

OXFORD DISCOVER FUTURES 4

Units: 1 and 2

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TASK 1: Questions 1-5

Read the text and questions below. For each question, choose the correct answer A, B, C or D.



Does Christmas Music Make Us Buy Less?

Par. 1 It happens, invariably, in November. Every year around this time, retailers bombard us with Christmas music. But what's the impact of all this holiday music? Given that so many stores completely revamp their December playlist, you'd assume there's some pretty strong evidence suggesting that holiday music lifts sales, or at least improves the quality of shoppers' mood. However, a growing body of evidence disproves this widely held belief.

Par. 2 Given that happy shoppers are likely to spend more, playing Christmas music holds a good deal of intuitive appeal for store owners. The holidays, after all, represent a joyous time. One marked by overdue reunions, fireside kisses and a meaningful exchange of gifts. It's logical to assume that reminding shoppers of the holiday will lift their mood and increase their spending.

Par. 3 But there's a problem with this analysis: the presumption that Christmas music puts shoppers in a good mood. It's simply not true. While some shoppers adore holiday jingles, others find them utterly unbearable. And when the sounds we hear in a retail environment are perceived as unpleasant, we grow irritated and seek to cut our shopping trip short.

Par. 4 Why do many shoppers find Christmas music so irritating? One interesting explanation comes to us from the labs of music researchers. Studies show that the amount of pleasure listeners derive from any particular song tends to follow a pattern—one that's remarkably predictable.

Par. 5 So what does the data tell us about the impact of Christmas music on shoppers? On the one hand, sales peak during the holiday season, which might lead us to infer that Christmas music contributes to more spending. But this is a statistical fallacy, one that conflates correlation with causation. It's the holidays that drive both higher spending and the playing of Christmas music. Using these data to suggest that Christmas music causes greater spending is like saying that increased ice cream consumption in the summer is the reason more people wear shorts. Obviously, it's the rise in temperature that influences consumer decisions on both food and clothing. Mistaken statistical beliefs caused by a failure to truly understand the underlying logic behind data can lead retailers astray.

Par. 6 In a very recent study, shoppers reported being over 20% less likely to shop at stores when Christmas music was playing in the background. One explanation is that holiday music irritates a certain segment of shoppers. But there's another interpretation, one that raises the possibility that Christmas music might backfire even among those who find it enjoyable. It's because people feel that retailers use it to make them think and behave exactly as they want them to, by skilfully deceiving or influencing them. Research shows that when we feel pressured by others to think or act a certain way—as we might when stores pressure us to get in the holiday spirit—we become motivated to reassert our freedom by doing the exact opposite.

Par. 7 Psychologists call it reactance, and it's a phenomenon that explains why pushy salesmen and micromanaging bosses are universally reviled. As humans, we desire the experience of autonomy in our lives, and when that autonomy feels restricted, we instinctively (and often unconsciously) look for ways of reclaiming our independence.

Par. 8 The results suggest that before jumping on the holiday bandwagon, retailers would be wise to first pause and consider the preference of their target customers. What would elevate their shopping experience? As for shoppers, if you want to make smarter decisions this holiday season, the next time you enter a store, take a moment to reflect on the music playing in the background. If Christmas music lifts your spirits, be careful. A happier mood can inflate your impression of a store's merchandise and cause you to spend more generously.

On the other hand, if Christmas music annoys to no end, take heart. A grumpy mood can lead you to evaluate products more critically. Instead of grouching about the music selection, perhaps you should continue humming along. The store may be doing you a favour.

Adapted from <https://www.forbes.com>

1. Evidence _____ that the yearly barrage of Christmas music lifts sales.

- A. reveals
- B. debunks the myth
- C. conceals
- D. speculates

2. Which of the following sentences is true, according to par. 3?

- A. Some people are indifferent to festive music.
- B. The power of festive music is universal
- C. Most people are unaffected by festive music.
- D. The way people respond to festive music varies.

