

Starting up

- Have you heard of a company called Loop?
- What do you think about the way food and other products are packaged?

Reading

A new company called Loop is aiming to eliminate waste in the packaging of consumer products.
To find out more, read the article.

Reading comprehension

Find answers in the article to the following questions.

- 1 In what way is Magali Sartre's weekly delivery of groceries untypical?
- 2 What are the delivered items packed in?
- 3 How are the pasta and tea packed ?
- 4 What happens to the containers that the items are packed in?
- 5 What is Loop's business?
- 6 What is Loop's business model and aim?
- 7 Where is Loop trialling this new way of packaging food and other consumer items?
- 8 Why does Magali Sartre use Loop for her deliveries?
- 9 What is the "Blue planet" effect?
- 10 What are the challenges of reducing the use of plastic in packaging?

Can we break our addiction to plastic? The future of packaging

¹Every week or two, Magali Sartre, a 44-year-old who lives in Paris, goes online to grocery shop. She clicks on orange juice, olive oil, tea, pasta, cookies and crackers — a typical order for herself, her two young children and her husband, which she tops up with trips to a nearby organic shop, butcher and cheesemonger.

²But when the delivery arrives, it looks anything but typical. Packed in a padded tote bag with thick foam dividers, the pasta and loose tea are in stainless steel reusable containers and the orange juice is in a glass bottle.

³There are no plastic bags or ice packs in sight. Once the family has finished with an item, the packaging goes back in the tote for collection, cleaning and — eventually — refilling.

⁴Sartre is one of the early customers of Loop, a new company that seeks to eliminate waste by teaming up with well-known brands such as Häagen-Dazs ice cream, Dove soap and Crest mouthwash to make their packaging reusable.

⁵Now in trials with tens of thousands of people in Paris and across the US, the company aims to create a radically new shopping model in which packaging becomes durable, reusable, valuable and sometimes even beautiful, instead of something to be immediately thrown away.

⁶The start-up is working both with multinationals such as Nestlé, Unilever, Procter & Gamble and PepsiCo and the supermarkets that distribute their products.

⁷The concept appealed to Sartre, who uses the service to teach her seven- and nine-year-old children about how their consumption habits affect the environment. “I’m pretty militant about it,” she admits.

⁸“I really want to show as a consumer that I don’t want any more plastic, and send a message to big companies that I’m ready to spend money to back another model of consumption that is more in line with my values.”

⁹Sartre is part of a growing consumer movement against plastic packaging that has begun to campaign for change at the world’s biggest makers of food, drink and household products. Industry executives say that vocal customers have pushed concerns about climate change and pollution up the agenda to the point where big businesses can no longer ignore them.

¹⁰Pressure has only intensified since 2017 when the BBC nature documentary, Blue Planet II, showed how staggering amounts of plastic were ending up in our seas. In what was soon dubbed the “Blue Planet effect”, consumers began to complain about plastic forks and criticise brands online for what they saw as excessive packaging.

¹¹But even as green campaigners want the industry to go further faster, executives warn that there are real challenges to reducing our reliance on plastics. Switching to glass and metal often means higher greenhouse gas emissions because of their heavier weight. Plastic is light, versatile, cheap and durable — allowing companies to maximise shelf life while minimising manufacturing and transport costs.



Vocabulary 1

Find words and phrases in the article which match these definitions.

- 1 a large bag, usually made of cotton or linen (para 2)
- 2 get rid of something that is not wanted (para 4)
- 3 tests to see if a plan will work (para 5)
- 4 long lasting (para 5)
- 5 a buyer of products and services (para 8)
- 6 speaking out, making their voice heard (para 9)
- 7 increased (para 10)
- 8 very shocking and surprising (para 10)
- 9 called; given the name of (para 10)
- 10 much more than is reasonable or necessary (para 10)
- 11 depending on something (para 11)
- 12 the length of time that a product remains in good condition before it is sold (para 11)

Vocabulary 2

Complete these sentences, giving the word for different kinds of shopkeepers. The first is done as an example

- 1 A baker sells bread.
- 2 A _____ sells meat.
- 3 A _____ sells cheese.
- 4 A _____ sells fish.
- 5 A _____ sells fruit and vegetables.
- 6 A _____ sells books.
- 7 A _____ sells paper products.

Grammar – phrasal verbs and prepositional verbs

- 1 Find phrasal verbs in the article with the following meanings.
 - a add some extra things in order to complete your collection
 - b when you no longer have a use for something
 - c join and work with another company or person
 - d get rid of something that is no longer useful
 - e be in a final place after doing something

- 2 Find prepositional verbs in the article with the following meanings.
 - a give an example or instruction on a topic
 - b move a topic to a more prominent position so it can be discussed
 - c try to achieve social change by persuading companies to do something
 - d criticise and say negative things about something or someone

Discussion

- 1 Would you use Loop to deliver your weekly shopping? If so, why? If not, why not?
- 2 Do you think Loop's approach can be rolled out on a large scale? If not, what would stop it?
- 3 What is your comment on this quote by Tom Szaky, founder of Loop?

"If our mission is to eliminate waste, then recycling is not the long-term solution. We need to completely rethink our relationship to products and how we shop"

ANSWER KEY**Reading comprehension**

- 1 The way it is packaged. There are no plastic bags in sight.
- 2 They are packed in a padded tote bag.
- 3 The pasta and loose tea are in stainless steel reusable containers.
- 4 Once the family has finished with an item, the packaging goes back in the tote for collection, cleaning and — eventually — refilling.
- 5 A new company that seeks to eliminate waste by teaming up with well-known brands to make their packaging reusable.
- 6 The company aims to create a radically new shopping model in which packaging becomes durable, reusable, valuable and sometimes even beautiful, instead of something to be immediately thrown away.
- 7 In Paris and across the US.
- 8 In her words: "I really want to show as a consumer that I don't want any more plastic, and send a message to big companies that I'm ready to spend money to back another model of consumption that is more in line with my values."
- 9 The impact of the BBC nature documentary 'Blue Planet II', which showed how staggering amounts of plastic are ending up in our seas.
- 10 Switching to glass and metal often means higher greenhouse gas emissions because of their heavier weight, whereas plastic is light, versatile, cheap and durable — allowing companies to maximise shelf life while minimising manufacturing and transport costs.

Vocabulary 1

- | | | |
|-------------|---------------|---------------|
| 1 tote | 5 consumer | 9 dubbed |
| 2 eliminate | 6 vocal | 10 excessive |
| 3 trials | 7 intensified | 11 reliance |
| 4 durable | 8 staggering | 12 shelf life |

Vocabulary 2

- 2 butcher
- 3 cheesemonger
- 4 fishmonger
- 5 greengrocer
- 6 bookseller
- 7 stationer

Grammar

- | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1 a top up (para 1) | 2 a teach ... about (para 7) |
| b finished with (para 3) | b push up (the agenda) (para 9) |
| c team up with (para 4) | c campaign for (para 9) |
| d throw away (para 5) | d complain about (para 10) |
| e end up (para 10) | |

Articles sourced from the Financial Times have been referenced with the FT logo. These articles remain the Copyright of the Financial Times Limited and were originally published in 2019. All Rights Reserved. FT and 'Financial Times' are trademarks of The Financial Times Ltd. Pearson ELT is responsible for providing any translation or adaptation of the original articles.

With a worldwide network of highly respected journalists, the Financial Times provides global business news, insightful opinion and expert analysis of business, finance and politics. With over 500 journalists reporting from 50 countries worldwide, our in-depth coverage of international news is objectively reported and analysed from an independent, global perspective.

For more information: <http://membership.ft.com/pearsonoffer/>