

Chatterbox #279 – Shrinkflation

Episode description

Have you noticed your usual grocery items are smaller than they used to be, but cost the same? You may not have heard of shrinkflation before, but it's something that's affecting everyone and people aren't happy about it!

In this Chatterbox episode, Andrew and Anna discuss the issue of shrinkflation. Culips' Chatterbox series helps you learn English from native speakers, with detailed expressions you can add to your own vocabulary that will surely impress your English-speaking friends!

Fun fact

You may get excited when your favourite cereal is re-branded with fancy new packaging, but this is actually one of the smart ways companies disguise reduced contents. Coca-Cola did this in 2019, reducing their bottles from 2 litres to 1.75 litres.

Expressions included in the study guide

- Evil twin
- Perfect storm
- At the heart of [something]
- To get laid off
- To fall victim to [something/someone]
- To vote with your pocketbook



Transcript

Note: The words and expressions that appear in **bold text** within the transcript are discussed in more detail in the Detailed Explanations section that follows the transcript. The transcript has been edited for clarity.

Andrew: Hello everyone, my name is Andrew.

Anna: And my name is Anna.

Andrew: And you're listening to the Culips English Podcast.

Hello there, everyone. Welcome back to Culips. This is Chatterbox, the Culips series for intermediate and advanced English learners that features natural, unedited conversations between native speakers about an interesting topic or a current event or maybe even a hot issue. And today, I'm joined by my cohost, Anna. Hey there, Anna.

Anna: Hey, Andrew, how's it going?

Andrew: I'm doing fantastic. How are you?

Anna: I'm really good, thank you.

Andrew: Anna, today, we have kind of a current event and a hot topic to talk about. It is something that is related to the pandemic. It's also an economic issue. And I think it's going to be an interesting conversation and maybe something that our listeners have never really even heard about before. Our topic for today is shrinkflation. It's a little bit difficult to pronounce even, shrinkflation.

Anna: Shrinkflation.

Andrew: OK, so we'll get into all of the details about what shrinkflation is and what our opinions and thoughts about this topic are in just a moment. But before we do that, I want to let all of our listeners know about the transcript and study guide that's available for this episode for all Culips members. And following along with the study guide while you listen to us here today, everyone, is the best way to study with us. And by becoming a Culips member, you'll be able to support us and keep allowing us to make English lessons for people all over the world. There are also a bunch of fantastic bonuses that you'll get when you become a member. So to sign up and get the study guide, just visit Culips.com.

Anna: We also wanted to give a big shout-out to our listener Na Hyun from South Korea, who left us a very nice comment and a five-star review on Apple Podcasts. And he wrote, “Best podcast channel ever. I am a Korean student who enjoys listening to Culips. I didn’t really listen to podcasts, but since I got to know the Culips channel, I’ve been listening to the episodes, including the old episodes. Thank you for always telling me good conversations and expressions. The stories about Korea that come out from time to time are so exciting and interesting. I’ll be waiting for more conversations to come. Take care and have a happy day.”

Andrew: I love it. Thank you, Na Hyun, for that great review. And listeners, if you want to hear your name shouted out at the start of an upcoming Culips episode, then all you have to do is do exactly what Na Hyun did. And that is leave us a positive review and a five-star rating on Apple Podcasts or really whatever platform you use to listen to Culips. And we ask you to do that because it will help more English learners around the world find Culips and study with us. So if you could find the time to leave us a five-star rating and a short review, we would really appreciate it.

And with that being said, Anna, I think we can jump in to our main topic for today, which, once again to remind everyone, is shrinkflation, shrinkflation. So, Anna, I guess we should start by defining and breaking down exactly what this is for our listeners, because it may be new to many of them. In fact, it was kind of new to me when I first learned about it. Anna, it was this the first time that you heard of this issue, shrinkflation, recently?

Anna: I think it is. When we were looking at the topics I was thinking, oh, I’m very familiar with inflation, but shrinkflation, even though actually when I look at the definition, I think, oh, I know what that is, but perhaps I hadn’t heard the term before. I guess shrinkflation could be described as being the **evil twin** of inflation.

Andrew: I like that, the **evil twin** of inflation because, yes, they are both negative things in most people’s opinions, I think. So let’s start with talking about what inflation is. So inflation occurs when prices rise, but our wages don’t rise and we actually have less buying power. We can buy less with our money. OK, that is inflation.

