Christmas Special
Men and Christmas shopping
Yvonne: Hello, this is a BBC Learning English Christmas Special – and I’m Yvonne Archer!

Of course, Christmas shopping can be lots of fun, especially if we plan ahead. And as Christmas only happens once a year, there is a whole year to think about it and buy those perfect gifts. But is that enough time for this man?

Vox pop
I like to think about what I’m doing before I do it, but Christmas doesn’t give you the time to think. You just have to do it before the day’s over!

Yvonne: So what is he doing during the rest of the year?! It sounds like that man only spends a day thinking about and buying his Christmas gift. And sadly, he’s not alone. It’s a well known fact that many men wait until Christmas Eve – the day before Christmas – to buy all their gifts! But who knows, maybe that makes it all the more exciting.

I asked fifteen men whether they like Christmas shopping and fourteen gave me a firm ‘NO!’ Some men have even stopped buying Christmas gifts altogether. As we hear from some of them, try to count how many reasons they give for their answers to the question: “Do you like Christmas shopping?”

Vox pops – “Do you like Christmas shopping?”
Hate it – can’t stand Christmas, don’t believe in it…. Crowds, the rush, the hassle – I don’t like that…. I think it commercializes everything too much… No, I don’t like Christmas shopping – especially when you don’t know what you want to get – it’s murder.
Yvonne: And what could be more serious than that?! That last man described Christmas shopping as ‘murder’ – not literally of course, but he really does find it difficult and unpleasant. And if he doesn’t know what he wants to buy before he gets to the shops, it’s even worse. So ‘murder’ is a Jamaican-English term that you may come across in informal situations…

Vox pops – “Do you like Christmas shopping?”
It’s murder.

Yvonne: Why not think of some other really difficult and unpleasant situations that you’d happily describe as ‘murder’ after today’s programme? For example, a journey into the city or a really difficult essay that you’ve got to write.

OK, how many reasons did you count why those men hate Christmas shopping so much?... Including the one we just talked about, I counted 6. The first man doesn’t believe in Christmas…

Vox pop
Hate it – can’t stand Christmas, don’t believe in it….

Yvonne: The next man gave us three reasons all of his own; he doesn’t like ‘the crowds’ – so too many people are all out shopping at the same time. [And if there are too many people inside the shops, we say they’re ‘crowded’. [‘The shops are so crowded’]]]
That man also mentioned ‘the rush’, because everyone seems to be hurrying to do their Christmas shopping at the same time. [And if you’re late for an appointment, you’re ‘in a rush’. Or if you’ve just won a race or an award, for
example, that wonderful feeling could be described as ‘a rush’ – “Winning is such a rush!” Try to spot the different ways that ‘rush’ is used after today’s programme.]

**Vox pop**

Crowds, the rush, the hassle – I don’t like that.

**Yvonne:** So for many men, Christmas shopping is always difficult, annoying, bothersome and even stressful. It’s a ‘hassle’ – and that’s the last reason given by that man. ‘Hassle’ can be used to describe lots of annoying things and situations. [[For example, someone might say: ‘I can’t be bothered to cook tonight; it’s too much hassle.’ And after large family meals - like Christmas dinner - ‘Cleaning up is such a hassle!’]]

The other reason we heard for hating Christmas shopping is that it’s become too ‘commercialized’. So in that man’s opinion, shopping and making money during the Christmas season has become more important than the real reason for celebrating this Christian religious festival.

Perhaps you agree; has Christmas and other religious festivals become too commercialised? Why not discuss that in English with a few friends after today’s programme?

That’s all for today – Goodbye!