is fun and not a chore.
spaghetti carbonara: a rich spaghetti with a sauce made from eggs, cream, Parmesan cheese, and bits of bacon.
pasta primavera: a type of pasta served with fresh vegetables.
seafood linguini: a pasta using crab, shrimp, lobster and/or scallops in a rich creamy sauce with Parmesan cheese.
unaltered: not changed in any way.
flabbergasted: very surprised and even shocked.
expatriate: to be born in one country, but living AND working in another country.
ritual: something that you do regularly and in the same way each time.
white food: often processed food favored by white children.
bangers and mash: a traditional British dish of sausages and mashed potatoes.

What does it mean?
1. Guess and write the meaning of the following expressions in your own words.
   A family recipe is ________________________________
   After school activities are ________________________________
2. Share what you write with your teacher.

Comprehension questions
1. Why was the restaurant waitress flabbergasted at what the three children ordered?
2. Who is Kathy Kinsbrook?
3. What do most Americans think about eating habits when living abroad with their children?
4. Is the traditional family sit-down dinner still popular outside of America?
Adventures in food

**Questions for discussion**

1. Are picky eaters the result of parents who don’t cook for their children?
2. Are picky eaters less likely to be healthy? Why or why not? Are you a picky eater?
3. What is the difference between an American grocery store and a Japanese grocery store?
4. Does the reaction of the young American woman in Italy tell a lot about American food culture?
5. Discuss the role of food and culture.
6. Are you willing to try new foods? What was food you tried recently?
7. How many times a week does your family have meals together?
8. Do you bring your own lunch to work or school, or go out for lunch at the lunch break?
9. Do you think Japanese recipes are healthier than American recipes?
10. Some people say buying food is less expensive than cooking food. Do you agree? Why?
Plastic surgery for employment

The mosaic drawn on the above pictured woman’s face, is constructed from facial features belonging to well-known actresses, is a model of what youngsters are trying to achieve through plastic surgery. Once considered merely a means of making one’s appearance more attractive, plastic surgery is becoming, among vigorous job seekers, a way to beef up their competitiveness for a better job.

In an increasingly brutal job market, many female undergraduates are going under the plastic surgeons knife, hoping to have more charming features to give them some advantage when seeking jobs. “Many of my friends underwent cosmetic procedures during the vacation. The vast majority of them cut their eyelids to create folds and make their eyes appear bigger. Some of them also got their noses done.

Eye and nose alterations are the most common operations. “Although a nip and tuck costs not only lots of money but also sometimes unbearable pain, I think the payoff is worth the pain,” said a female student at Harvard University on condition of anonymity.

Men are also increasingly undergoing surgical beauty treatment, once the almost exclusive domain of women, in hopes of boosting self-esteem and better competing for jobs. While 35 percent of male visitors to the surgeon’s office are in favor of the operation, females in favor are far higher at 93 percent.

In order to avoid failure at job interviews, a large number of seniors and those failing to be hired are knocking on hospital doors, requesting a consultation about the surgery. To achieve their goal, many customers are showing interest in “facial bone contouring,” and “full face modification” rather than lesser operations like double fold operation and “rhinoplasty” (nose jobs), a plastic surgeon said.

According to the result of a survey by Scout, a recruitment information provider, 162 out of 243 or 66.7 percent of those leading the recruitment process agree that a favorable appearance is partly linked with a good score in an interview – 26.5 percent higher than in 2004. About 73.7 percent of responders said they would choose an applicant who had a good appearance but was less skillful rather than a poor face and exceptional ability.

“It is not appropriate to score applicants only according to objective factors such as academic scores or English certifications because a number of applicants have good school grades and outstanding English abilities. So, we are giving more weight to subjective criteria like first impression and appearance,” said a personnel officer.

With concern over the declining national economy, this year, hundreds of thousands of students are entering the workforce without great potential of receiving a job. High-paying jobs that most students are eager to get, however, are too few and far between.

With media reports glamorizing little nips and tucks, and with this year’s graduates taking jobs as non-regular workers and even those not seeking jobs, it is no wonder job hunters including students are seeking an edge in looks.
**Glossary**

- **beef up**: to improve something or make it more interesting, more important etc.
- **payoff**: an advantage or profit that you get as a result of doing something.
- **anonymity**: when other people do not know who you are or what your name is.
- **contouring**: shaping the outer edges of one’s body.
- **certification**: an official document that says that someone is allowed to do a certain job.
- **glamorize**: to make something seem more attractive than it really is.
- **criterion**: a standard that you use to judge something or make a decision about something.