Now on the other hand, shrinkflation is what happens when prices stay the same, but the quantity or the amount that you get is less than before. And many shoppers from around the world, I know at least in the USA and in Canada, maybe even in Europe as well, Anna, you can tell us about the situation in Europe in a moment. But many shoppers have noticed that this is happening a lot recently. So people are going to the grocery store, going shopping, they’re buying the same products as they always have, but when they closely inspect the box, they notice that the amount of the product is less than it was before.

So let's say, for example, maybe in the past you bought a box of cereal. And to keep things easy, let's just say the box of cereal contained 300 grams of cereal inside. Well, when shrinkflation occurs, you go to the grocery store, you buy that box of cereal, you pay the same price, but instead of getting 300 grams, you only get, like, 280 grams. So you're paying the same price, but you're getting less in return. This is exactly what shrinkflation is.

Anna: And I'm going to give a perfect example of something that I've experienced. Have you ever gone to the supermarket and you've bought a packet of crisps. I say packet of crisps, but people in America will say chips. Andrew, do you say chips?

Andrew: I say chips or potato chips. But, yeah, crisps I can understand but I don't use that word, no.

Anna: Well, for me a packet of crisps. And have you ever gone and bought a packet of crisps and then you open it up and you think there's a lot more air in here than there was last time?

Andrew: Yeah, they put so much air in the packaging that when you open the bag, it looks gigantic and then you see the amount of chips or crisps that are in the bag. And it looks pretty small, often.

Anna: Yeah, so that's definitely one of the products I've noticed that that happens to. Also I think ice cream is one of the products that gets affected by shrinkflation. But, honestly, I think a lot of companies right now are looking at this tactic to try and pass on the cost to the customer. So watch out, there may be a shrinkflation happening near you.

Andrew: So Anna, that's a great point that you just mentioned about why shrinkflation is happening right now and why it is in the news and on so many people's minds. And maybe we should talk about some of the reasons why shrinkflation is happening. And it's really kind of like a **perfect storm**, I think, of economic issues that are causing it to happen. When we say something is a **perfect storm**. What does that mean, exactly, Anna, when I said there's a **perfect storm** of issues causing shrinkflation?

Anna: So a **perfect storm** could be described as a bad situation caused by a combination of bad circumstances.

Andrew: Exactly. So the storm here is shrinkflation. And there are many issues that are causing it that are happening at the same time. So why don't we run through some of these causes of shrinkflation.

I think **at the heart of it** is the pandemic, right? The COVID pandemic that is affecting people around the world and the world's economy as well. And one of the things that is really influencing shrinkflation here is that there are labour shortages, labour shortages. So labour means workers, right? There's not enough workers. These days, some people **got laid off** because of COVID and didn't go back to work. Some factories, some producers of raw materials had **to lay people off**, meaning they had to fire them, right? They couldn't employ them anymore, because of safety protocols. There are also people who got a taste of working from home and they didn't want to go back to the office or go back to the factory to work. So there are many issues behind labour shortages these days, but that is one of the reasons. So when there are fewer workers available, that means that there are shortages with production or that producers have to pay higher wages to keep staff on.

And this means that these producers need to pass the cost on to the consumer, right? And so there are two options for how they can pass that cost on. They could either raise the prices or they could do shrinkflation and give you a smaller amount for the same amount of money. So I think that's the first factor that's really **at the heart of it** here, Anna, is labour shortages. But that's not the only thing. As we said, it's a **perfect storm**. There are many reasons why shrinkflation is happening now. Could you let us know about some of the other reasons, Anna?

Anna: I think it's also important to mention that another factor in this **perfect storm** is about cost increases which have happened due to the pandemic as well. For example, shipping, shipping costs are way up. And way up here is a way to say a big increase, way up, actually two to three times more than before the pandemic. So businesses have higher costs. And as you said, Andrew, they're figuring out, well, how can we pass on these costs, because as we know, businesses are there to make a profit, they don't want to lose money. Also, some other factors that maybe we could throw into the mix are a surge in demand, as restaurants start opening up again. I think it'd be good, Andrew, to explain surge, because I'm not sure if many people will be familiar with that word.

Andrew: That's a great point, Anna. And, yeah, an excellent word to use in this kind of context. So a surge in demand means a huge increase very quickly, right? So it's like, suddenly, as restaurants start to open up again around the world, because, you know, every country is different, but at least in North America, and in my country, Canada, many restaurants actually had to close down during the COVID pandemic, during the lockdown. So as they all opened up at the same time, they started buying products all at the same time, you know, ingredients for cooking food, right? There was a surge in demand, everybody was buying the same thing at the same time. And this caused prices to skyrocket for raw goods.

