

LEVEL 2

C1 - C2

Vicuña – the fibre of the gods

When asked whether they would pay over the odds for an object of fashion, people often dismiss this question with the **perfunctory** "It is not worth the money, as one pays for the brand only". Which is not always true, and such a response is a **blatant** sign of sheer ignorance.

The world's most expensive brand Loro Piana is not all about ripping you off your money only due to a cute-sounding name. Loro Piana represents a whole philosophy, a lifestyle, an outlook behind its brand name. The company is synonymous with not only luxury and superior-quality products but also with its undeniable commitment to environmental protection, **viz.**, securing and boosting the population of the endangered vicuña. The vicuña has always been prized for its finest fleece, and as such was on the brink of extinction due to excessive poaching. One animal produces only 200 grams of precious fleece once every two years! For many centuries it had been considered by the **indigenous** peoples of the Andes a divine creature and thus its fleece had been used to make **regal** clothes until one beautiful day it also became available to the general public thanks to Loro Piana's altruistic efforts.

In order to save the animal from poachers, Loro Piana, in cooperation with the Peruvian government, established a natural conservation park, where the vicuña was brought back to life and saved from total extermination. The animal can be **shorn** in spring only, and its fleece, which is only 12 micrometers thick (being the thinnest fleece in the world), is then yarned into magnificent pieces of clothing. Poachers used to kill these graceful animals for their fleece, which costs about \$600 per kilo. However, thanks to Loro Piana's charitable activities the vicuña is in safe hands now.

Yes, it is true that the prices of basic vicuña sweaters start at the staggering entry level of \$3500 per piece, this **exorbitance** is rightfully propped by the **arduous** process of making the **celestial** fabric.

So, next time you feel the urge to ridicule the prohibitive price of a particular item, linger for a while before spurting unfounded **opprobrium**.



RETELL

What attitude towards expensive fashion objects do most people have?

What is Loro Piana famous for?

What is special about the animal called vicuña?

How did Loro Piana help the animal?

How much is a vicuña sweater?



DISCUSS

It makes sense to buy expensive designer clothes.



ARGUMENT BANK

Can buying such items make you feel special and unique?

Are ultra-expensive items really made of different materials and in a different way?

Can they be an investment?

Is it likely that you pay extra only for excellent marketing?

Are the prices much higher than those of regular clothes?

Will an average person notice what you are wearing?

Make notes!

DEFINITIONS

Put the right letters next to the definitions.

A) perfunctory; **B) blatant**; C) viz.; **D) indigenous**; E) regal;
F) to shear (sheared, shorn); G) exorbitance; **H) arduous**;
I) celestial; **J) opprobrium**

- 1) royal

- 2) severe criticism

- 3) very obvious

- 4) to cut the wool off a sheep / hair on a person's head

- 5) local; existing/living in a particular place

- 6) difficult

- 7) done quickly, without taking care or interest

- 8) sth unreasonably high

- 9) supremely good

- 10) namely



Write down 5 arguments FOR.



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Write down 5 arguments AGAINST.



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GAPS

Say/Write full sentences by filling in the gaps with the correct forms of the phrases from the exercise above.

- 1) The _____ of the rates some private tutors charge for their lessons renders me speechless.
- 2) I will never cease to admire the _____ beauty of Debussy's music.
- 3) My partner and I share the same ambition, _____, to retire before 50.
- 4) Everything he said was a _____ lie!
- 5) He gave a _____ nod and disappeared into his room.
- 6) Hannah always speaks in a _____ manner as if she was born to an aristocratic family.
- 7) I had to rest for three days after our _____ climb to the top of Kilimanjaro.
- 8) After his thoughtless decision, the President is expected to face social _____.
- 9) Are you sure these species of lizard are _____ to this area?
- 10) My grandparents taught me how to _____ sheep to preserve the family business.



Write down the words you will use in your essay/speech.

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