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Amazon.com cuts down on packaging

<http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/0811/081105-packaging.html>

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5th November, 2008

THE ARTICLE

At last a company has come up with a sensible solution to its packaging. Amazon.com has taken a great leap forward and decided to cut back on the packing materials it uses in its boxes and parcels. Soon, you'll no longer have to spend half-an-hour trying to free the books or CDs you ordered from the box. Amazon calls its new idea the "Frustration-Free Packaging Initiative." It aims to stop the "wrap rage" we all experience when we try to set free our goods from the cardboard, plastic and foam packing materials. This will help the environment and also mean we need one less garbage bag to throw the packaging away. The Seattle-based company is working with other retailers to find solutions to using less packaging, and so save customers money.

The initiative will initially be for only 19 items. Amazon.com executives say they will expand this to more and more products. The company website says it is "a multi-year [plan] designed to [reduce] 'wrap rage'." The site says it will use "recyclable boxes that are easy to open and free of excess materials such as hard plastic clamshell cases, plastic bindings, and wire ties". It is interesting the company recognizes that we all experience frustration and rage when opening parcels. The new initiative may also help cut down on the tens of thousands of injuries caused by packaging each year. To highlight the problem of excess packaging, Amazon has put a "Gallery of Wrap Rage" page on its site. It invites visitors to post photos and videos of frustrating packaging.

WARM-UPS

1. PACKAGING: Walk around the class and talk to other students about packaging. Change partners often. After you finish, sit with your partner(s) and share your findings.

2. CHAT: In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words from the article are most interesting and which are most boring.

sensible solutions / leaps forward / packing materials / initiatives / cardboard / garbage / executives / recyclable boxes / frustration / injuries / posting videos

Have a chat about the topics you liked. Change topics and partners frequently.

3. RAGE: What gets you in a rage? Complete the table below. Give a mark from 1 (no problem) to 10 (I get super angry). Share what you wrote with your partner(s).

Feature	1 - 10	Why I get in a rage
Packaging		
Computers		
Others' driving		
English		
Family		
My country's leader		

4. PACKAGING: Students A **strongly** believe stores need to cut down on the amount of packaging they use; Students B **strongly** believe packaging is not a big enough problem to worry about. Change partners again and talk about your roles and conversations.

5. SENSIBLE SOLUTIONS: With your partner(s), discuss some sensible solutions for these problems. Share your ideas with other students.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Too much packaging • Identity theft • Global warming • Obesity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bad breath • Stress • Dangerous driving • Overpopulation
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6. FRUSTRATION: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word 'frustration'. Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

1. TRUE / FALSE: Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

- a. Amazon.com has decided not to use packaging when it sends parcels. T / F
- b. Amazon hopes people will no longer be angry trying to open parcels. T / F
- c. The new packaging initiative from Amazon is environmentally friendly. T / F
- d. Amazon.com is in talks with other stores on how to cut costs. T / F
- e. Nineteen of Amazon's products will use the new, reduced packaging. T / F
- f. There will be free wire ties in the frustration-free packaging. T / F
- g. Tens of thousands of people a year get injured opening packages. T / F
- h. Amazon.com has asked its customers to video poor packaging. T / F

2. SYNONYM MATCH: Match the following synonyms from the article:

- | | |
|-----------------|----------------|
| 1. at last | a. at first |
| 2. come up with | b. rubbish |
| 3. cut back on | c. calls for |
| 4. initiative | d. reduce |
| 5. garbage | e. finally |
| 6. initially | f. unnecessary |
| 7. expand | g. is aware of |
| 8. excess | h. increase |
| 9. recognizes | i. created |
| 10. invites | j. plan |

3. PHRASE MATCH: Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

- | | |
|--|----------------|
| 1. a company has come up with a sensible | a. frustration |
| 2. Amazon.com has taken a great leap | b. retailers |
| 3. free the books or CDs you ordered from the | c. items |
| 4. It aims to stop the "wrap rage" we all | d. forward |
| 5. The Seattle-based company is working with other | e. injuries |
| 6. The initiative will initially be for only 19 | f. experience |
| 7. recyclable boxes that are easy to | g. packaging |
| 8. the company recognizes that we all experience | h. solution |
| 9. cut down on the tens of thousands of | i. box |
| 10. post photos and videos of frustrating | j. open |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

GAP FILL: Put the words into the gaps in the text.

At _____ a company has come up with a sensible solution to its packaging. Amazon.com has taken a great _____ forward and decided to cut back on the packing materials it uses in its boxes and _____. Soon, you'll no longer have to spend half-an-hour trying to _____ the books or CDs you ordered from the box. Amazon calls its new idea the "Frustration-Free Packaging Initiative." It _____ to stop the "wrap rage" we all experience when we try to set free our goods from the cardboard, plastic and _____ packing materials. This will help the environment and also mean we need one less _____ bag to throw the packaging away. The Seattle-based company is working with other _____ to find solutions to using less packaging, and so save customers money.

