

## Venezuela seizes 4 million toys for its children

13th December, 2016



The government of Venezuela has seized nearly 4 million children's toys from a toy distributor. It will give the toys to children for free or at discounted prices in time for Christmas. The government says the distributor was unfairly charging

high prices for the toys, which meant only the richest people could buy them. Venezuela has one of the highest rates of inflation in the world. This is the rate at which prices go up. The IMF says the rate could be as much as 2,000 per cent in 2017. Many Venezuelans can't afford to buy non-essential items like toys. Even a jar of Nutella can cost half the monthly minimum salary. In the past few months, Venezuela has also ordered price cuts on clothes.

In total, the government seized 3,821,926 toys from two warehouses. It tweeted: "Our children are sacred. We will not let anyone rob them at Christmas. Boys and girls of this country will have a happy Christmas." The government said the toy distributor was keeping the toys out of the shops to reduce their supply and so increase prices. The government also accused the company of buying them with dollars it got at very low rates several years ago and now wanted to sell the toys at much higher prices. The toy distributor has said it has done nothing wrong and was not trying to sell the toys at high prices to make huge profits. It said many of the toys were out of fashion.

Sources: *Bloomberg.com / bbc.com / npr.org*

## Writing

Computer games are better than toys. Discuss.

## Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

government / toys / discounted prices / inflation / essential / minimum salary / price / warehouse / boys / girls / shops / supply / dollars / several years ago / profit / fashion

## True / False

- a) Venezuela will give 4 million toys to children for free. T / F
- b) The government said toys were priced too high. T / F
- c) Venezuela has the highest rate of inflation in the world. T / F
- d) Venezuela also reduced the price of clothes recently. T / F
- e) The government took toys from a dozen warehouses. T / F
- f) The government said the company bought toys using Euro. T / F
- g) The toy company said it hadn't done anything wrong. T / F
- h) The toy company said many of the toys were no longer in fashion. T / F

## Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- |                   |                   |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| 1. <b>seized</b>  | a. additionally   |
| 2. <b>free</b>    | b. wealthiest     |
| 3. <b>richest</b> | c. steal from     |
| 4. <b>go up</b>   | d. very big       |
| 5. <b>cuts</b>    | e. taken          |
| 6. <b>rob</b>     | f. reductions     |
| 7. <b>also</b>    | g. a number of    |
| 8. <b>several</b> | h. without charge |
| 9. <b>wrong</b>   | i. increase       |
| 10. <b>huge</b>   | j. illegal        |

## Discussion – Student A

- a) What do you think of toys you get free with fast food?
- b) How educational should toys be?
- c) What was the best toy you ever had?
- d) What is wrong with companies making big profits on toys?
- e) Why are toys based on cartoon characters so expensive?
- f) What toy would you buy for a child?
- g) How can toys go out of fashion?
- h) What questions would you like to ask the boss of the toy distributor?

## Phrase Match

- |   |                        |
|---|------------------------|
| 1. give the toys to children            | a. items like toys     |
| 2. one of the highest rates             | b. at very low rates   |
| 3. can't afford to buy non-essential    | c. cuts on clothes     |
| 4. cost half the monthly minimum        | d. profits             |
| 5. Venezuela has also ordered price     | e. for free            |
| 6. keeping the toys out of the shops to | f. of inflation        |
| 7. buying them with dollars it got      | g. of fashion          |
| 8. The toy distributor has said it has  | h. salary              |
| 9. make huge                            | i. reduce their supply |
| 10. It said many of the toys were out   | j. done nothing wrong  |

## Discussion – Student B

- What do you think about what you read?
- How important are toys?
- What do you think of the price of toys?
- What's the best toy ever?
- Is the government right to take the toys for the children?
- What do you know about inflation?
- Should all governments give children gifts on special days?
- Should governments tell companies how much to charge for things?

## Spelling

- The mrvnetgone of Venezuela
- for free or at  cudnesoitd  prices
- unfairly  gcganhri  high prices
- the highest rates of  ntofainnl  in the world
- buy non- lnieceatss  items like toys
- cost half the monthly  mmmuini  salary
- Our children are  adcres
- reduce their  suplyp
- aiseecrn  prices
- veralse  years ago
- make huge  fpoitsr
- the toys were out of  shaoifn

### Answers – Synonym Match

1. e	2. h	3. b	4. i	5. f
6. c	7. a	8. g	9. j	10. d

## Role Play

### Role A – Action Figures

You think action figures are the best toys. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them things that are wrong with their toys. Also, tell the others which is the best fun of these (and why): toy cars, Lego or marbles.

### Role B – Toy Cars

You think toy cars are the best toys. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them things that are wrong with their toys. Also, tell the others which is the best fun of these (and why): action figures, Lego or marbles.

### Role C – Lego Blocks

You think Lego blocks are the best toys. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them things that are wrong with their toys. Also, tell the others which is the best fun of these (and why): toy cars, action figures or marbles.

### Role D – Marbles

You think marbles are the best toys. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them things that are wrong with their toys. Also, tell the others which is the best fun of these (and why): toy cars, Lego or action figures.

## Speaking – Toys

Rank these with your partner. Put the best at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- |                 |                  |
|-----------------|------------------|
| • Monopoly      | • action figures |
| • marbles       | • toy cars       |
| • jigsaw puzzle | • Lego           |
| • toy sword     | • Play-Doh       |

### Answers – True False

a	F	b	T	c	F	d	T	e	F	f	F	g	T	h	T
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.