

The beauty of barter

A. Barter is when you exchange things without using money. It was the system used to pay for things before money. However, money was much more efficient, so the barter system disappeared. Think about this situation. If I grew potatoes and I needed new shoes, I had to find a shoemaker who wanted my potatoes at that precise time. As a consequence, in almost all civilizations, apart from the Incas, money began to be more important.

B. However, even if barter was difficult, some experts believe that barter and money are not completely incompatible. In early forms of barter, people exchanged all their things. Later, in better barter systems, people selected one or two things that were generally more popular with everybody.

C. Barter is often important in commerce with countries that can't convert their own *currency* easily, for example in the communist countries during the cold war. Also, barter is the principal way to have commercial exchange when currencies collapse because of hyperinflation. This happened in Germany after the two world wars.

D. In normal circumstances commercial barter is less important but it continues to exist. In Britain there is a weekly magazine called *Exchange and Mart* that has a part dedicated to barter. It began publication in 1868 and is still popular today. It is an efficient way of putting together people with identical needs. Nowadays, many newspapers also have sections where people can publicise things they want to exchange. So the ancient system of barter still exists and functions!

E. Magazines and newspapers are efficient, but computers are probably even better. There are numerous opportunities on the Internet to find things to exchange with other people. Also, if we think about it, the Internet facilitates the free exchange of information. Another version of barter!

1 Read the text and tick (✓) the correct sentences.

Barter is:

1. exchanging one thing for another
2. buying potatoes and shoes
3. important in countries with convertible currency
4. the best way to exchange when a country collapses from hyperinflation
5. still present in newspapers and magazines
6. expensive on the Internet

2 Match the two parts of the sentence.

1. If you barter,	A. happened after World War II.
2. The commercial collapse of Germany	B. of exchanging information.
3. The <i>Exchange and Mart</i> magazine	C. comes out every week.
4. Magazines and newspapers are a good way	D. of uniting people who want the same things.
5. Internet is the best way	E. you don't use money.

1. ... 2. ... 3. ... 4. ... 5. ...

3 Answer the questions.

1. What did people use to pay for things after barter?
2. Why did barter disappear?
3. Which ancient people continued to use barter?
4. Why did the communist countries use barter during the cold war?
5. When did the *Exchange and Mart* begin publication?

4 Decide on something you would like to barter. Write a description of it for the *Exchange and Mart*. Say what you want in exchange. Make your description as attractive as possible!

Capitalism

A. Capitalism is a system where commerce and industry are organised by private people and not by the government. The first form of capitalism was called *mercantilism*. It was present in Ancient Rome, the Middle East and in early Medieval times. Mercantilism is the distribution of *goods* for a profit. The person who buys and sells the goods is a merchant. The merchant buys goods in one place and sells them in another place for more money. With the expansion of the Roman Empire, mercantilism expanded too. But it suffered when the Roman Empire *collapsed* in the 5th century. European economies became more localised.

B. Arabic cultures, however, had a different story. They had a long history of mercantilism because they lived on the commercial *routes* between three great empires: Egypt, Persia and Byzantium. From the 7th century Islam expanded across Northern Africa, Spain, the Middle East and Asia. As a consequence, Arabic mercantilism became more global. Medieval Europeans learned mercantilism from their Islamic neighbours. In fact, many economic terms like *tariff* and *traffic* derive from Arabic. From the 14th century, Europeans began to expand their mercantile practices. As a consequence, ambitious merchants made many long voyages to explore distant parts of the world.

C. Gradually, mercantilism evolved into *capitalism*. The principle was the same: to make a profit on a large scale, buying goods at one price and selling them at a higher price. But the practice of capitalism also has these characteristics: a) to accumulate *property* for a limited number of people. Property can be land, buildings, materials etc. This property is called *capital*. The person who has the property is a *capitalist*; b) to produce the goods to be sold on a large scale. People must work to produce and distribute these goods. They work for money, (their pay or wage). The capitalist controls this wage with a system which gives him/her the maximum profit.

