7 Retail therapy

retail therapy *n* [U] The act of buying things that you do not need when you are unhappy because you think it will make you feel better – often used humorously. (Longman Exams Dictionary)

In this unit you will practise
- Discussing likes and dislikes; consumer topics; describing objects
- Sampling a text; dealing with unknown vocabulary
- Short answer; summary completion; matching; True/False/Not Given
- Topic vocabulary and pronunciation

Key Language
Linking expressions
Talking about research
Noun + noun combinations

Exam Focus
Speaking: Parts 1–3
Reading skills
Speaking / Writing

Lead-in

1 Work in pairs. Read the following statements and decide whether the missing word in each space is 'men' or 'women'.

1 When they shop, 70 per cent of …….. become 'hunters', aiming for a defined product in a specific shop. 80 per cent of …….. , on the other hand, act as leisurely 'gatherers', roaming round in a less purposeful manner.
2 …….. have normally exhausted their patience after 72 minutes of shopping. Meanwhile most …….. prefer to carry on shopping for at least another 28 minutes.
3 Generally speaking, …….. buy their own clothes, without seeking other people's advice. However, around a quarter of …….. admit to relying on the input of other people to choose what they wear.

2 Check your answers on page 000 and discuss how true the statements are of you personally, and of other people you know.

3 Underline linking expressions within each pair of statements.

KEY LANGUAGE
Linking expressions
▶ p. 000, ex. 00

Focus on speaking 1 *Discussing likes and dislikes; consumer topics*

Part 1: Interview

EXAM BRIEFING **Speaking: Interview Part 1**

Questions about likes and dislikes are very common in Part 1, so it's important to know a variety of expressions to describe your feelings. It may be useful to start with a brief introduction to help you give a more specific answer. If you need to give a negative opinion, it's a good idea to begin with a softening phrase.

1 Study the *Useful language*, notice the introduction and softening phrases.

Useful language

Introduction
It depends what kind of … / what you mean by …

Likes
I (quite/really) enjoy/I don't mind …
The *(kind of)* … I enjoy most is/are … because …
I find … *(very/extremely/really)* interesting/relaxing/enjoyable, etc.

Softening phrases
To be honest, … I'm afraid, …, Actually …

Dislikes
I don't *(really)* like/enjoy … *(very much/at all)*
I'm not *(very/all that)* keen on …
I find …*(rather/really)* boring/frustrating/annoying, etc.

2 Practise answering the following Part 1 questions with a partner. Remember to use expressions from the *Useful language* above.

- How do you feel about shopping in general?
- What is your least favourite kind of shopping?
- Do you prefer shopping alone or with someone else?
- What kind of shopping do you do on the Internet?

Part 3: Discussion

3 Discuss the following questions. Try to present two sides of the argument using the expressions below. Use introductory sentences or softening phrases as appropriate.

1 Are large out-of-town hypermarkets and shopping malls a good thing?
2 Do you think people are too materialistic these days?
3 Is there too much advertising on TV?

TIP Answer questions as fully as possible by giving reasons for opinions and mentioning examples from your experience.

Useful language
On the whole … / Generally speaking … (I think) …
(But) **On the other hand** …

Focus on reading *Retail therapy*

EXAM BRIEFING

One challenge of the Reading paper is dealing with a large amount of text in a short time. A single passage may be up to 900 words long, and the three passages together contain 2,250–2,700 words. At least one passage will put forward a detailed, logical argument, which needs careful analysis.

Academic reading: tackling long texts
- Begin by forming a general picture of the content and how it is organised.
- Study the questions to find out what information is needed.
- Scan the text to locate the relevant section, then read closely for detail.

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SAMPLING A TEXT

1 **Sampling is a way of forming a general picture of a text. The main topic is usually set out in the first paragraph, and sub-topics are often made clear in the first sentence of each paragraph, so these are good places to begin.**

Read the first paragraph of the text on page 77, and the first sentence of each of the following paragraphs. Then decide which answer (A–D) best describes the overall topic.

A A history of the marketing industry
B Effective sales techniques for the retail industry
C Information on credit card debt and how to avoid it
D Research findings that can help us reduce our spending

EXAM PRACTICE
Short answer questions

TASK APPROACH

2 **Read paragraphs 1–4 of the text on page 00 and answer Questions 1–3 below.**

- Check the **instructions** to find how many words you can write.
- Underline **key words in** the questions.
- Use **skimming skills** to find the relevant section of text and **scanning skills** to locate the information you need. The answers are in text order.