Raw goods is what we call, you know, things that haven't been processed yet. So we talked earlier about crisps and cereal and ice cream. These are not raw goods, right? These are foods that have been prepared before selling them. But all of those foods have the original ingredients, things like wheat, or corn, or barley, or canola, these are what we call raw goods. So there was a huge demand on these raw goods. And as a result, the prices shot up.

So we have all of these factors at play, we have the labour shortages, we have increased shipping costs, we have a surge in demand, and we have the cost of raw goods rising and all of this led to shrinkflation. So it's a pretty complicated issue. But I think that's the clearest way that we can break it down for our listeners.

Anna: As you said, Andrew, before, I'm just going to come back to that, you said there's two strategies that companies can use. They can either make the product more expensive or they can make the product smaller but charge you the same amount. And the reason why a lot of companies choose that second strategy is because it's more difficult to notice. So maybe when you're doing your shopping, you don't notice that, actually, this is a little bit smaller than last time, but you're paying the same amount. So I think that's maybe one of the reasons why it's problem is it's just really difficult to notice, and little by little things start getting smaller and smaller, and you're taking home less, but paying the same amount.

Andrew: Yeah, it's a big problem, because, I don't know about you, Anna, but personally, I don't really check the boxes of my food products every week after I come home from the grocery store. And I certainly don't write down the amount that was in the box so that the next time I go to the grocery store, I can check against that. You know, it kind of feels sneaky to me, because, you know, people are so busy these days, we're already stressed enough that now we have to throw this on top of things as well. And, you know, I don't have a ton of time to commit to grocery shopping every week, but to go to the grocery store and to look at all of the amounts, how many grams are in this, how many millilitres are in this, and to compare like that. It's just frustrating that this is the path that the food companies have chosen to take with how they're dealing with this rise in prices.

Anna: Yeah, and as you said, sneaky. I think that's a really nice word. Sneaky is very similar to the adjective sly, which implies like bad intentions, OK. Sneaky, like doing something undercover so that people won't notice. In a way you're kind of tricking your customers because, as you said, most people don't look at the weight, or, for example, how much of the product is contained. But for example, in my case, I looked at a couple of products that I've bought over the last year. And I think if you start noticing, for example, I'm going to use one product. I buy mince, which is beef. And I noticed that it's got 50 grams lighter than last year, but I'm paying the same amount of money. So I've decided that I'm not going to buy that anymore. So we have power with where we spend our money. If we stop spending money in one area or one product, then companies are going to notice. So I think it's a case of if you notice something like that happening, then maybe choose to buy another product or decide to spend your money in another place.

Andrew: Yeah, I totally agree with you there, that the consumers ultimately do have the power to make decisions. And, you know, we can **vote with our pocketbooks**, right? We can show companies that we like what they're doing or don't like what they're doing by either buying their products or not buying their products.

You know, one example that came to mind here in South Korea, where I live, over the last maybe 6 months to a year, I can't really remember, but over the last little while recently is that the price of eggs really went up dramatically. I think that they probably doubled, the price of eggs doubled. And so for a little while, I just stopped buying eggs. And this is a really hard item to do shrinkflation on, right? Because you usually buy eggs in like a pack of 12 or a pack of 24. And so if suddenly, you only have 10 eggs or, you know, 20 eggs in a package, then it would be super noticeable. So I think eggs are one of the products that are safe from shrinkflation. But the price shot up, it was double. And I heard this was due to an avian flu and a bunch of chickens unfortunately had to be put down. So it was a chicken shortage and an egg shortage, and that just caused the increase in the price of eggs. So I stopped buying eggs for a while, you know, but as time went on and the price didn't go down, it's kind of stabilized now and I started buying eggs again. So, unfortunately, that's one of the products where there's not a great alternative. If you want to eat an egg, you kind of gotta eat an egg.

Anna: Another area as well is in restaurants. I've noticed the restaurants have increased their prices, which a lot of restaurants have struggled over the past year. And it's a similar kind of situation, they've had higher costs, they've had less business, so they're looking for a way to make more money. And that I don't like. I've been to a couple of restaurants that I would normally go to. And I've noticed in some dishes that they've really increased their prices and that really puts me off. I really didn't like that. And I decided as you with the eggs, I said, well, I'm not going to go back to that restaurant.