D. Capitalism also depends on the *consumer* – the person who buys the goods. Most consumers do not produce the goods that they consume or buy. In non-capitalist societies like *tribes*, people *know* the producers of these goods. In capitalist societies the opposite happens. People only know the *object* that they consume, not the producer, as the product is the result of the work of many people.

Glossary

collapsed - *crollò*, goods - *merci*, routes - *rotte*, tribes - *tribù*.

1 Choose the appropriate title for each paragraph in the text.

1. The characteristics of capitalism.
2. What is mercantilism and where did it originate?
3. The importance of consumers for capitalism.
4. Arabic mercantilism and its effect on Medieval Europe.

2 Say if the sentences are True (T) or False (F). Correct the false ones.

1. Mercantilism was the first form of capitalism.
2. Mercantilism is based on making a profit.
3. Arabic mercantilism expanded in the 5th century.
4. The Romans invented words like *traffic* and *tariff*.
5. Capitalism and mercantilism are based on the same principle.
6. In capitalism, property is something that belongs to a lot of people.
7. People work for profit.
8. The consumer is a fundamental part of capitalism.
9. Consumers know the goods they consume, not the producers.

3 Look back at the text and write a paragraph about capitalism, following these guidelines:

- definition of capitalism
- the principle of capitalism
- other characteristics of capitalism

How fair is Fair trade?

Commerce, or *trade* between different countries, is an extremely old profession. A very early example of long-distance commerce was the *Silk Route* between China and Imperial Rome. This started around 100 B.C. and was a trade route of 6,000 km. Traders transported Chinese silk, Roman wool and precious metals. Now, international trade is very sophisticated. However, sometimes the producers cannot make enough money when they trade their products. This is especially true in the poorer *developing* countries of the world. Also, people must sometimes work in difficult or dangerous conditions.

So what is *Fair trade*? Fair trade is when producers and consumers collaborate in a way that respects and benefits both of them. Fair trade means that producers in the developing countries of the world receive a *fair* price for the work they do, and they have good trade terms. Fair trade also helps these producers to have access to markets in the richer developed countries.

With fair trade, producers can be supported in a number of ways:

- they get a fair price that reflects the true cost of production (often, the prices in the world market don't cover costs of production);
- they can have stable, *safe*, long-term business relationships with buyers and so provide good *employment* opportunities for their *employees*;
- they can receive support for social development projects in their country, like better medical treatment and education services, and also for environmental projects, like planting trees and farming without chemicals;
- they can receive support for people's *rights*, for example, to improve the position of women;
- in this way, producers have a better commercial position and take more control of their own lives;

If you buy Fair trade products, you get high quality and contribute to a more equitable and *sustainable* system of production and trade. You can usually find a special mark on the product that proves its authenticity. Usually, you can find fair-trade products in special Fair Trade shops.

Glossary

developing - *in via di sviluppo*, employees - *impiegati, dipendenti*, employment - *lavoro, impiego*, fair - *giusto*, Fair trade - *commercio equo-solidale*, rights - *diritti*, safe - *sicuro*, sustainable - *sostenibile*.

1 Based on the information in the text, find the inappropriate word in each group.

1. buyer - consumer - producer - shop
2. business - commerce - service - trade
3. metal - silk - trees - wool
4. cost - education - money - price

2 Underline the most appropriate option to complete each sentence.

1. The Silk Route began in 100 / 6000 B.C.
2. Producers in developing countries are *richer* / *poorer*.
3. With Fair trade, producers can have *good* / *fair* prices for their products.
4. World market prices *rarely* / *often* cover production costs.
5. With Fair trade, producers have business contacts with buyers for a *long* / *short* time.

3 Match the products listed in the table to their country of origin. Then check the products you usually buy and make a table to show each product and the different countries of origin. Write a short comment. Do most of your clothes, games, books, food etc come from developing countries or from Europe?

PRODUCT	COUNTRY OF ORIGIN
1. bananas	A. leather from Brazil
2. bike	B. cocoa from Ghana
3. book	C. rubber for tyres made in the Philippines
4. chocolate	D. made of cotton in Sri Lanka
5. computer hardware	E. made of oranges from Cuba
6. fruit juice	F. assembled in Korea or Taiwan
7. shoes	G. printed in Hong Kong
8. t-shirt	H. grown in Ecuador

Globalisation – the debate continues...

