



General instructions:

- Answer the following five questions in ENGLISH after carefully reading the text: 1) True/False; 2) Comprehension questions and written production; 3) Vocabulary; 4) Communicative use of language; and 5) Writing task.
- The questions or sections that offer choices are as follows: *Question 2*: Three options are provided (you must choose two), *Question 3*: Four items are provided (you must choose three), *Question 5*: Two options are provided (you must choose one).
- If you answer more options than required, only the first ones will be corrected, and the rest will be disregarded.
- The use of a dictionary or any other educational resource is not allowed to answer questions related to the given text.
- DURATION OF THE TEST: 90 minutes; MAXIMUM SCORE: 10 points.

How I beat overwhelm: I gave up online clothes shopping – and gained money, time and mental energy

There was a time when, in order to acquire a new item of clothing – say, a dress – you had to either inherit it from a family member or travel to a store. Now, you can buy one in under two minutes from your couch.

Online shopping should have made my life easier. Being able to purchase from home or on my commute should have freed up my time and energy. It should have also made me a more ethical, conscious consumer. I could use my phone to shop secondhand or from sustainable brands. Instead, the irresistible allure of cute clothes consumed my thoughts and pulled me into the endless cycle of scrolling, spending, and mounting credit card debt. I used to love scrolling through pages of models who looked nothing like me, wearing pieces I could never afford or pull off. This was a way to kill time and escape. Waiting for a friend at a restaurant? Time to hunt for wide-leg jeans. Tough day at work? Time to search for a blazer that would make me appear competent. Bad date? Buy a new skirt. It was an expensive, time-consuming coping mechanism. I spent money I did not have and, although sometimes the clothes were great, often they were not quite right. Even if they did not fit, or I hated them, I never returned them because the whole process felt too daunting. Printing a return label? Going all the way to the post office? I have but one wild and precious life to live! And besides, what if in the next couple of years my body and personality completely changed and these clothes became perfect for me? It gave me the nagging sense that I was one purchase away from becoming the person I was supposed to be. Surely, once I found the exact right sweater dress or pair of boots, everything would fall into place. The hunt for myself was constant – and exhausting.

Then, a few years ago, out of financial necessity, I decided to stop. From now on, I would shop only in person and I would only buy clothes I really, truly loved on me – as they were, and as I was. Almost immediately, I found myself with a lot more free time and mental energy. Shopping for clothes in person took more effort, but it was a contained activity. Over time, I felt better about myself. I also saved money. Now, when I start to feel the urge to spend two hours shopping for clothes on my phone, I try to figure out what is behind that impulse: sometimes I am bored; sometimes I am feeling insecure. Most of the time, this thought is enough to stop the intense urge to scroll.

Adapted from Aggeler, Madeleine. (2024, December 31). *The Guardian*.



1. Indicate whether the following statements are TRUE or FALSE. Explain WHY by quoting directly from the text. NO marks are given for only saying TRUE or FALSE. Answer ALL the questions (from a to d). (2 points)

a) Shopping for clothes online from the comfort of your home can take less than two minutes. (0.5)

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b) The author believed that online shopping would make her a more ethical consumer. (0.5)

.....

c) After deciding to stop shopping online, the author ended up with almost no free time and mental energy. (0.5)

.....

d) The author decided to stop shopping online due to financial reasons. (0.5)

.....

2. In your own words and based on the ideas from the text, answer TWO of the following three questions (a, b, or c). NO marks are given for personal opinions or responses copied directly from the text. (2 points)

a) What impact did online shopping have on the author's finances and emotional well-being?

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b) Why did the author choose not to return the clothes she bought online?

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c) What are some of the emotions or circumstances that might explain the author's impulse to shop online?

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3. Find words or phrases in the text that have the same meaning as the ones below. Choose THREE out of the four items provided (from a to d). In the case of verbs, ONLY infinitive forms will be accepted (1.5 points):

a) To suddenly become clear and understandable, especially after a period of confusion or difficulty.

.....

b) The daily journey a person makes when travelling regularly by bus, train, car, etc., from home to work and vice versa.

.....

c) A strong desire or impulse to do something.

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d) Intimidating or frightening in a way that makes you feel less confident or overwhelmed.

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4. Choose the correct or most suitable option (A, B, C, or D) for each question. Indicate your choice clearly by circling the letter (A, B, C, or D). Answer ALL the questions (from 4.1 to 4.3). (1.5 points)

4.1) A friend (A) asks B for advice about managing stress. A says, 'I sometimes browse online stores when I feel overwhelmed'. B responds:

- A) 'I was also feeling anxious after the meeting, so I went for a walk'.
- B) 'That's a good way to unwind, but don't overspend!'
- C) 'Should we buy John a present for his birthday then?'
- D) 'All of the above could work, depending on the person'.

4.2) Two coworkers (A and B) are discussing deals on an online shopping platform. A says, 'I found this platform with amazing discounts!' B replies:

- A) 'That's interesting! What kind of offers do they have?'
- B) 'Do you think the new manager will approve?'
- C) 'It's always hard to find a parking space near the platform'.
- D) 'Well, it depends on its quality'.

4.3) Two friends are chatting about their shopping experiences. One of them says, 'I've been shopping all day, so _____'.

- A) I can't break up the deal.
- B) I hope you found some great offers!
- C) I've run out of cash.
- D) It's time you made another purchase.

Note: To be completed by raters only

Writing Assessment Criteria:

APPROPRIATENESS AND COHESION						
ITEMS	VERY POOR (0 points)	POOR (0.1-0.15)	ADEQUATE (0.2-0.3)	VERY GOOD (0.35-0.45)	EXCELLENT (0.5 points)	POINTS
Task fulfilment						--- / 0.5
Organization						--- / 0.5
Cohesion and Coherence						--- / 0.5
EXPRESSION						
ITEMS	VERY POOR (0 points)	POOR (0.1-0.15)	ADEQUATE (0.2-0.3)	VERY GOOD (0.35-0.45)	EXCELLENT (0.5 points)	POINTS
Grammatical Range						--- / 0.5
Vocabulary						--- / 0.5
Spelling and Punctuation						--- / 0.5
TOTAL SCORE:						--- / 3



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