

## Profit ... or loss?

### Level

Pre-intermediate and above

### Tasks

Considering where students would buy a book: in a bookshop, a supermarket or online

Completing two company fact boxes by scanning an article

Reading and summarising the article

Finding the 'odd one out' from a list of possible collocations

Discussing issues arising from the article

### How to use the lesson

- 1 Tell the students the title of the next book **you** are going to buy and ask them to tell you the next book **they** are going to buy. Hand out the worksheet and look at the question: 'If you wanted to buy a book, where would you go?' Ask students to choose the answer that they most agree with and compare with a partner. Elicit some answers and write on the board in a grid the number of (a)'s, (b)'s and (c)'s. Tell students the lesson will look at two companies famous for selling books.
- 2 Ask students to read the company profiles and complete the missing information by scanning the article.

#### Answers

|                          |                         |  |                                   |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|--|-----------------------------------|
| <i><b>W.H. Smith</b></i> | <i>Founded in: 1848</i> | <i>Annual pre-tax loss: £135 million</i>   | <i>Number of stores: over 670</i> |
| <i><b>Amazon</b></i>     | <i>Founded in: 1995</i> | <i>Third quarter profits: \$54 million</i> | <i>Company HQ: Seattle, US</i>    |

- 3 Ask students to read the text again and summarise what is happening to both companies. What about supermarkets? How are Borders and Waterstones marketing their books online?
- 4 Write some collocations from the article (pre-tax loss / fierce competition) on the board and check that students are familiar with this feature of English e.g. word partnerships. Tell them that in each of the following exercises, one word does NOT collocate with the word at the end. If time, ask students to generate example sentences related to their own company or a competitor using some of these collocations.

#### Answers

(1) – (c) high      (2) – (d) city      (3) – (c) thin      (4) – (e) tax

- 5 Ask students to work in groups to discuss their answers to the questions. Monitor the discussion. Ask the groups to report their ideas to the class, then hold a class feedback session.

### Related websites

Send your students to these websites, or just take a look yourself.

<http://www.whsmithplc.com/grp/welcome.htm>

<http://www.amazon.com>

<http://digital.library.upenn.edu/books/>