

Background

Comparing prices

A _____
 Most people are spending less at the moment. We are saving money because the future of the economy is uncertain. But there are some things you have to buy, so what do you do? My advice is to do some research first. The good news is that there are now lots of price comparison websites, so you can compare the price of nearly everything and choose the best option.

B _____
 There are two types of price comparison websites. First of all, there are websites with information on suppliers of every product you can think of: *household items, cameras, computers, office supplies, cars, trips, sports equipment, beauty accessories, gardening tools, etc. These sites keep information about prices from different sellers and list products in order of price.

C _____
 The other type of website compares specific products. For example, if you want to buy *contact lenses, then the website LensShopper.com will give you a range of prices. These types of sites are sometimes more difficult to find but the advantage of these *niche websites compared to more general sites is that the information is probably more *accurate. They also give you more information about the product, as well as the price. Another advantage is that a website like LensShopper also has closer contact with the suppliers. If the supplier

knows they are on the website, then they will also offer discounts so they are in the number one position on the website – which is great news for customers.

D _____
 When you are looking for a cheap product, it's important to visit more than one price comparison website. The best prices are often different from one site to another. For example, a consumer finance magazine compared the prices on three different websites for home insurance. The cheapest price was different on each website and the difference was big, for example Gocompare.com gave a *quote of £51. The same insurance was £71 on Confused.com. In some cases, the price on the company's website was lower than on the price comparison website.

E _____
 Comparison websites work in different ways and they take their information from different places. Sometimes, their prices are *estimates and it also depends on how many suppliers they compare. Websites with a wide search of suppliers are going to be more accurate than those without. However, it's impossible for the customer to know. So the best advice is to look at two or three comparison sites *and* check with the supplier before you make a final decision. If you finally decide to buy through the price comparison website, then make sure that the price you see is the real price and not an estimate.

Glossary

**accurate* = correct and true

**contact lenses* = you put them in your eye to see better

**estimate* = what you think is correct (not accurate)

**household items* = products for the house (e.g. a washing machine)

**niche* = something that no one else does. In business, a niche market is a small specialized market.

**a quote* = the price someone says they will charge you

Exercises

1 Discuss as a class.

- 1 When you want a new product, do you compare different brands? What do you compare?
- 2 How important is the price in your final decision? Is it the most important factor?

2 Read the text. These headings are missing from each paragraph. Write the headings next to the correct paragraph in the text. There is one extra incorrect heading.

Compare the websites Shopping for anything and everything
Niche websites Buy the cheapest product
Using price comparison websites Different prices

3 Read the text again and choose the correct answer from a, b, or c.

- 1 What is the writer's best advice?
 - a spend less
 - b save money
 - c compare prices online before you buy
- 2 What are the two types of price comparison websites the writer compares?
 - a websites for suppliers and websites for customers
 - b websites with all types of products and websites with one type
 - c websites with household items and websites with contact lenses
- 3 Why does the writer think niche price comparison websites are better?
 - a They are more accurate.
 - b The suppliers often offer lower prices on these websites.
 - c Both answers a and b.
- 4 Which is true?
 - a You should visit a few websites including the supplier's.
 - b You will find the same price on every website.
 - c The price on the supplier's website is always the cheapest.

4 Complete the sentences with these verbs.

spend offer compare buy save give

- 1 We _____ customers a 10% discount when they spend over \$100.
- 2 I usually _____ some of my money every month and put it in a bank account.
- 3 Can you _____ me your best quote for life insurance, please?
- 4 When you _____ their prices with the supermarket, they are more expensive.
- 5 I have a large family, so I _____ most of my money on food and household items.
- 6 Young people _____ more products online than older people.

5 Look back at the text and choose three words that you could use in your day-to-day work.

6 Complete this sentence so it is true for you. Choose from answers a, b, c, or d.

When you go shopping, you ...

- a compare prices from different suppliers before you buy.
- b go to one shop and pay the price you see?
- c ask for a discount on the price?
- d look in different shops but buy nothing and save your money.

Now compare your answer with the rest of the class. Does the answer depend on the type of product? Explain your answer.