The initiative will _____ be for only 19 items. Amazon.com executives say they will _____ this to more and more products. The company website says it is "a multi-year [plan] designed to [reduce] 'wrap rage'." The site says it will use "recyclable boxes that are _____ to open and free of excess materials such as hard plastic clamshell cases, plastic bindings, and wire _____". It is interesting the company recognizes that we all experience _____ and rage when opening parcels. The new initiative may also help _____ down on the tens of thousands of injuries caused by packaging each year. To _____ the problem of excess packaging, Amazon has put a "Gallery of Wrap Rage" page on its site. It invites visitors to _____ photos and videos of frustrating packaging.

aims
free
retailers
leap
foam
last
garbage
parcels

highlight
ties
expand
cut
post
initially
frustration
easy

LISTENING: Listen and fill in the spaces.

At last a company _____ a sensible solution to its packaging. Amazon.com has taken a great leap forward and decided _____ packing materials it uses in its boxes and parcels. Soon, you'll no longer have to _____ trying to free the books or CDs you ordered from the box. Amazon calls its new idea the "Frustration-Free Packaging Initiative." It _____ "wrap rage" we all experience when we try to set free our goods from the cardboard, _____ packing materials. This will help the environment and also mean we need one less garbage _____ packaging away. The Seattle-based company is working with other retailers to find solutions to using less packaging, _____ money.

The initiative will initially _____ items. Amazon.com executives say they will expand _____ more products. The company website says it is "a multi-year [plan] designed to [reduce] 'wrap rage'." The site _____ "recyclable boxes that are easy to open and free of excess materials _____ clamshell cases, plastic bindings, and wire ties". It is interesting the company recognizes that we all experience frustration and rage when opening parcels. The new initiative _____ down on the tens of thousands of injuries caused by packaging each year. To highlight the problem of excess packaging, Amazon has put a "Gallery of Wrap Rage" page on its site. It invites _____ and videos of frustrating packaging.

AFTER READING / LISTENING

1. WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words **'wrap'** and **'rage'**.

wrap	rage
-------------	-------------

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS: Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

3. GAP FILL: In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the activity. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

4. VOCABULARY: Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

5. TEST EACH OTHER: Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall how they were used in the text:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• last• forward• free• idea• less• save	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• initially• expand• excess• thousands• highlight• post
--	--

STUDENT PACKAGING SURVEY

Write five GOOD questions about packaging in the table. Do this in pairs. Each student must write the questions on his / her own paper.

When you have finished, interview other students. Write down their answers.

	STUDENT 1 _____	STUDENT 2 _____	STUDENT 3 _____
Q.1.			
Q.2.			
Q.3.			
Q.4.			
Q.5.			

- Now return to your original partner and share and talk about what you found out. Change partners often.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

PACKAGING DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a) What did you think when you read the headline?
- b) What springs to mind when you hear the word 'packaging'?
- c) Do you get fed up with the amount of packaging in products?
- d) What do you think about Amazon.com's idea?
- e) Is the idea a "great leap forward"?
- f) Have you ever experienced "wrap rage"?
- g) What other "frustration-free" initiatives would you like to see?
- h) Would you prefer lots of wrapping to protect the things inside the package?
- i) Do you really think less packaging would be good for the environment?
- j) Do you ever say no to bags and packaging in stores?

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PACKAGING DISCUSSION

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a) Did you like reading this article?
- b) Do you think the frustration-free packaging will expand to all of Amazon's parcels?
- c) What exactly happens when people experience wrap rage?
- d) Do you experience other kinds of rage?
- e) How could you recycle the packaging inside boxes and parcels?
- f) Have you ever injured yourself opening a box or parcel?
- g) Will you be visiting Amazon's Gallery of Wrap Rage web page?
- h) What do you think of the company Amazon.com?
- i) What will packaging of the future be like?
- j) What questions would you like to ask the brains behind the frustration-free packaging?

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LANGUAGE

At (1) _____ a company has come up with a sensible solution to its packaging. Amazon.com has taken a great (2) _____ forward and decided to cut back on the packing materials it uses in its boxes and parcels. Soon, you'll no (3) _____ have to spend half-an-hour trying to (4) _____ the books or CDs you ordered from the box. Amazon calls its new idea the "Frustration-Free Packaging Initiative." It aims to stop the "wrap rage" we all experience when we try to set free (5) _____ goods from the cardboard, plastic and foam packing materials. This will help the environment and also mean we need one less garbage bag to throw the packaging away. The Seattle-based company is working with other retailers to find solutions to using less packaging, and (6) _____ save customers money.