So it can have a really negative effect on your customer experience. But then there's also some products that, well, even if they applied shrinkflation, I would still buy it because I love the product. So I'm also not going to say that I would always change. There are some products, especially things like beauty products, that I absolutely love and, well, they could apply all the shrinkflation they want, I'm still gonna buy it.

Andrew: Yeah, I think for some products, you know, if you're just a loyal consumer of them, and you know you love them, then you're going to pay for them no matter what the price is.

So, Anna, I mentioned a little bit earlier in this episode that you're located in Europe, and I'm really curious about the European situation and how prices are labelled in the grocery store, in the market in Europe. Because, you know, I'm from Canada and when an item in a Canadian grocery store is listed, you see just the price of the item, OK? So let's say it's a box of cereal, we'll go back to the cereal box example. And maybe the price is \$5. And so it will just be listed as \$5 on the price tag. However, that doesn't include tax. So once you go and pay for the item then the tax gets added on. And you're actually going to be paying a lot more than \$5 for the box of cereal once the tax is added, because unfortunately in Canada we have a high tax rate on a lot of things. And also on that price tag all you see is the \$5, OK, you see the price per box.

However, I'm living in South Korea and South Korea does things differently. So I think this is a great way to do it. And what we do here in Korea is that when you see the price of the box of cereal, it includes the tax. So the price that you see on the store shelf is the price you're actually paying. There's no extra hidden calculation that you have to do to figure out how much tax is added. And then they also include the price per a unit. So you can see how much it costs per 100 grams or per 100 millilitres. And this actually makes comparing products really easy because you can see, oh, this box of cereal is, you know, 50 cents per 100 grams, and this one is 40 cents per 100 grams. So you can really see very clearly which is the cheaper product, which product has the best value.

And so for that reason, I think it's harder to get away with shrinkflation here in South Korea, maybe not as big of an issue here as it is back home in Canada and also in the States. But I'm dying to know about Europe, in the UK, your home country and in Spain, where you're living now, how are prices displayed at the grocery store?

Anna: Well, as far as I remember of the UK and I think it's the same as in Spain, and I think this is right, but the tax is applied. So when you see that price tag, that is the final price, you don't have to add anything on to that. So that's great, you can do an easy price comparison. One thing they love here in Spain is they love a two for one, they love a two for one. So there's always offers. I mean, this is another strategy of supermarkets, as well, to make it seem like you're always getting a deal and to buy more. There's always offers. So two for one offer.

And, you know, I think that's also about psychology as well. So you see all these signs, so you think, oh, I'm getting a good deal when actually maybe it's more expensive than it was before. And one thing they like to do as well is have these two for one offers and then once that offer is finished and you like the product, then they bump up the price. So it's also again, other tactics to make you spend more money I think the thing is, they're always looking for ways to make more money. So whether it's through inflation or getting you to buy another deal, or whatever, they're always looking for little ways to try and extract more money from you, always.

Andrew: Yeah, well, I mean, you mentioned it earlier and it's worth repeating that that is the goal of a business, right? A business's goal is to make money and if their costs are rising, then they don't want to eat those costs. They don't want to have to lose money. And so they'll try their best to pass it on to us as consumers. And whether it's shrinkflation, whether it's these two for one specials, buy one get one free.

Also, it's funny because South Korea loves this kind of marketing as well. And the stores here are packed with items that are buy one, get one free, or buy two get one free, which is not really common back home in Canada as much. So it's kind of interesting that it is popular in Spain and Korea. But at the end of the day, the companies are out to make money, and they're going to do their best to try and keep their profits as high as possible. And so maybe that's why they're using some of these what seemed like sneaky marketing tactics.

Anna: Absolutely. And you know, they're there to make a profit and whether it's sneaky or whether actually from their perspective, it's just logical. It's logical to do this as part of a business. But as I said before, I think you really do have, you said, you **vote with your wallet**, which I really liked that expression and it's absolutely true. So if you feel like you're being victim to a sneaky tactic or whatever, you can choose to spend your money wherever you want. So I think, you know, you do have the power to change their behavior as well, not just them changing our behavior in the way that we buy things. So that would be my summary of that.

Andrew: Well, I think we'll leave it at here for today. But, listeners, we'd love to hear your opinion on this issue and to also hear what the situation is like in your corner of the world. Is shrinkflation an issue where you live? And what would you do if one of your favourite products suddenly **fell victim to shrinkflation**? So imagine you got a smaller amount but you had to pay the same price, would you keep using that product? Or would you stop using that product and look for an alternative?

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We'll be back soon with another brand-new Culips episode and we'll talk to you then.
Goodbye.

Anna: See you later.

