

Artificial scarcity 人为的物品缺乏

Vocabulary: consumer economy 词汇: 消费者经济

We expect companies selling **products** to make them as **available** as possible. But now some of them are bringing back **rationing**. As you might expect, it's all part of a plan to make us spend more, not less.

Once upon a time, goods were **scarce**, and **hard to get** for all but the extremely wealthy. But **industrial mass production** has changed all of that. Factories all over the world are **pumping out** bright and beautiful objects.



When everyone has to wait and **save up for** new things, owning them feels exciting and special. But when lovely things are available every day, they stop being a **treat**.

Another feature of **consumer society** is that we aim for **social distinction** through what we own. But if everyone has lots of **stuff**, how can we **impress** anyone with our **purchases**? All of this **takes the fun out of** shopping and means there's a limit to how much consumerism can grow.

This is deeply worrying to companies, and some of them have started to fight it, by creating **artificial scarcity**. For example, in Singapore, a small café called Liberty Coffee only opens on **random** days. It sometimes stays closed for over a week at a time. Swedish rapper Adam Tensta has **limited access to** his latest track. Only one person at a time can access it, and fans must take their place in a digital **queue**.

This **trend** means we can again own something **rare**. But the risk for these companies is that in a world of so much stuff, if they make their products too hard to get, we'll just buy from someone else instead.

词汇表请参看答案与词汇部分

Quiz 测验

。阅读短文并回答问题

1. According to the article, what happens when we can have lovely things every day?
2. Does industrial mass production make goods more or less scarce?
3. Which examples of artificial scarcity does the article give?
4. Why do fans of Adam Tensta have to queue to hear his music?
5. Which days does Liberty Coffee open?

Exercise 练习

从每个表格中选择一个意思合适的单词填入句子。请你在不参考课文的情况下完成下列练习。
。的空格处

1. In Britain, sweets were not freely available during World War II, because of _____.

scarce	hard to get	rationing	available
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2. I haven't got the money now, but I'm going to save up _____ it.

for	at	on	about
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3. We hope our purchases make us look better than other people. We aim for social _____.

distinction	extinction	attention	retention
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4. I wish he wouldn't plan so much. It takes all the fun _____ the party.

into	out of	from	out
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5. She owns a vase which is incredibly _____. There are only five or six in the world.

rationing	random	treat	rare
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Answers and Glossary 答案与词汇

Quiz 小测验

1. According to the article, what happens when we can have lovely things every day? They stop being a treat.
2. Does industrial mass production make goods more or less scarce? It makes them less scarce.
3. Which examples of artificial scarcity does the article give? Swedish rapper Adam Tensta's music and Liberty Coffee in Singapore.
4. Why do fans of Adam Tensta have to queue to hear his music? Because only one person can access the track at a time.
5. Which days does Liberty Coffee open? It opens on random days.

Exercise 练习

1. In Britain, sweets were not freely available during World War II, because of rationing.
2. I haven't got the money now, but I'm going to save up for it.
3. We hope our purchases make us look better than other people. We aim for social distinction.
4. I wish he wouldn't plan so much. It takes all the fun out of the party.
5. She owns a vase which is incredibly rare. There are only five or six in the world.

Glossary 词汇表

products	产品
available	有货，可买到的
rationing	定量供应
scarce	稀少的
hard to get	难以获得的
industrial mass production	工业化的大批量生产
pumping out	批量推出
save up for	存钱以便（购买某物）
treat	款待
consumer society	消费者社会
social distinction	优等社会地位
stuff	（泛指任何）物品，东西
impress	给人深刻印象
purchases	购买
takes the fun out of	失去了乐趣（意义）
artificial scarcity	人为的物品缺乏
random	任意的
limited access to	限制收听权
queue	队伍
trend	潮流
rare	稀罕的