Globalisation means the development and diffusion of social and economic connections across the world. After the Second World War, western states began to construct strong links with other nations. The countries involved started to be more and more interdependent. This was the beginning of modern globalisation. Now these links affect all our lives, even if we don't know about them. We are richer and we can have a different lifestyle, thanks to the *increase* of international commerce. A lot of companies now have bases in many countries around the world. One example is McDonald's, the famous fast food restaurant. It has more than 25,000 restaurants in 120 countries. The success of the Internet and new telecommunications also encourages contacts between different nations.

Because of these links, many people believe that globalisation is a good thing. Others, like *environmentalists*, anti-poverty demonstrators and anti-capitalist groups, believe that global companies are causing problems. Critics of globalisation think that the West is richer *at the expense of* the *developing* countries. They believe that developing countries are not helped by this trade but are poorer because of it. This is statistically true. The poor people in the world now make 1.4% of the total global *income*. 10 years ago this percentage was 2.3%.

Multi-national companies have caused and still cause other problems in the developing world. Some companies have moved their production units to countries where manual labour is cheap. As a result many manual workers in the rich countries have lost their jobs, while workers in the developing countries are exploited. Another problem connected to globalisation is the risk of losing national culture and identity, as more and more people watch satellite TV and adopt different cultural habits.

Anti-globalists also believe that global companies have some control over national governments and have more power than them. They also think that profits are more important for these companies than ecological safety. The *debate* on globalisation is still very active. It is taking place across the world. This is, in effect, an indication that the famous "global village" is already here with its positive and negative aspects.

Glossary

at the expense of - *a spese di*, debate - *dibattito*, developing - *in via di sviluppo*, environmentalist - *ambientalista*, income - *introito*, increase - *aumento*.

1 Match each word from the text to the correct description.

1. cheap	A. connection
2. labour	B. the western part of the world
3. link	C. (physical) work
4. power	D. low in price
5. the West	E. control over people or situations

1. ... 2. ... 3. ... 4. ... 5. ...

2 Answer the questions.

1. What does globalisation mean?
2. What is McDonald's an example of?
3. Who criticizes globalisation?
4. Why do they criticise it?
5. What type of company is responsible for the problems in the developing world?
6. Is ecological safety important for global companies according to anti-globalists?

3 Say if the sentences are True (T) or False (F). Correct the false ones.

- 1 Globalisation began before the Second World War.
- 2 Commercial contacts with other nations influence our lifestyle.
- 3 McDonald's has restaurants in 120 countries.
- 4 Internet encourages new telecommunications.
- 5 Demonstrators believe that global companies have problems.
- 6 People in developing countries were richer 10 years ago.
- 7 Manual workers are losing their national identity.
- 8 Anti-globalists think that global companies can make political decisions.
- 9 The "global village" is our globalised world.

4 Write a short text, giving your opinion about the influence of globalisation in your own life. Say if you think globalisation is a good thing or a bad thing, and for who.

Internet wins again – buying cars online is betterAdapted from *The Guardian* newspaper

A. British people don't like visiting car *showrooms*. British cars are the most expensive in Europe, and potential customers don't want aggressive sales people. So it isn't surprising that a lot of people are going on the Internet to buy a car. Prices are cheaper, there is clearer information and people can *browse* anonymously. The new sites can offer good prices because they don't have the costs of a large showroom.

B. Richard Branson, famous for his group of large record shops, Virgin Megastores, in the UK, is the boss of Virgin Cars. They sell cars online from different car manufacturers. They offer very competitive prices and special services for drivers. Their competitor is a new online service called Jamjar.com. They sell cars but also car *insurance*, and their services are very popular.

C. The best thing about the new car websites is that they can give personalised information to the customer. You can specify your maximum price, number of seats and size of *engine*. You can even choose the look of your car. You receive a digital photo of the car by e-mail and then you decide! If you're not happy with the original, you can cancel the transaction.