Detailed Explanations

Evil twin

Noun

The **evil twin** is a worse version of someone or something. For example, in this episode Anna and Andrew talk about shrinkflation being the **evil twin** of inflation, because shrinkflation is similar to inflation. It's even worse, though, because of the sneaky manner in which companies try to hide it from their consumers.

Have you have heard of the famous literary character Jekyll and Hyde? He was a man who had a split personality, with a good side and a bad side. This can help you to understand the contrast between someone who appears to be the same person but has a bad, dark, mean side—this is their **evil twin**.

Here are a couple more examples with **evil twin**:

Jonas: Have you seen Katie's got a new look? I'm not sure what to make of it.

Leonie: Yes, I have. She looks pretty scary with all that gothic makeup. At first I thought it was her **evil twin**!

Jonas: No, it was definitely her. She really doesn't look like the Katie I know.

Gareth: I've been suffering terribly from headaches lately and the doctor gave me some medication. The side effects are awful, though.

Shavina: I'm sorry to hear that. Have you told your doctor about the side effects?

Gareth: Yes. She said it's quite common but there's nothing you can do about it.

Shavina: That's a shame. I guess it's just the **evil twin** of painkillers.

Perfect storm

Idiom/noun

A **perfect storm** is when events combine to produce an unusual or disastrous outcome. The events that combine to create a **perfect storm** are not disastrous on their own, but their combination makes the result even more powerful or dangerous. Most often a **perfect storm** represents a bad situation, but it can sometimes be used to mean that something is particularly powerful.

The idiom comes from the author Sebastian Junger, who coined the term by describing the perfect weather conditions that come together to form a mighty storm while at sea. A **perfect storm** results from events that are very rare or coincidental.

Here are a few more examples with **perfect storm**:

Juan: The stock market isn't doing well these days.

Sol: I'm not surprised, with all those businesses going bankrupt after the economic recession. That, combined with the pandemic, has really caused a **perfect storm** for investors.

Juan: Well, I certainly won't be investing my money any time soon.

Harriett: Global warming is the **perfect storm** of human interference.

Maria: What do you mean?

Harriett: Over the years, humans have exploited and polluted the planet, and it has resulted in the global warming disaster.

Dimitri: How's your album coming along?

Enrique: Really well! I've spent most of the year writing songs, recording, collaborating with producers, and finally, after all this hard work, I think it's going to be a hit!

Dimitri: Glad to hear it. It sounds like you've got yourself a **perfect storm** for success.

At the heart of [something]

Phrase

To be **at the heart of [something]** is to be the most important or influential part. Andrew mentions the pandemic being **at the heart of shrinkflation**, meaning the pandemic had the biggest influence on shrinkflation, among other, lesser factors.

The heart is one of the most important organs in the body, which is where the saying comes from.

Here are a couple more examples with **at the heart of [something]**:

Thibault: Thank you for your hard work! We're really pleased with the result.

Karen: Don't thank me. It was the I.T. department **at the heart of it all**.

Thibault: I see. You helped to organize the project, though, so we're really grateful.

Karen: No problem, happy to hear it!

Matilda: For months we've been trying to fix our engine, but we haven't had any luck so far.

Jeronimo: Well, have you figured out the cause of the problem?

Matilda: We think it could be the fuel injection system, which is **at the heart of the engine**.

Jeronimo: That sounds like a difficult fix. Let me know if I can help you with anything.

Matilda: Thanks!

To get laid off

Verb

To get laid off means to lose or be fired from your job. Employers choose to **lay off** their workers to save on costs or because there isn't enough work for them to do. Sometimes employers plan to hire the workers back at a later date.

In this episode, Andrew refers to people **getting laid off** during the pandemic due to safety protocols. This led to a labour shortage, which is one of the contributing factors to shrinkflation.

Here are a few more examples with **to get laid off**:

Timothy: I haven't seen Robert around the office in a while. I was hoping to get some ideas for this project I'm working on.

Sally: Didn't you hear? Robert **got laid off** last week.

Timothy: Seriously? I know it's been hard with the pandemic, but Robert was such a hard worker.

Sally: It's such a shame. We're going to have a lot more work to do now that he's gone.

Timothy: You're right. I suppose it's tough for everyone at the moment.

Renata: I saw in the news that unemployment rose substantially after the pandemic hit.

Aurelie: It's awful. I'm terrified I'll **get laid off** soon. There are rumours going round the office.

Renata: You'll be fine—they can't afford to lose you!

