

BLACK FRIDAY

"That happiness is to be attained through limitless material acquisition is denied by every religion and philosophy known to mankind, but is preached incessantly by every American television set."

Robert Neelly Bellah (1927 – 2013), American sociologist

1. Black Friday Discussion

1. What is Black Friday? Do you know the origins of Black Friday? Why is it called Black Friday? What is Cyber Monday?
2. Do shops in your country offer discounts on Black Friday? When did this become a thing?
3. What are the best things that are discounted on Black Friday?
4. Is it a good idea to wait until Black Friday before you buy something? Are there really any genuine bargains on Black Friday?
5. Can you find the best bargains in the shops or online? Why is this?
6. Do people buy any old rubbish on Black Friday just because it's on discount? Why might someone do that?
7. Does shopping make you happy? Why or why not?
8. Does Black Friday undermine the themes of Thanksgiving (an occasion where people give thanks for what they already have)?

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2. Black Friday Vocabulary

- **sale** (noun) – *a period of time in a shop when there are many discounted items.*
- **(to) discount** (verb, noun), **discounted** (adjective) – *to reduce the price of something; a reduced price.*
- **(a) bargain** (noun) – *an item that has a good price.*
- **(a) steal** (noun) – *a price so good it feels like you have stolen the item.*
- **to rip off** (verb) **a rip-off** (noun) – *to charge someone too much money for something; a bad/dishonest price.*
- **crowds** (noun), **crowded** (adjective) – *large numbers of people.*

Using the vocabulary words above, complete the following sentences (remember to use the correct form of the word, e.g. verb conjugation or plural noun):

1. Don't buy tequila from the shops on the high street in Playa del Carmen; the prices are a complete _____.
2. During the holiday season, shopping malls are often bustling with _____ of shoppers looking for gifts.
3. I found a great _____ at the flea market—a vintage dress for only $10.
4. If you use this coupon code, you can get a significant _____ on your online purchase.
5. Paying $500 for this iPhone was a _____, considering it's over $1,000 in the stores.
6. The summer _____ at the department store starts tomorrow, and I'm planning to buy lots of new clothes.

Black Friday vocabulary comprehension questions

1. When is it traditional for shops in your country to have sales on?
2. Do you get excited about the discounts on Black Friday? Why or why not?
3. What is the best bargain you've found on Black Friday (or at another time)?
4. Think of some things you'd like to buy and say what price you would consider a steal for those items.
5. Have you ever been ripped off? What happened?
6. When are the shops in your country crowded? How do you feel about shopping when there are crowds of people?

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3. Video: Black Friday Insanity

You are going to watch a video by WatchMojo called "20 Most Insane Black Friday Incidents."

Watch the video here: https://yourenglishpal.com/blog/esl-conversation-lesson-plan-black-friday/

While you watch the video, answer the following questions:

Multiple choice

1. What were damaged in the stampede in the Thousand Oaks Mall?

   a) anti-theft alarms *b) front windows* *c) goods for sale*

2. Where did people go crazy for towels in 2011?

   a) Georgia *b) California* *c) Texas*

3. How many people were arrested for violence in Tescos in Manchester?

   a) 3 *b) 5* *c) 7*

4. How much did Walmart charge for waffle irons?

   a) $1 *b) $2* *c) $3*

Sentence completion

5. The Del Amo Fashion Center used _____ to drop gift certificates from the ceiling.
6. A _____-year-old man trampled an elderly woman to get a discount TV.
7. At an Adidas store in Vancouver, a man started whipping people with his _____.
8. A marine was stabbed by a man who had attempted to steal a _____.

Short answer

9. At what time did a fight break out in the queue outside a Walmart in Rialto, California?
10. For how long was Gerald Newman, who was arrested for shoplifting a computer game, knocked unconscious by the police?
11. What was a woman at a Walmart in Porter Ranch, California trying to buy when she pepper sprayed other shoppers?
12. What did a pregnant woman who was trampled by other shoppers at a Walmart in Grand Rapids, Michigan lose?

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4. Black Friday Conversation Questions

1. How important is Black Friday for the economy?
2. Have you ever noticed shops increasing their prices before Black Friday? Why might they do this?
3. If shops can still make profits on heavily discounted items, why were the prices so high in the first place?
4. Do you agree with the expression, "a fool and his money are easily parted"? How might this apply to Black Friday?
5. Why did Black Friday begin to spread around the world from 2010? Has Black Friday helped to spread a consumerist ideology around the world? Have you noticed your country's culture changing since 2010 in this respect?
6. Why do people fight each other to buy TVs and other items on Black Friday? Where does this violence come from?
7. Is the promotion of excessive consumerism healthy for society? Why or why not?
8. Why have some people started to promote the Saturday after Black Friday as "Buy Nothing Day"? Do you agree with this? Do you think it achieves anything? Why not have Black Friday as "Buy Nothing Day"?

5. Black Friday Writing Task

Write about your opinion of Black Friday. Try to use some of the vocabulary you learned earlier in this lesson. In your answer, you could include some of the following topics:

- Its origins.
- Its spread around the world.
- Its effect on society.

Alternative exam practice question:

Black Friday is a gentle reminder of the coming future collapse of civilisation and humanity's inevitable descent into a new dark age. Do you agree or disagree with this statement?

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