Questions 1–3
Answer the questions below.
Choose ***NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS*** *from the passage for each answer.*

1 What aspect of shopping causes dopamine to be released?
2 What research method did Gregory Berns use in his work?
3 Which institution was responsible for a report on shoppers' attitudes to credit cards?

Summary completion

TASK APPROACH

3 **This task was introduced in Unit 5. In this second type, you have to choose answers from a box of options. Read the advice for this task below.**

- Study each gap and think about the part of speech that is missing, eg. noun, verb, adjective, etc. This will help you narrow the choice.
- Search the list of options for words of that kind, and try them in the space.
- Locate the relevant part of the text and re-read carefully, looking for parallel expressions which help identify the correct answer.

KEY LANGUAGE
Grammatical terms
▶ p. 00, ex. 1

4 **Before you start the exam task, do this practice exercise.**

a **Decide what part of speech is missing in each space in the text on page 71. Choose from the list below and say what clues helped you decide.**

Ns (noun singular)	**V** (plain verb)
Npl (noun plural)	**V+*-ing*** (*-ing* form, N or V)
Number	**V+-s** (3rd person singular)
	V *-ed* (past)

b **Identify suitable words from the box and choose the best answer in each case.**

administered	*living*	*scientists*	*8.9 %*
condition	*recognize*	*seek*	
consumers	*resisting*	*shopaholic*	

1 ……. have developed a new test which aims to tell if you are a **2** ……. . The test is designed to identify **3** ……. who regularly spend money on items, regardless of need, and who have difficulty in **4** ……. the impulse to buy. This **5** ……. is known as compulsive buying. When the test was **6** …….to a sample of 550 university staff members, the results revealed that nearly **7** ……. would be considered compulsive buyers. The authors concluded that we are **8**……. in a consumption-orientated society and people need to be educated to **9** ……. if compulsive buying is a problem in their lives so that they can **10** ……. help.

5 **Now do the exam task. If necessary, remind yourself about the general Task Advice on page 53 and the specific advice on page 70 before you begin.**

Questions 4–12
Complete the summary using the list of words, ***A–Q****, below.*

Many studies into the psychology of shopping have been carried out, not only by experts in **4** …… like Jennifer Argo, but also by **5** …… like Gregory Berns, and the results can be found in various **6** ……and professional journals. Among other things, researchers have looked at the difference between shopping alone or with **7** …… , and at the effect of shopping when you have **8** …… problems. Much of this research into shopping is **9** …… by the marketing industry, in order to discover how to **10** …… consumers to buy more and more products they don't need. **11** …… , it is also possible to use the same research to help people to control their **12** ……

A *academic*	**G** *funded*	**M** *psychologists*
B *additionally*	**H** *make*	**N** *retailers*
C *aimed*	**I** *marketing*	**O** *scientists*
D *companion*	**J** *money*	**P** *spending*
E *encourage*	**K** *others*	**Q** *time*
F *fortunately*	**L** *popular*	

Matching

REMINDERS

6 **This task was introduced in Unit 3. Study the following reminders.**

- Scan the text and underline the points to match in the text (in this case journals).
- Underline key words in the questions.
- Study the relevant sections of the text, looking for parallel expressions.

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Questions 13–17
*Look at the following advice on how to avoid overspending when shopping (Questions **13–17**), based on research published in a number of journals (**A–D**).*
Match each piece of advice with the correct journal. NB You may use any letter more than once.

13 Use only cash as a method of payment for goods.
14 Avoid shopping in the company of other people.
15 Try to resist the attraction of designer brands.
16 Be particularly cautious if you have financial problems.
17 Take time to consider before making a purchase.

A The Journal of Consumer Research
B The Journal of Experimental Psychology: Applied
C The Journal of Advertising Research
D Behavioural Research Therapy

True/False/Not Given

TASK APPROACH

7 Read the following advice on choosing between No/False and Not Given answers.

- A No/False statement says the **opposite** to information in the passage. You can therefore make a No/False statement true by inserting *no* or *not*.
- There is **no information** in the passage to say whether a Not Given statement is true or false. Even if you know the information is true, you must choose Not Given if there is no evidence in the passage.