**What does it mean?**

1. Guess and write the meaning of the following expressions in your own words.
   - A brutal job market is ________________________________
   - An edge in looks is ________________________________

2. Share what you write with your instructor.

**Comprehension questions**

1. Why are many job seekers undergoing plastic surgery?
2. Which body parts are the most common with plastic surgery?
3. What is the nickname for a nose job?
Questions for discussion

1. Where do you stand with this issue? Do you support having a facelift or are you against it?
2. Why do you think a lot more women are in favor of plastic surgery than men?
3. Do you believe it is fair for interviewers to take one's looks into consideration?
4. Do you agree with the personnel officer who says their company is giving more weight to subjective criteria?
5. Besides how one looks, what other subjective criteria can there be for judging interviewees?
6. If you had an opportunity to receive plastic surgery, which part of your body would you choose?
7. If your loved ones or close friends became stressed with their below average appearance, would you recommend they undergo plastic surgery?
8. How important do you think one's appearance is at the workplace or in one's social life?
9. What are the good and bad points of plastic surgery?
10. Do you know anyone with an unfavorable appearance who is very optimistic and successful?
In soccer, three goals are commonly referred to as a ‘hat trick’. Everywhere else, three of anything in a row makes for a trend. After three school shootings within a week, predictions about an explosion of violence in U.S. classrooms were both inevitable, but also wrong. The fact is that violence in schools has fallen by half since the middle part of the 1990s; students have a much higher probability to be killed outside the schoolroom than in the schoolroom. That average doesn’t make a lot of people feel better, however.

Most children who are murdered, are murdered by someone they know. The vast majority of parents know that neither they nor their immediate friends are assassins, so they focus their worry on strangers. The fears of parents are seriously increased by the often sensational coverage of school shootings.

One day in September, a 53 year old small-time criminal, Duane Morrison, walked into a school in Bailey, Colorado, with two guns. He took several girls hostage, had a strong preference for blondes, molested a few of them, and killed one before finally taking his own life as heavily armed police charged into the room. Almost immediately afterwards, a teenaged boy carried two guns into his school in Cazenovia, Wisconsin.

Prosecutors believe that 15 year-old Eric Hainstock might well have planned on killing several people. However, school staff reacted quickly when they saw him with a shotgun, immediately calling police and putting the school into “lock-down.” The only person to be killed was the head teacher who confronted young Mr. Hainstock in the hallway. At the very beginning of October, 32 year-old milk truck driver, Charles Roberts, walked into a one room Amish school in Nickel Mines, Pennsylvania. His suicide notes talked about repeated dreams of molesting children, but no one knows for sure if he actually did. He then lined the girls up, bound their feet and, after a bit more than an hour, shot them, killing at least 5. Mr. Roberts finally killed himself as police rushed into the classroom.

Numerous experts see both the Pennsylvania and Colorado cases as an extreme expression of a culture of violence aimed at women. Both killers seemingly had a sexual motive, and let all of the boys free in the classroom. Of course, such extreme examples are difficult to analyze, and one must also consider that violence directed against women is half of what it was in 1995.

Other experts and specialists see all three cases as symptoms of change in the manner in which men commit suicide. Forensic psychologist Helen Smith told a radio audience, “men are deciding to take their own lives, and they are not doing it alone anymore. They’re also taking other people with them.” This is true, but not so very often.

Gun control supporters believe school shootings clearly show the need for additional restrictions. They say it is far too easy for people like Mr. Morrison and Mr. Hainstock to obtain guns. Gun supporters find the opposite reasoning: if more teachers carried concealed weapons, they could take down possible child-killers before they actually kill.

After the Columbine school massacre in 1999, the Federal Bureau of Investigation prepared a comprehensive report on school shooters. The report came to the conclusion that it was not possible to draw a useful profile of a potential shooter due to the fact that “the vast majority of teenagers who will never commit a violent act will show at least some of the behaviors” on any watch list of warning signs.
hat trick: a series of three successes, especially in sports such as football when the same person scores three times.

trend: general course or direction.

molest: to touch a child in an improper sexual manner.

lock-down: an emergency situation where no one is allowed in or out.

motive: reason for doing something.

forensic: applying scientific knowledge to legal problems.

What does it mean?

