

## Topic 7 CONSUMERISM – LIVING IN A MATERIAL WORLD

1 Complete the text using vocabulary from topic 7.

### Consumerism

Perhaps Brad Pitt's character Tyler Durden said it best in the film *Fight Club* when he said "Advertising has us chasing cars and clothes, working jobs we hate so we can buy shit we don't need." As the quote suggests, consumerism has become about more than simply shopping. In our throwaway society we no longer simply buy the things we need, but we have become compulsive shoppers in a desire-based economy.

Whether people are shopping for gadgets or clothes, online or in enormous shopping malls, we are spending more of our hard-earned money and free time standing in queues and checking price tags for bargains to take to our already full homes. In fact, people are buying so much stuff that they do not have any space for it, which in turn has led to a boom in the storage industry as we look for space to store our possessions.

But some people are turning their back on this way of life and are embarking on a life of deliberately spending less money and even adopting minimalism. This is not just a way of keeping tabs on what they spend, but a conscious decision to not worship brands and things, and instead to recognise that other things in life are more important. In fact, anti-consumerism and minimalist movements have become increasingly influential as more and more people try to follow in their footsteps and simplify their lives.

Of course, it is not only the consumers that have decisions to make, but also the companies themselves. In a world of dwindling resources and space, they have a responsibility to address the issue of sustainability and not produce with harmful materials, for example. Furthermore, they have the power to influence how people consume and more companies are promoting a circular economy whereby products are recycled and not discarded.

But not all companies are interested in this. Why should they risk harming our brand loyalty when they can cash in on our need to always have the newest, fastest and cheapest things? Whichever way you look at it, our relationship with the material things in our life is a complex one, but the bottom-line is that the things you own can end up owning you.

**2 Match the words on the left (1-8) with their synonyms on the right (A-H).**

D	1	compulsive	A	coupon
A	2	voucher	B	promise
E	3	to maintain something	C	to repair
G	4	to worship	D	obsessive
B	5	pledge	E	to look after something
C	6	to mend	F	deceptive
H	7	consent	G	to idolize
F	8	misleading	H	permission

**3 Match the words on the left (1-8) with their definitions on the right (A-H).**

G	1	to strive towards something	A	what somebody leaves behind
D	2	to sue somebody	B	a mess-up
B	3	calamity	C	with intention
A	4	legacy	D	to bring legal charges against somebody
C	5	deliberately	E	to go out of business
E	6	to go bust	F	a sudden insight into the reality of something
H	7	to be funded by	G	to try hard to achieve something
F	8	epiphany	H	to be supported financially

**4 Fill in the gaps.**

- The notes taking during a meeting are known as the minutes.
- Your outlook is your mental attitude.
- Offensive language should be banned from schools.
- A gadget is another name for an electronic device.
- Somebody who wants to buy things at a low price is a bargain hunter.
- A chain of negative circumstances is a vicious cycle.
- If you give something away, you donate it.
- Apple* customers are said to have a very high brand loyalty.

**5 What is it in German?**

- bargain Schnäppchen
- temptation Versuchung
- undisputed unumstritten
- to embark on etw. beginnen
- dwindling resources abnehmende Ressourcen
- disgrace Schande
- groundbreaking bahnbrechend
- launch Markteinführung