TIP Answers to True/False/Not Given questions are in passage order.

8 Read paragraph 8 again carefully, then say which of each pair of statements is False and which Not Given.

1a 90% of the world's population lives on less than $2 a day.
1b Purchasing power of $2 a day is defined as the international poverty line.
2a The term 'satisficing' comes from a combination of the words 'satisfy' and 'suffice'.
2b The term 'satisficing' was invented by the author of the article.

Questions 18–22
Do the following statements agree with information given in the passage?
Write:

TRUE	*if the statement agrees with the information*
FALSE	*if the statement contradicts with the information*
NOT GIVEN	*if there is no information on this*

18 Shoppers' first concern when buying something is whether it is good value or not.
19 Wendy Liu holds the position of Assistant Professor of Marketing.
20 After buying a product, the level of dopamine in the body increases rapidly.
21 The 'pain of paying' is likely to be experienced when using a credit card.
22 People with more than one credit card are more likely to get into debt.

Retail therapy

1 The marketing industry has spent billions of dollars scientifically perfecting ways to appeal to shoppers' primitive brain responses of instinct and emotion so that they buy products which their reasoning higher brain knows that they don't need or particularly want. The good news is that much of this research can be turned on its head, enabling us to control our instincts and spend less.
2 To take a simple example: pausing briefly between choosing something and taking it to the checkout can dramatically increase the chance of resisting the urge to buy, according to a study in the Journal of Consumer Research. Wendy Liu, of the University of California, Los Angeles, ran four tests where she interrupted people's purchasing. She found that a break in the buying process changed their priorities. Before the interruption, shoppers focused on whether the object they desired was a bargain, whereas after the interruption, they returned with a far more objective, higher-brained view, which questioned whether they really wanted the item at all.
3 The need to cool off our consumer brains is reinforced by Gregory Berns, a neuroscientist at Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia. His brain scan studies show how the feelgood chemical dopamine is released in waves as shoppers see a product and consider buying it. However, it is only the anticipation, rather than the buying, that releases the chemical. Once an item has been purchased, the chemical high dissipates rapidly, often leaving a sense of regret. In fact, with practice it is possible to stimulate the dopamine release merely by window-shopping, without making any purchase.
4 Another area of enquiry has been methods of payment. Four studies on 330 people in the *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Applied* confirm the suspicion that it's much easier to spend money in the form of a credit card. The New York University-led report concludes that we regard anything but hard cash as 'play money' and that real currency is the only thing that gives you the 'pain of paying'. Credit cards might not only anaesthetise retail pain, they may also create a physical craving to get the dopamine high from spending, according to Professor Drazen Prelec, a psychologist at the Massachusetts Institute of technology. He cautions that when you see and touch the plastic it is just like smelling biscuits baking when you are hungry. You feel compelled to spend in order to satisfy the craving.
5 Researchers have also looked at the phenomenon of designer brands. These have proved highly effective at persuading people to spend more money on 'special' goods which are actually only of average quality. Such brands are painstakingly developed to encourage people to identify with them, to believe, in effect, that their favourite labels have exactly the same human values as they do. A study in the Journal of Advertising Research, which investigated this area, reveals how our primitive brains are built to relate to other people and animals – and this way of relating attaches to inanimate objects too.
6 One aspect of shopping psychology studied by Jennifer Argo, an associate professor of marketing at Alberta University, arose from personal experience. Argo realised that whenever she went shopping with a friend, she changed her habits, choosing costlier foods and clothes. She subsequently employed mystery shoppers to stand by a rack of batteries, and found that their mere presence made the battery buyers pick the most expensive brand. If no one was there, they chose cheaply. The result, published in The Journal of Consumer Research, was consistent in three separate studies. "We will spend more money in order to maintain our self image in front of other people," she says. One answer, according to a separate study, may be to shop with relatives: apparently we buy fewer things when accompanied by family members.
7 A final point of potential interest is that we are more liable to spend when in financial difficulty: under stress we can feel driven to hoard, according to a study of students in Behavioural Research Therapy. This residual instinct can help to explain how sales campaigns may work by collectively preying on our deepest insecurities – you're not good enough, no one likes you.
8 The fact is that we need to look wider, to the global neighbourhood, remembering that about half of humanity lives on less than $2 a day according to UN statistics. Meanwhile, a fifth of the earth's people buy nearly 90 percent of all the consumer goods. 'Satisficing', a term originally from the social sciences, is the sensible alternative to maximising. When you satisfice, you don't let an impossible search for the perfect option destroy your enjoyment of the merely satisfactory. We have an opportunity to decide that life in the developed world today, with its unprecedented levels of healthcare, comfort and personal safety, is probably as good as it will get, and there is no need to try buying any more contentment. We just need to convince our primitive brains of this.