D. Is Internet the future to buy a new car? Some people have doubts. It's very different if you buy a CD or book! However, Internet is still a good way to get preliminary information, before you decide if you want to buy. And car manufacturers can see the increasing number of young people's requests, too. General Motors now has a UK site for teenagers called Curve.com.

Glossarybrowse - *navigare* (In Internet), engine - *motore*, insurance - *assicurazione*, showroom - *salone (d'auto)*.**1 Match the paragraph in the newspaper article to the appropriate description.**

1. Car websites offer a lot of advantages.
2. People in the UK are starting to buy their cars on Internet.
3. There are 2 new competitors in the UK that sell cars online.
4. People have doubts about buying a car online, but young people are becoming very interested.

2 Tick (✓) the correct sentences.

1. Internet is a good way to buy a car because:
 - a. the cars cost less
 - b. people can look at the information but not give their name
 - c. there's a large showroom
 - d. people can ask for specific information
 - e. you receive a photo of your car by post
2. Companies that sell cars online:
 - a. don't have the costs of traditional showrooms
 - b. have aggressive sales people
 - c. offer good services
 - d. won't sell to teenagers
 - e. will cancel the contract if you don't like the car

3 Answer the questions.

1. Why don't British people like visiting car showrooms?
2. Who is Richard Branson?
3. What does Virgin Cars offer?
4. What is Jamjar.com?
5. What is the biggest advantage of car websites?
6. Are young people interested in these sites?

4 If you have Internet, you could look at these sites - www.virgincars.com, www.jamjar.com, www.autotrader.co.uk.

Then choose a car you like among the ones you see and write a description of it, including why you chose it, if its price looks good to you, if it was easy to find it.

Alternatively, write about a product you would like to buy online. What are the advantages and disadvantages if you buy it online?

Human rights

Most European countries have a **Declaration of Rights** in their constitutions. Human rights are based on the *belief* that people have *fundamental* or *basic rights* at all times, in all societies. Generally, these rights are defined by each culture and can only be changed with the *consent* of the people.

In the 17th century, John Locke, an English philosopher, declared that people consented to be governed because they had the promise that their security and liberty would be defended. His philosophy influenced the **United States' Declaration of Rights**. This was *ratified* in 1791. It recognised that all men had "certain unalienable rights" which God gave them.

In 1948 the **United Nations**, an international organization of nation-states, produced its own **Universal Declaration of Human Rights**. The introduction affirmed that "recognition of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world".

In 1953, the Council of Europe adopted the **European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR)**, which established the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg. This was a result of the Nazi atrocities in Europe. European governments decided that it was essential to have a form of international supervision of how individual nations treated their citizens. The Convention (14 member states in 1953, 25 in 1996) protects most of the rights contained in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Rights included are the right to *life*, *freedom from slavery*, *freedom of association*, *freedom of expression*, *freedom from torture*, *protection of privacy and family life*, and *freedom from discrimination*.

Glossary

belief - *convinzione*, consent - *consenso*, ratify - *ratificare*, *confermare ufficialmente*, slavery - *schiavitù*.

1 Read the text and find the answers.

- the name of a philosopher who defended people's rights:

- The ECHR is: _____
- The UN is: _____

2 Complete the table with the correct information.

DATE	EVENT
	The United States' Declaration of Rights was officially recognised.
1948	
1953	
	There were 25 European states in the ECHR.

3 Answer the questions.

1. What are human rights based on?
2. Who was John Locke?
3. Where is the European Court of Human Rights based?
4. Why did Europe want it?
5. What is the function of the ECHR?

4 Write your own personal declaration of rights. Include things which you think are fundamental rights for you and all human beings. List a minimum of 10 rights. E.g.:

We should all have the right to live in safe cities.
We should all have freedom from pollution
...



Drawing by an Italian girl (age 9) on the theme of human rights

Market research – the search for the perfect customer

A. What is market *research*? If you are a company, market research is useful to find out as much as possible about consumers who may be interested in your products or services. To get this information it is necessary to consult a lot of different *sources*. There are two types of market research: *Field* or *Primary research* and *Secondary* or *Desk* research.