3. According to the article, there is often a wrong interpretation of data because of _____ .

- A. disregarding important information when making a judgement on how likely something is.
- B. inadequate sampling that is used for a generalized conclusion
- C. incomparable groups presented as equivalent and comparable
- D. mixing trends and incomplete reporting that suppresses facts

4. Christmas music can have the opposite effect even on those who enjoy it because it can feel _____ .

- A. annoying
- B. manipulative
- C. pretentious
- D. spontaneous

5. When the writer refers to “jumping on the holiday bandwagon” in par. 8 , he means _____ .

- A. inviting shoppers to a festive activity
- B. criticising an event or activity
- C. joining others in doing a popular activity
- D. deciding to go on holiday

TASK 2- Questions 6-10

Read the magazine article about three people (A-C) who write about how music improves your life. Then answer questions 6-10.

A. Mary

Research shows that listening or humming to the tunes of soothing music just before surgery helps to calm patients even better than drugs used for anesthesia or procedural sedation. Another study found that patients who listened to soothing music after open-heart surgery increased relaxation and reduced recovery time. It is also true that music can heal. Research is beginning to heavily focus on how music can act as medicine and reduce the pain of patients. The university of Alberta published a study which proved that children who listened to music, as opposed to those that didn't, felt less pain after a procedure!

B. Helen

A large number of people suffer from sleep deprivation. According to research, students who listened to soothing music before going to bed experienced better sleep than those who didn't. Music has a way of relaxing our nerves. If you're having a hard time sleeping, perhaps some music by Bach or Mozart will come to your rescue. Plato had it right when he said, "Music and rhythm find their way into the secret places of the soul."

Regardless of age, health, or emotional state, music will improve your quality of life by enhancing the quality of your sleep. Another little-known fact is that anger can have positive effects when combined with music! We usually think of anger as something that's just universally bad. However, anger focuses attention on rewards, increases persistence, makes us feel in control and more optimistic about achieving our goals. I had a hard time believing it myself, until I read in a science magazine about a study which showed that when people listened to angry music when preparing for tests, or while playing video games, they got higher scores!

C. John

Listening and singing along to your favourite holiday music can actually improve your memory, too. It's beneficial to your attention span and executive functioning, and music therapy is even useful in treating people with dementia and Alzheimer's disease. In fact, some Alzheimer's patients with severely impaired memory or ability to hold a conversation have been shown to light up and even sing along with their favourite songs! It's also important to add that music is the international language that expresses feelings we all understand. It does not differentiate race, religion or nationality and is unique in bringing people together to experience the same emotions.

Who says that _____?	
6. music therapy helps people who suffer from insomnia	
7. "he who sings scares away his woes"	
8. music therapy can help maintain or rehabilitate cognitive abilities in patients	
9. music enhances performance	
10. where words fail, music speaks	

TASK 3: Questions 11-16

Read the article and answer the following questions.

Billionaire Chuck Feeney achieves goal of giving away his fortune

Chuck Feeney has achieved his lifetime ambition: giving away his €7bn fortune while he is still around to see the impact it has made. This week Feeney, 89, achieved his goal. The Atlantic Philanthropies, the foundation he set up in secret in 1982 and transferred almost all of his wealth to, has finally run out of money.

Feeney, who always avoided attention, gave most of his money away in secret and said he hoped more billionaires would follow his example and use their money to help address the world's biggest problems and change people's lives for the better.

Christopher Oechsli, the president and chief executive of Feeney's charity organisation, said Feeney was astonished that other rich people were unwilling to put all that accumulated wealth into good use – "what is all that wealth about if you're not going to do good with it?", he would often say.

Feeney has lived a remarkably economical lifestyle, not owning a car or home, and only one pair of shoes. He was known for flying only in economy class, even when members of his family and colleagues would travel in business class on the same plane.

Over the years, Feeney has given more than €4.7bn to higher education institutions. He has also donated €870m to human rights groups (including €72m in grants to groups campaigning to end the death penalty in the US, and €86m to campaigns supporting the passage of Obamacare.)

Feeney has five children, four daughters and one son, with his first wife Danielle. He wanted his children to live useful lives so all of them were instructed to work summers as waiters or chambermaids. He later married Helga, a former secretary.

Feeney's generosity spurred Bill Gates and Warren Buffett to establish the *Giving Pledge*, under which the world's richest people commit to giving away at least half their wealth to charity.

Gates credited Feeney with creating a path for other philanthropists to follow. "I remember meeting him before starting the *Giving Pledge*," Gates said. "He told me we should encourage people not to give just 50% but as much as possible during their lifetime. No one is a better example of that than Chuck. Many people talk to me about how he inspired them. It is truly amazing."

