

Try not to look at this until you've done all the exercises that go with the listening.

### Spend less live more

Richard: It's that time of the year when many people all over the world are thinking about Christmas, and of course buying presents for family and friends. However, there is an alternative and for this week's podcastsineenglish.com we're talking about Buy Nothing Day. So Jackie, what is Buy Nothing Day?

Jackie: Well, it's the idea that we live in um... we live in a very consumer driven society nowadays. You know in the past we bought things that we needed, but now we buy loads of things we don't need and... or things that we don't want.

Richard: Yes, everybody's buying things all the time and I suppose that's especially true er... near Christmas, is it?

Jackie: Well, yes as you... as you said at the beginning this time of the year, is when many people are out shopping and buying more things than... than normal. The organisers of Buy Nothing Day think shopping has got out of hand and it's all a waste of time and money. The day itself depends on the country. In North er... North America, where Buy Nothing Day started, the Friday after Thanksgiving is famous for being a... a wild shopping frenzy. In Europe and Asia the following Saturday, the last Saturday in November, has highest sales for the year cos people are buying things for Christmas.

Richard: Ok, so what exactly happens on Buy Nothing Day in these countries?

Jackie: Well again it depends on... on the country...

Richard: So, so which er... you mentioned a few um... places but which countries actually celebrate the day?

Jackie: Well, um... it, it's celebrated in Canada where it started in 1992 and er... and in the UK um and Asia, in Japan it's big in Japan, but in fact there are well over 60 countries who do something for... for the day.

Richard: Ok great, so what sort of things do they do?

Jackie: Well, one of the main themes is to get people thinking about how much we spend and how stupid this is. It's quite a simple idea: try not to shop for a day, and to ask yourself these questions: Where does all this stuff come from? Where will it go? And why are we buying it? Um... you know aren't there better ways of spending our

time? In Japan, for example, they have this figure called Zenta Claus...

Richard: Who? Zenta Claus? Not Santa Claus then?

Jackie: Yeah, Zenta Claus. He doesn't go around with his reindeers and buy toys for children, he sits and meditates on the negative effects of our consumer culture! So some cities have a person dressed up, um... dressed up as Santa Claus but sitting crossed legged outside a huge shopping mall for example.

Richard: Mmm, I don't know how this Zenta Claus is going to stop people from shopping though.

Jackie: Well, I think it's making people just think about how much they... how much they spend on things. I think a lot of people just buy automatically without thinking about it.

Richard: Ok, it's a good idea but then what's so bad about buying things anyway?

Jackie: Well, the organisers say that... that er... people in money-rich countries make up 20% of the world population but they're the ones who consume over 86% of the earth's natural resources, and cause most of the environmental damage. And I think the idea, people might think 'Oh actually I don't think it's that difficult not to buy anything for a day' but I think it's actually more difficult than you realise.

Richard: Yes, I think if you think about it everyday... like today for instance, what did you buy today? And I think someone... everybody must have bought something so it's going to be a little bit difficult but I'll have a go, so when is... when's the next um... Buy Nothing Day, then?

Jackie: Well, in the UK Buy Nothing Day is the last Saturday in November.

Richard: Ok, and I know there's lots of information on the web isn't there...

Jackie: Yes

Richard: ...and I think for this week's podcastsineenglish, are we going to have a webquest?

Jackie: Yes, there'll be a webquest so people who want to find out more information about the day can have a look at the webquest and they'll get more information.

Richard: Great, so that's fantastic. So, for you Jackie no need to buy you a Christmas present!

Jackie: [laughs] I'm not sure about that, Richard!

Richard: Ok, thanks very much, Jackie.

Jackie: Ok