

# Christmas shopping

As Christmas approaches, a recent report reveals that more and more people are doing their shopping online. Will Christmas this year be a success for high street retailers?

1 Which speaker is most like you? Explain your answer to a partner.

(A) "I did my Christmas shopping ages ago!"

(B) "I always shop at the last minute."

(C) "I do most of my Christmas shopping online!"

(D) "We've given up buying Christmas presents completely!"

2 Guess the answers in this list of statistics from a recent report. Check your answers in paragraph 2 of the article.

**Report: Shopping online (UK)**

- a) 5% / 15% / 25% / 35% of people in the UK prefer to do their Christmas shopping online
- b) 20% / 30% / 40% / 50% of people will do some of their Christmas shopping online

(Based on research by Mintel)

## Online shopping

The British certainly like to spend money on Christmas presents – figures suggest they spend as much as £600 on gifts, double that for people in Germany and France. It seems only the Americans spend more! Perhaps that's also because of the British love for 'debt', and the use of loans and credit cards at Christmas time.

A new survey of 1,000 people in the UK has revealed that 15% of people actually prefer to do their Christmas shopping online. This is up 5% on last year's figures. Almost 40% of people will buy some of their gifts online – nearly twice as many as five years ago. Music CDs, DVDs and computer games are among the most popular items chosen on the web.

What about buying presents for those people who 'have everything'? A new market seems to have emerged in 'once-in-a-lifetime' books. In 2000, the German publisher *Taschen*

published the largest bound book of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. At 500mm by 700mm, it comes with it's own display table. The original price was £1,500 ... rather expensive for most of us. How about sushi plates from Tokyo? Or clothes from Florence? The web has enabled us to view the world as a giant shopping bazaar – despite shipping costs and occasional extra charges such as customs duties and tax.

Meanwhile, out on the High street, stores are hoping for a late surge in shoppers this year because Christmas Eve falls on a Saturday. Many people expect to be still doing their Christmas shopping on the Saturday. Last year, some shops started their sales before Christmas in a desperate bid to encourage people to spend. For many, this time of year has become too commercial. As more shoppers avoid queues by shopping online, will Christmas 2005 be a busy time for retailers?

3 Now read the whole article. Which presents are mentioned? Does anything in the article surprise you?

4 Complete the tables below. Mark the word stress. Use some of the words to create sentences about your company.

NOUN	VERB
survey	(a)
product	(b)
(c)	to retail
bid	(d)

NOUN	VERB
tax	(e)
loan	(f)
(g)	to sell
surge	(h)

NOUN	VERB
(i)	to buy
market	(j)
charge	(k)
price	(l)

5 Discuss the following questions in small groups. Be ready to report your ideas to the class.

- (a) What would be your ideal Christmas present?
- (b) What would you buy for 'the person who has everything'?
- (c) Do you think that nowadays Christmas is too commercial? Justify your answer.