Yannick: We're going to have **to lay off** some more workers from the factory this week. Do you think you could help?

Fred: That's not going to be easy. I wouldn't know where to start.

Yannick: It's a tough call to make, but I think you'll make the right decision for the company.

To fall victim to [something/someone]

Idiom

To fall victim to [something/someone] is to experience negative consequences from a person or a situation. **Falling victim to something** is being affected by a bad situation, or sometimes an illness. It is often unexpected and can happen by chance.

For instance, a person may **fall victim to the flu**, meaning they're sick with the flu. Or, as Andrew says in this episode, your favourite product might **fall victim to shrinkflation**. In a more literal sense, a person could **fall victim to a serial killer**, meaning they have been murdered by the serial killer, becoming the victim.

Here are a couple more examples with **to fall victim to [something/someone]**:

Nik: Did you see the news? They found a boat off the coast of New Zealand and the captain was nowhere to be seen. Crazy stuff.

Boris: Totally. That's why I choose to stay on land! The sea is a scary place.

Nik: That's the thing, he was a very experienced sailor, but sadly he still **fell victim to the sea**.

Rokas: I've got a new job opportunity working in sales. Any tips for the interview?

Lorenzo: Honestly, just be yourself and you'll make a great impression.

Rokas: It's not as simple as that. They make you showcase your sales skills to one of the managers. I'm pretty nervous about it.

Lorenzo: Don't be! Just make sure you don't **fall victim to any traps** they might use to try to make you look bad.

Rokas: That's a good point. Thank you.

Lorenzo: Best of luck! Let me know how it goes.

To vote with your pocketbook

Idiom

To vote with your pocketbook is to choose to spend money in a way that reflects your values. For example, you can **vote with your pocketbook** by buying ethically sourced coffee because you find it important that small coffee farmers are paid fairly. On the other hand, you can also **vote with your pocketbook** by choosing not to buy something, usually in response to the way the company operates. People do this to show companies that they aren't happy with their product or how they run their company.

To vote with your feet is a similar idiom that describes people walking away from a situation they don't agree with. For example, many nurses were unhappy with long working hours and inadequate pay, so they decided **to vote with their feet**, leaving their jobs at hospitals.

Voting with your pocketbook, which can also be said as **voting with your wallet**, is similar to **voting with your heart**, whereby you do what you believe is right for you. For instance, someone might want to vote strategically to stop the main political party from getting in power, but in the end **vote with his heart** and chose the party he likes the most.

Here's one more example with **to vote with your pocketbook**:

Lauren: I've always bought my clothes from the same store, but recently I found out they manufacture their clothing in sweatshops. I don't know what to do.

Philip: Maybe you should **vote with your pocketbook** and choose to shop somewhere else. I'm sure there are other shops with nice clothes that aren't made in sweatshops.

Lauren: You're right, I guess I could do that. The whole situation just doesn't sit well with me.

Philip: You might not be the only one who feels that way. It's possible that, with time, other people will be **voting with their wallets**, too, and companies will be forced to listen and take action. Otherwise, they're going to lose a lot of money.

Lauren: That would be great. If I can contribute to making a positive change, that makes me feel a bit better. I just hope other people do it, too.

Quiz

1. What does it mean to be the evil twin of something?

- a) to be a worse version of something
- b) to look different
- c) to appear and act identically
- d) to show a similar side to a person or a situation

2. Which of these best describes a perfect storm?

- a) a small, quick thunderstorm
- b) a pleasant, unexpected outcome from a series of bad events
- c) a combination of events that results in a catastrophic or unusual situation
- d) a storm that is followed by blue skies and sunshine

3. If something is at the heart of a situation, then it:

- a) is one of the contributing factors
- b) is the most important part
- c) is the least important part
- d) is located on the side

4. If you get laid off, you:

- a) get disciplined at work
- b) lie down
- c) get a new job
- d) lose your job

5. Which of these means to suffer the negative consequences of something?

- a) to fall down on something
- b) to blame the victim
- c) to break a fall
- d) to fall victim to something

Writing and Discussion Questions

1. Can you think of any evil twin characters you've seen on TV or read about in a book? What makes them similar and what makes the evil twin the worse counterpart?
2. Describe an occasion when a perfect storm has occurred in your life.
3. Do you know anyone who has been laid off? What were the reasons for this?
4. Have you ever fallen victim to a situation or an illness?
5. If you chose to vote with your pocketbook, which product would it be for and why?

Quiz Answers

1.a 2.c 3.b 4.d 5.d

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