

## Reading Lesson

## B1 Business: Reuse, Recycle, Refill

## Reading

Read the text. Have you heard about or used a refill store?

## Reuse, Recycle, Refill

When you buy products from the grocery store, many of them come in plastic packaging. Often, that plastic packaging is thrown in the trash when the product is finished, or even when the packaging is opened. Some of this single-use plastic is recycled, but a lot of it goes to a landfill. Many customers are concerned about the effect this has on the environment. As a result, some businesses are thinking about how they sell their products. Some of them are using less packaging or using greener materials. Some businesses are even removing the packaging completely and asking customers to bring their own containers. These are refill stores.

Companies such as Common Good, a business in New York, show how this works. They sell liquid soap, detergent, and other cleaning products. You can take your own container and fill it with the product you want. You then pay only for the product, and you can use the same container again and again. The company also sells glass and plastic bottles that can be used many times. This business model works well with liquids, which in the past were often sold in reusable containers, but it can also be used with other loose products, such as vegetables, spices, and rice.

There are a number of advantages to this idea for both the customer and the business. First of all, there is no need to spend money producing plastic packaging, which makes the product cheaper. The customer can also buy a small amount of each product. In this way, they can get only what they need—a small amount of fresh spices, for example, or a small number of vegetables—and there is less waste. Customers can also be sure they are being environmentally friendly, which is not always true with recycling. If you send plastic to be recycled, some of it may go to a landfill anyway. This is often because it is mixed with other materials that can't be recycled.



Are there any disadvantages to refill stores? One is that there are still only a small number of them. Unless you live near one, you may have to travel to shop there. If you drive, you will use gas, and this will increase your carbon footprint. Another problem is that customers have to remember their containers. This means they have to plan their shopping trip carefully, which not everyone does. Finally, if you use refill stores and only ever buy what you need, you may find that you run out of a product at a time when you can't visit the refill store.

Refill stores are one way of dealing with the problem of plastic packaging, but they are probably not a complete solution.

**container** (n): an object used for storing or holding things, such as a box, jar, etc.

**landfill** (n): a large hole in the ground where waste is buried

**packaging** (n): materials used for wrapping products so that they can be protected and/or sold

## Reading Lesson

### Vocabulary

Complete the sentences with words from the box.

amount   liquid   product   solution   spices

1. Do you like to add \_\_\_\_\_, such as black pepper, to your food?
2. Can I buy a small \_\_\_\_\_ of pepper, or do I have to buy a large jar?
3. If we don't find a \_\_\_\_\_ to the problem of plastic packaging, we'll damage the environment.
4. The main \_\_\_\_\_ our company produces is smartphones.
5. I often buy \_\_\_\_\_ soap instead of bars of soap because it's easier to use.

### Comprehension

Choose the correct option.

1. Businesses are thinking about the packaging they use because ...  
**a** customers are worried.      **b** they save money.      **c** they want to recycle.
2. At Common Good, you can ...  
**a** fill your bottles with rice.      **b** buy cleaning products.      **c** change old plastic bottles for new ones.
3. An example of why refill stores are good for businesses is because ...  
**a** they can charge more.      **b** they can sell less.      **c** the products cost less to make.
4. Refill stores are good for customers because the stores ...  
**a** sell small amounts.      **b** make superior products.      **c** have lots of products.
5. One problem with sending plastic to be recycled is that ...  
**a** it can still go to a landfill.      **b** plastic can't be recycled.      **c** it produces more plastic.

### Thinking

Would refill stores be successful in your area? Why or why not?