Buffett described Feeney as "my hero and Bill Gates' hero – he should be everybody's hero".

Adapted from: <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2020/sep/19/billionaire-chuck-feeney-achieves-goal-of-giving-away-his-fortune>

11. What was Chuck Feeney's lifetime goal?

12. What did Feeney advise other billionaires to do? Give two (2) details.

13. How did Feeney feel about the fact that other rich people were reluctant to give away money?

14. What evidence is there in the article that Chuck Feeney did not live a luxurious life? Give three (3) details.

15. Why did he insist that his children work during the summer?

16. What does the article tell us about Chuck Feeney's character? Give three (3) details.

TASK 4 Question 17

Read the following article about money.

Write a summary about the downsides of making a lot of money.

Your summary should be about 100 words long (and no more than 120 words long).

You should use your own words as far as possible.

Is a light purse a heavy curse?

At some point in your life, you've probably heard someone say they don't care about money; you may have even said that yourself. While this sounds nice in theory, the reality is that you shouldn't underestimate the importance of money. Money can't buy happiness, but it can certainly buy security and safety. Human beings need money to pay for all the things that make life possible, such as shelter, food, healthcare bills, and a good education.

Because money is necessary for obtaining the goods and services we need to survive, an understanding of personal finance is essential. You need to be responsible with the money you earn and save enough for the future to ensure you will still have enough leftover when you can no longer trade your labour for money. So, the sooner you start saving your money, the more likely it is that you'll never feel financial stress.

However, there is always the flip side. Being rich may seem like a dream come true, but not all high earners live the high life. It may be hard for those with lower incomes to feel

sympathetic to the problems of the rich, but there is no denying that money brings with it a whole new set of problems.

Money buys children many opportunities, but it also comes with risks. A series of studies at Columbia University found teens in wealthy families were more likely to struggle with mental health issues like depression, anxiety and substance abuse than those in other socioeconomic groups.

However, it isn't only children who may be vulnerable because of money. Research has shown that after spending years building their businesses and becoming financially well off, people felt aimless and out of ideas as if their imagination had run dry. In his case, money didn't bring happiness, but rather stifled creativity and led to unproductive idleness.

Also, it shouldn't surprise anyone that those who are wealthy pay much more in taxes. College tuition credits, mortgage insurance deductions and other itemized deductions all can be limited or eliminated for those with higher incomes. Many people also get assessed the alternative minimum tax.

Worse still, a recent study found a trend that upper-class individuals — people that have the most money, the most income, the best education and the most prestigious job — have a tendency to engage in less ethical behaviour. It may involve upper class people cutting off other motorists, lying in a negotiation, cheating to win a prize or even stealing candy from children, according to the Canadian Press. Researchers from the universities of California and Toronto found that wealthier people are more apt to behave unethically than those who had less money.

A love of money can also cause family problems if people focus too much on money or material things at the expense of other people and things in their life. If all people have is money but have no one to share their life with and nothing to enjoy, they are unlikely to be happy.

Some people are rich, and no one is the wiser. Other times, it's hard to blend into the crowd. For these people, the risk of litigation is heightened. Rich people are always targets for lawsuits. If, for instance, a rich person is involved in a minor automobile accident, someone who recognizes him/her and their wealth may be more inclined to take legal action than if the other driver was a less affluent person.

While most people wouldn't give up longing for financial wealth, those who've experienced living the dream say it can be isolating and that their lives often look rosier from the outside. As many high earners can attest, having money doesn't wipe away the problems. It only gives different ones.

Adapted from: <https://money.usnews.com/money/personal-finance/earning/articles/2017-04-28/6-downsides-to-making-a-lot-of-money>

TASK 5: Question 18

You have unexpectedly come into a large sum of money. Write an email to your best friend to share the good news.

In your email, you should

- explain where the money came from
- say what you intend to do with it
- describe how you felt



TASK 6- Question 19

You have seen an advertisement in your school magazine inviting readers to send in articles about money. The article is entitled "Money is the root of all evil". Write your article giving your opinion.

Your article should be between 150-200 words long.



Here are two comments from other students in your class.

Some people think that making money is everything. Such people become so greedy that they will do anything to make money. The love of money prompts people to do nasty things.

Money is a great blessing if properly handled and it can be used to support worthwhile causes. We must never forget that money is only a means and not an end in itself.