The initiative will (7) _____ be for only 19 items. Amazon.com executives say they will expand this to more and more products. The company website says it is "a (8) _____ -year [plan] designed to [reduce] 'wrap rage'." The site says it will use "recyclable boxes that are easy to open and free (9) _____ excess materials such as hard plastic clamshell cases, plastic bindings, and wire ties". It is interesting the company recognizes that we all experience frustration and rage (10) _____ opening parcels. The new initiative may also help cut down on the tens of thousands of injuries caused (11) _____ packaging each year. To highlight the problem of excess packaging, Amazon has put a "Gallery of Wrap Rage" page on its site. It (12) _____ visitors to post photos and videos of frustrating packaging.

Put the correct words from the table below in the above article.

- | | | | | |
|-----|----------------|--------------|-----------------|---------------|
| 1. | (a) last | (b) lasting | (c) lastly | (d) lasted |
| 2. | (a) pace | (b) hop | (c) leap | (d) jump |
| 3. | (a) length | (b) longer | (c) longest | (d) longing |
| 4. | (a) freer | (b) freedom | (c) freely | (d) free |
| 5. | (a) her | (b) my | (c) our | (d) their |
| 6. | (a) so | (b) sew | (c) sow | (d) so-so |
| 7. | (a) initialled | (b) initial | (c) initials | (d) initially |
| 8. | (a) multiple | (b) multi | (c) multiply | (d) multiples |
| 9. | (a) for | (b) to | (c) of | (d) with |
| 10. | (a) when | (b) where | (c) which | (d) how |
| 11. | (a) on | (b) by | (c) at | (d) with |
| 12. | (a) invite | (b) inviting | (c) invitations | (d) invites |

WRITING:

Write about **packaging** for 10 minutes. Correct your partner's paper.

HOMework

1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION: Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

2. INTERNET: Search the Internet and find out more about Amazon.com's new frustration-free packaging initiative. Share what you discover with your partner(s) in the next lesson.

3. MY RAGE: Make a poster about the things in life that put you in a rage. Include advice on what to do to reduce your rage. Show your work to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all have similar things?

4. FRUSTRATION-FREE: Write a magazine article about the person who came up with the idea of frustration-free packaging. Include imaginary interviews with that person and the head of Amazon.com.

Read what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Write down any new words and expressions you hear from your partner(s).

5. LETTER: Write a letter to the person who came up with the idea of frustration-free packaging. Ask him/her three questions about it. Give him/her your three ideas for other frustration-free initiatives. Read your letter to your partner(s) in your next lesson. Your partner(s) will answer your questions.

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

- a. F b. T c. T d. T e. T f. F g. T h. T

SYNONYM MATCH:

- | | |
|-----------------|----------------|
| 1. at last | a. finally |
| 2. come up with | b. created |
| 3. cut back on | c. reduce |
| 4. initiative | d. plan |
| 5. garbage | e. rubbish |
| 6. initially | f. at first |
| 7. expand | g. increase |
| 8. excess | h. unnecessary |
| 9. recognizes | i. is aware of |
| 10. invites | j. calls for |

PHRASE MATCH:

- | | |
|--|----------------|
| 1. a company has come up with a sensible | a. solution |
| 2. Amazon.com has taken a great leap | b. forward |
| 3. free the books or CDs you ordered from the | c. box |
| 4. It aims to stop the "wrap rage" we all | d. experience |
| 5. The Seattle-based company is working with other | e. retailers |
| 6. The initiative will initially be for only 19 | f. items |
| 7. recyclable boxes that are easy to | g. open |
| 8. the company recognizes that we all experience | h. frustration |
| 9. cut down on the tens of thousands of | i. injuries |
| 10. post photos and videos of frustrating | j. packaging |

GAP FILL:

Amazon.com cuts down on packaging

At **last** a company has come up with a sensible solution to its packaging. Amazon.com has taken a great **leap** forward and decided to cut back on the packing materials it uses in its boxes and **parcels**. Soon, you'll no longer have to spend half-an-hour trying to **free** the books or CDs you ordered from the box. Amazon calls its new idea the "Frustration-Free Packaging Initiative." It **aims** to stop the "wrap rage" we all experience when we try to set free our goods from the cardboard, plastic and **foam** packing materials. This will help the environment and also mean we need one less **garbage** bag to throw the packaging away. The Seattle-based company is working with other **retailers** to find solutions to using less packaging, and so save customers money.

The initiative will **initially** be for only 19 items. Amazon.com executives say they will **expand** this to more and more products. The company website says it is "a multi-year [plan] designed to [reduce] 'wrap rage'." The site says it will use "recyclable boxes that are **easy** to open and free of excess materials such as hard plastic clamshell cases, plastic bindings, and wire **ties**". It is interesting the company recognizes that we all experience **frustration** and rage when opening parcels. The new initiative may also help **cut** down on the tens of thousands of injuries caused by packaging each year. To **highlight** the problem of excess packaging, Amazon has put a "Gallery of Wrap Rage" page on its site. It invites visitors to **post** photos and videos of frustrating packaging.

LANGUAGE WORK

- 1 - a 2 - c 3 - b 4 - d 5 - c 6 - a 7 - d 8 - b 9 - c 10 - a 11 - b 12 - d