1. Guess and write the meaning of the following expressions in your own words.
   
   Sensational coverage of a school shooting is ____________________________
   
   A watch list of warning signs is ____________________________

2. Share what you write with your teacher.
### Comprehension questions

1. How many school shootings occurred within a week?
2. What states did the shootings take place in?
3. How old were the shooters?
4. Who did each of the killers release in the classroom?
5. Why was the Federal Bureau of Investigation unable to create a shooter profile?

### Questions for discussion

1. Discuss some reasons why some people act in a violent manner.
2. Do you think that past or present bullying may have caused the men to do what they did?
3. Have you ever been bullied or have you bullied someone else at some time in life?
4. Outline reasons for some of the school shootings.
5. What do you think about the idea that teachers should be armed to prevent future school shootings?
6. Why do some people take their own lives?
7. Does this statement: “the vast majority of teenagers who will never commit a violent act will show at least some of the behaviors” mean that we are all potential criminals?
8. Do you think people should be allowed to buy and carry guns for an emergency in Japan?
9. Does the article imply in any way that the U.S. school system needs to focus on moral education more than college entrance exams.
Men also suffer from compulsive shopping

People like to buy nice or brand-new items whether they are men or women, but many women have been said to be obsessed with shopping. Actually, a lot of women admit that they are addicted to shopping. However, men are also beginning to confess that they are suffering from “compulsive shopping”.

A recent survey has found that 1 in 20 American adults buy things they may not even want or never need or use. In today’s world of consumerism, where we are constantly bombarded by ads, this is not surprising.

What may raise an eyebrow or two is a further finding in the study that men are just as likely as women to suffer from “compulsive buying”. Gone seem to be the days when women dragged their bored and fed-up-looking men around shopping malls. New research from Stanford University has revealed that men are now just as avid and compulsive shoppers as their female counterparts.

Researcher Dr. Lorrin Koram explains how the number of men who indulge in unnecessary shopping sprees has rocketed: "That's the biggest surprise -- men engage in this behavior almost as commonly as women," he said. This finding runs counter to the conventional and rather stereotyped view that compulsive buying is very much a "woman's disease." Dr. Koram said. Trends and figures may have been unfairly skewed as male obsessive shoppers used to be more reluctant than women to recognize that they have a problem and then come forward and admit it.

He pointed out that: "Generally, in psychiatry, men seek help less often than women. It's not 'manly' to seek help."

And help seems to be exactly what the doctor ordered for any compulsive shopper, who is usually not made any happier by his or her relentless buying. Dr. Koram warns: "It's always important to encourage people who have these types of disorders to seek treatment."

Many find themselves laden with debt and filled with shame and suicidal tendencies as they attempt to hide their addiction. Now in many societies it’s getting more and more difficult to discern the roles of men and women. This may be one of the reasons why there are an increasing number of men who also suffer from an endless impulse to go on unnecessary shopping sprees.
Men also suffer from compulsive shopping

Glossary

**obsessed with**: to think or worry about something all the time.
**bombard**: to do something too often or too much.
**fed up**: annoyed or bored, and wanting something to change.
**indulge in**: to let yourself do or have something that you enjoy.
**run counter**: to be the opposite of something.
**skew**: not straight or exact.
**relentless**: strict, cruel, or determined, without ever stopping.
**laden with**: heavily loaded with something, or containing a lot of something.

**What does it mean?**

1. Guess and write the meaning of the following expressions in your own words.
   - **Compulsive shopping** is ____________________________
   - **Unnecessary shopping sprees** are ____________________________
   - Share what you write with your teacher.

**Comprehension questions**

1. How does the article describe today's world?
2. What does the findings of the research show about males' shopping trend?
3. According to the article, who is less likely to seek treatment for compulsive shopping, women or men?
4. What emotional states do compulsive shoppers experience?
Questions for discussion

1. How would you describe yourself when it comes to shopping? Are you a compulsive shopper?
2. What do you suppose makes men compulsive shoppers in today's world?
3. If your spouse were a compulsive shopper, how would you help him/her treat his/her disorder?
4. Have you ever regretted buying something after you purchased it?
5. Do you know any man who indulges in unnecessary shopping sprees? If you do, what is he like?
6. How can we fight the temptations to buy unnecessary items while shopping?
7. Do you think shopping gives a boost to the economy?
8. Do you know any unique/successful selling strategies that make shoppers buy on impulse?
9. Where do you prefer to go shopping: on the Internet or at a store?
10. What do you think of the people who buy many luxurious items? Do you think it's worth buying them or do you think spending money on these kinds of items is a waste?
Bibliography


