

Passage 1

Online and in-store shopping

- 1 The internet has brought about a revolution in many aspects of our daily lives, with social media, internet banking and changes to the way education is carried out in our classrooms. Another area of change caused by the internet revolution is in the way people shop; they now have a choice between online and in-store shopping.

- 2 One advantage of online shopping is that purchases are delivered directly to your door and so you don't have to carry goods, which might be heavy, through town or on a bus or train. Conventional shops have to pay for things like shelving units and décor, and sometimes elaborate displays, whereas online items are stored in basic out-of-town warehouses with much lower overhead costs. This means that goods purchased online are often cheaper than those bought in shops. Apart from the money saved on the actual goods, online shoppers make further savings as they don't have to pay to travel to shopping centres – either for fuel or public transport – or for the coffee or lunch they might have once they get there. Moreover, online shoppers are not at the mercy of the elements, and don't get caught in the rain or burned by the sun, which often happens to those who visit high street shops or markets.

- 3 Because there is no need to leave your home to shop online, it is much quicker than in-store shopping; the weekly groceries for an entire family can be bought in a matter of minutes. This means that time is freed up for people to do more interesting things. After all, wandering around a supermarket is a very boring activity. Instead of grocery shopping together, families can spend their precious time at weekends or in the evenings going to a park, beach or gallery.

- 4 There is nothing more disappointing than finding that a particular item in a store is out of stock or unavailable in the correct size. However, online shoppers know immediately if the desired article is available and can quickly make alternative arrangements if it isn't. People who shop in stores are restricted to particular opening hours, but the internet is always open for business. If you want to order your groceries or that new jacket in the middle of the night or on a public holiday, you are free to do so!

- 5 On the other hand, many people find that in-store shopping reduces stress and is therefore relaxing, providing 'retail therapy', as it is called. It may add to the overall cost of shopping to stop for coffee in town, but many people like to incorporate their coffee break at the shops with catching up with friends, and so it can be seen that shopping in this way has a social dimension. Many shoppers find that, although some reductions are made on items for sale online, more discounts are available in shops. It is really satisfying and even thrilling to search through discounted items looking for a bargain.

- 6 In-store shopping nowadays can be carried out in huge, bright malls buzzing with activity, with everything under one roof. Although it can be argued that the internet also has everything under one roof, the overall experience of a shopping mall is much more interactive than sitting silently in front of a computer screen placing an order. In-store shopping allows us to judge items for sale at close quarters: perfumes can be smelled, clothes can be tried on, fabrics can be seen and felt.

- 7 Goods purchased in-store are instantly available, so that consumers don't have to stay at home waiting for deliveries, or rely on delivery companies which might let them down. Shops, particularly when run by small or independent retailers, add character and local colour to towns, and attract visitors, who in turn generate income for local areas by purchasing things. Conversely, the closure of such shops because they can't compete with online shopping detracts from the appearance of towns and can turn them into unattractive wildernesses. Moreover, people are needed to work in shops and so having a lively town full of busy shoppers provides employment for local people and is yet another advantage of in-store shopping.

Passage 2
Jennifer

- 1 As some last-minute paperwork had to be dealt with, Jennifer was late getting away from the office, which upset her as this was the much-anticipated day when her daughter Anna was coming home from university for the long vacation. Jennifer's boss was apologetic, but he was adamant that she should do the extra task, as the paperwork had to be completed that evening in time for the next morning's post. 5
- 2 At long last, the work done, Jennifer rushed to the office car park and jumped into her car. The rain was pouring down and it was already dark; even worse, the high wind buffeted Jennifer's little car, almost as if it were trying to force her off the road. She headed anxiously in the direction of the motorway which would take her to the airport. Her shoulders hunched up to her ears with tension, she peered out through the gaps created by the windscreen wipers as they swished quickly and rhythmically back and forth. Her heart raced with the effort of driving in such difficult conditions, but also at the thought of seeing Anna after her absence of almost a year. Jennifer thought yet again of her plans for Anna's vacation: their visits to family members; their invitations to friends to share dinner with them; their shopping trips ... Jennifer relaxed a little. 10 15
- 3 Suddenly the brake lights of the car in front glowed red as its driver slowed down, and Jennifer had no alternative but to do the same. Signs by the side of the motorway depicting matchstick-figure workmen warned of roadworks ahead. Jennifer sighed in exasperation, while realising that endurance and good humour were her best options. 'Maybe it won't take much longer,' she thought, but after the car had crawled along for half a kilometre, and flashing orange lights confirmed the need for caution, she switched on the car radio to listen to some calming music. But, when the radio announcer gave his audience a time check, her anxiety increased and she hastily chose silence again. The queue of traffic edged almost imperceptibly forward. 20
- 4 Sooner than Jennifer had expected, a cluster of huge hotels, like shiny white teeth, rose against the skyline, indicating that she was approaching the airport. She took the appropriate exit from the motorway and headed for the airport car park. It appeared to be full, and driving up and down each lane looking for a space shaved even more precious minutes off her schedule, until, just as she was beginning to despair, her mission was accomplished. 25
- 5 The arrivals hall was busy. Jennifer made her way through a huddle of taxi-drivers who were noisily trying to attract prospective passengers, and drivers of hotel cars holding up cards on which were displayed the names of arriving guests. An extended family of at least 30 people, all wearing traditional dress in a blaze of colours, was gathered under the electronic board which displayed details of flight arrivals. Jennifer wove through this group, craning her neck to study the board. She felt her heart miss a beat at the absence of a reference to Anna's flight, before realising she was looking at information about domestic and not international flights. She half-walked, half-ran, in the direction of international arrivals. 'How could I be so stupid?' she berated herself. To her relief, the new arrivals board told her that Anna's plane, having been delayed by an hour, had just landed. 30 35
- 6 Jennifer picked a spot which gave her an excellent view of the automatic doors through which her daughter would emerge once she had cleared immigration and collected her luggage. At first the doors hissed open only occasionally as an irregular trickle of people came through. Airport meetings can be so emotional, thought Jennifer, as passengers arrived, their eyes scrutinising the crowd, before lighting up with joy as they recognised their loved ones. Children fell over themselves as they rushed towards grandparents; fathers and sons shook hands; friends embraced. The doors were opening more frequently now, releasing a steadier stream of people. And suddenly, at last, there she was – Anna herself! 'Are you all right, Mum?' she asked anxiously, noticing her mother's flustered expression. 'How was your journey?' 40 45
- 7 'Oh, absolutely fine,' laughed Jennifer. 'And look what I got at the end of it!' 50

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