

The rise of storage spaces

Level: Intermediate (B1–B2)

Time: Approximately 90 minutes

Overview: This article discusses the increase in demand for storage spaces and the reasons for it.

Business topic: Market trends, consumer preferences, recession

Business language: Words and phrases for describing market trends

Activities: Key words, understanding the text, business language, discussion, discussing economic indicators, presenting findings

Groups: Whole class, pairs, small groups, one-to-one

Key:

1. decluttering
2. lease
3. high-density
4. occupancy
5. listed companies
6. housing squeeze
7. recession
8. supply
9. supplanted
10. packrats
11. liminal spaces
12. consumer confidence

4. Understanding the article

- a. Ask students to read the statements and then find the relevant parts of the article to determine if the statements are *True* or *False*. Encourage students to not only correct the false statements but also be ready to explain what supports the true statements. Have them share their answers in pairs or small groups before eliciting answers from the whole class.

Key:

1. *False – Digital products haven't supplanted the need for physical goods.*
2. ✓ *True*
3. ✓ *True*
4. *False – It is the number of places that have storage units.*
5. ✓ *True*
6. *False – Storage unit use tends to rise during downturns.*
7. ✓ *True*
8. *False – He accidentally threw the books away because he mistook the garbage truck for the movers' truck.*
9. ✓ *True*
10. ✓ *True*

1. Warmer

- a. Ask students to discuss the questions in small groups. Monitor and write any useful vocabulary on the board. Elicit the main ideas that arise from the discussion from the whole class.

2. Reading for gist

- a. Have students skim the article and choose the main idea. Then ask students to scan for phrases that support their answers.

Key:

2

3. Key words

- a. Have students match the key words to the definitions individually and then compare their answers in pairs. Elicit answers from the whole class.

5. Business language – describing trends

- a. You could set up this activity as a Total Physical Response (TPR) activity. Put the table on the board or on the walls of the classroom and have students physically add the words to the table. This could be done as a competition or as a group activity. If you are teaching online, you could set up virtual whiteboards to do the same. These words are from the article. You can also add other phrases to describe growing and expanding trends to extend this activity.

Key:

go up: *spike, increase, grow, multiply*
go down: *plummet, slow down*

- b. Ask students to work in pairs or small groups to complete the task. Explain to students that these words and phrases are synonyms, but aren't always exchangeable, e.g. the word *spike* cannot be used in sentence 6 to indicate increasing taxes. Remind students it is useful to record and memorise whole phrases or even sentences to remember these word chunks.

Key:

1. *plummeted*
2. *grow*
3. *slow down*
4. *multiply*
5. *spiked*
6. *increase*

- c. Ask students to write six sentences using the words and phrases from tasks a and b.

6. Discussion

- a. Put students in pairs or small groups and ask them to discuss the questions. When students have covered all the questions, bring the whole class back together so that they can share their answers and any interesting information that arose from their discussions.

7. Wider business theme – unusual indices to track recession hacks

- a. Explain that students are going to prepare a presentation about unusual economic indices. You can use the *Hemline index* as an example as it appears in the original article used in this lesson. Ask students to read the paragraph and fill in the table. You can follow up with a short discussion and ask students if they find these indices useful.

Key:

Indicator	What it measures	Reasons
Lipstick Indicator	Consumer behavior during economic downturns	People buy small luxuries instead of expensive items in tough times
Men's Underwear Index	Basic consumer spending habits	Men tend to delay replacing used everyday items during financial hardship
Hemline Indicator	Consumer confidence and market trends	Fashion trends may reflect optimism (shorter hemlines) or worry (longer)
Garbage Index	Overall consumption and economic activity	More waste typically means higher production and consumer spending

- b. Ask students to choose one of these indices or any other similar one and research it online. Provide bullet points for doing the research if needed. You can also make it a group task in which each group is assigned one of the indices and focuses on it.
- c. Have students or groups present their findings. You can follow up with a class discussion on the topic.