B. Primary research is when you look for information for the first time. This kind of research is done either physically in the “field” - approaching people on the street and asking them questions - or on the phone, using questionnaires. However, it is expensive because it involves a lot of people and then you need to analyse the data, which can be very time-consuming. And in business, as we know, time is money. Besides, to make the research efficient, the company must decide on the *best place* to contact people, and the *right people* to *interview*. Depending on the company’s products, they must choose people of the appropriate age, sex, socio-economic group and education.

C. Secondary or desk research uses information or data which is already accessible and available, or *secondary data*. It is normally used to collect information about companies or organisations. Researchers can collect this information from their desk at work. There are two kinds of data: *internal sources*, or existing information about the *target* company (this can be the company’s financial or *sales* archives, for example); and secondly *external sources*. These are usually reports and can come from business groups, like the Chambers of Commerce, commercial associations, official reports of the European Union, company reports and financial *statements*. Other sources include publications in research journals and media, like newspapers, TV reports and the Internet.

D. Companies use market research so that they can focus their products most effectively. It is an extremely important tool for the enlargement and success of their business *ventures*.

Glossary

field (agg.) - *sul campo*, interview - *intervistare*, research - *ricerca*, sales - *vendite*, sources - *fonti*, statement - *bilancio*, target - *obiettivo*, ventures - *attività imprenditoriali*.

1 Read the first paragraph and choose the most appropriate definition for market research.

1. Market research is necessary if you want a lot of information on products.
2. Market research is necessary if you want to understand the needs of your potential customers.
3. Market research is necessary if you want to be a consumer.

2 Complete the sentences with the correct words from the list.

age - best - expensive - government
 - internal sources - Internet - primary - public
 - publications - phone - reports - right - secondary
 street - secondary data - socio-economic - TV

1. Two types of market research are _____ and _____ research.
2. You can do primary research in the _____ or on the _____.
3. Field research can be _____.
4. Efficient field research is when you contact the _____ people in the _____ place.

5. It is essential to interview people who are the appropriate _____ and sex, and belong to the right _____ group.
6. You can collect _____ from your desk.
7. _____ come from inside the company.
8. External sources can be _____ information, _____ from business groups and associations, _____ in research journals or information from newspapers, _____ and _____.

3 You are the marketing manager for a publishing company. You want to publish a new magazine for teenagers. Write a short report, suggesting an appropriate type of market research.

- Describe who you want to contact, and how.
- Provide a list of things you want to know from your potential customers.

A Curriculum Vitae

A Curriculum Vitae (CV) is a document with a person's details and information about his/her education and work experience. It is used to apply for a job.

1 You can find CV forms on the Internet. Look at this one that an Italian boy has found on the website of an English company looking for a clerk for its import/export department. Read it and answer the questions.

Personal Details

Full name: Lorenzo Liverani
 Date of birth: 20th November 1985
 Address: Via Mazzini 32, 20124 Milano (Italy)
 Telephone: 02 673976540
 Mobile tel.: 335 4657800
 Email address: l.liverani@libero.it

Education/Courses

Year	From	To	Name/Type of school/course
	1999	2002	A.Oriani Commercial School, Milan
	2002	2003	Computer studies course
	2003	2004	First Certificate in English

Work Experience

Year	From	To	Name of company	Type of job
	Sep 2004	Dec 2004	Decco srl, Milan	bookkeeper

Skills

Good knowledge of computer and of English.

- When was Lorenzo born?
- Does he live in Italy?
- Has he got a mobile phone?
- What's his email address?
- What type of school did he go to?
- Has he done any special courses? Which ones?
- Has he ever worked? Where? What did he do there?

2 Think of yourself. Imagine you are nineteen and that after finishing school, you worked for a company for a few months. Now you want to apply for a new job as a cashier for an English bank based in Italy. Complete this CV with your data.

Personal Details

Full name:
 Date of birth:
 Address:
 Telephone:
 Mobile tel.:
 Email address:

Education/Courses

Year	From	To	Name/Type of school/course
	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Work Experience

Year	From	To	Name of company	Type of job
	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Skills