



# Buy Nothing Day

Buy Nothing Day (BND) is an international day of protest against consumerism observed by social activists. Typically celebrated the Friday after American Thanksgiving (traditionally the first day of Christmas shopping) the USA and the following day internationally, in 2009 the dates are November 27 and 28.

People are encouraged to not make any purchases throughout the entire day. The idea is to sensitize (1) people about their spending habits and to think about mass consumerism and its effect on the cultural and natural environment of the world.

## The beginning

The first BND was launched (2) by *Adbusters*, a non profit organization in Vancouver (Canada) in September 1992, based as a day for society to examine the issue of over-consumption. In 1997, it was moved to (3) the Friday after American Thanksgiving, also called "Black Friday", which is one of the 10 busiest (4) shopping days in the United States. America and Israel, *Buy Nothing Day* is the following Saturday.

*Adbusters* was not very popular. For instance, it was denied (5) advertising time by major television networks except by CNN, which was the only one to air (6) their ads. Soon, campaigns started appearing in the United States, the United Kingdom, Israel, Austria, Germany, New Zealand, Japan, the Netherlands, France, and Norway. Participation now includes more than 65 nations.

## Active consumers

Various gatherings (7) and forms of protest have been used on Buy Nothing Day to draw attention to the perceived problem of over-consumption:

- Free, non-commercial street parties
- Public protests
- *Wildcat General Strike*: A strategy used for the 2009 Buy Nothing Day where participants not only do not buy anything for twenty-four hours but also keep their lights, televisions, computers and other non-essential appliances (8) turned off, their cars parked, and their phones turned off or unplugged from sunrise to sunset.
- *Buy Nothing Day hike* (9): Rather than celebrating consumerism by shopping, participants celebrate the earth and nature.

## Vocabulary

(1) to sensitize : *sensibiliser*  
have sth

(2) launched : *lancé*

(3) moved to : changed to

(4) busiest (superlative)

busy : having a lot of customers (clients)

(5) to be denied sth\* : to not allow someone to

(6) to air : to broadcast (*diffuser*)  
on the radio or television

(7) gathering : a group of people meeting  
together

(8) appliance : a machine or a piece of  
equipment that you have in your home, for  
example a washing machine or a refrigerator

(9) hike : *randonnée*

\*sth : something



# BUY NOTHING DAY ACTIVITIES

## PRE READING TASK

➤ To start you thinking

Answer the following question : Would you be ready to avoid shopping for a whole day? Justify your answer.

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## COMPREHENSION

Read the text and answer the following questions.

**ACTIVITY 1** (from the beginning to line 17)

**True (T) or false (F)?** Circle the correct answer and justify orally.

1. Buy Nothing Day is a day to celebrate consumerism. **T – F**
2. Today Buy Nothing Day is usually celebrated in September. **T – F**
3. The first Buy Nothing Day was celebrated in Canada in 1992. **T – F**
4. The Friday after Thanksgiving is usually a quiet day for business. **T – F**
5. About 65 countries are involved in Buy Nothing Day **T – F**

**ACTIVITY 2** : (from line 18 to the end)

How do Buy Nothing Day activists protest and draw public attention? Use your own words to explain their actions.

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