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DEALING WITH UNKNOWN VOCABULARY

KEY LANGUAGE
Talking about research
e.g. According to a study …
▶ p. 000, ex. 12

Remember these points:

- you are not expected to understand every word in a text.
- if a word is not important to understanding, ignore it!
- if a word is important to understanding, try to guess the general meaning.

9 **Find and underline two examples of the word 'craving' in paragraph 4. This word is helpful to general understanding and it's possible to work out the meaning. What information about the word is given? What do you think it means?**

10 **Look at the way the expressions below are used in context and try to guess the general meaning.**

1 to turn something on its head (paragraph 1)
2 to dissipate (2)
3 to compel (4)
4 inanimate (5)
5 liable (7)

Focus on vocabulary *Business and Economics*

TOPIC VOCABULARY

Noun + noun combinations, e.g. *designer brand, self image*
▶ p. 000, ex. 13

1 **Categorise the following words and phrases according to whether they relate mainly to:**

A Types of business **B** Success and failure in business **C** Economics

Check any meanings you're not sure of.

bankruptcy currency debt gross national product
inflation loss manufacturer multinational (corporation)
profit recession retailer service industry

2 **Complete the following sentences with words from the list above, using singular or plural forms as necessary.**

1 BMW is a leading car ….. in Germany
2 It is often cheaper to buy goods on-line rather than from a high street …..
3 The production of food is now dominated by huge ….. like McDonalds.
4 The city has attracted a large number of ….. such as insurance.
5 There was high … during the 70s and prices increased rapidly.
6 The …. of Japan is the yen.
7 One in ten people only pay off their credit card ….. by the minimum amount each month.
8 The poor economic situation has led to an increase in companies facing …

PRONUNCIATION: SOUNDS

3 **The letter 'o' can be pronounced in several ways. Put the following words under the correct heading according to the way the letter 'o' is pronounced.**

/ ɒ / e.g. hot	/ əʊ / e.g. note	ʌ / e.g. son

among company done flow front gone gross
home know loss money odd own profit wrong

Focus on speaking 2 *Describing objects*

Part 2: Long turn

1 **In some Part 2 tasks you need to describe an object. If so, think about the key aspects: size and shape, colour, what it's made of and how the object is used.**

Complete the following descriptions and say what the objects are.

A These are long thin sticks about 25 centimetres long, and they come in pairs. They're made of wood, plastic or ivory and they sometimes have beautiful decorations on them. You hold them both in one hand and they're used for …

B This is an extremely thin piece of metal about four centimetres long. It's got a hole in one end and the other end is pointed and sharp. It's used for …

C This is a flattish object which is usually square or rectangular in shape and made of plastic. There are buttons with numbers and mathematical symbols on them on top, and also a small clear window. You use it for …

A

B

C

D

E

2 **Practise describing objects A–E on the right. Before you begin, study the *Useful language* below.**

Useful language
It's a thing/a gadget/a device you use for … *(+-ing)* (purpose)
It looks (a bit) like … . (appearance)
It's (roughly/sort of) square/rectangular/circular, etc. (shape)
It's made of … (material); *It's soft/hard* (texture); *It's red, etc.* (colour)

3 **Work in pairs to describe objects and see if your partner can identify them.**

Student A: Turn to page 000. **Student B:** Turn to page 000.

EXAM PRACTICE

4 **Work in pairs.**

1 Read the topic card below and think of a suitable possession to describe. Notice that describing appearance is only one part of the task, so you don't need to go into a lot of detail.
2 Spend a few moments making brief notes in the form of a mindplan.
3 Take it in turns to describe your chosen possession. You should try to keep talking for two minutes, without interruption. Keep an eye on the time while your partner is speaking and let them know when their time is up.

TIP: You don't need to know the exact word for something as long as you can describe it clearly.

Describe a personal possession which means a lot to you.
You should say:
what the item is
what it looks like
where you keep it
and explain why it's important to you.

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