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Materials for language learning

SHRINKFLATION

B1/B1+ lesson plan - reading and speaking



Warm-up

- Have you ever heard the term “shrinkflation”? What does it mean?
- Have you ever noticed a product getting smaller while the price stayed the same or went up? How did you feel about it?



Vocabulary match

- A. shrinkflation
- B. scandal
- C. packaging
- D. lawsuit
- E. defend
- F. production costs
- G. mislead
- H. consumer

- 1. The money a company spends to make a product (e.g. materials, energy, workers).
- 2. A serious problem that makes many people angry or upset.
- 3. To protect yourself by giving reasons or explanations.
- 4. A person who buys and uses products or services.
- 5. A situation where products get smaller but the price stays the same or goes up.
- 6. The materials used to wrap or cover a product.
- 7. To give someone the wrong idea, usually on purpose.
- 8. A legal case brought to a court by one side against another.



Sentence match

Beginnings:

- A. Customers felt tricked because the company...
- B. The court will decide if the company's actions were...
- C. If a business has very high expenses, it must...
- D. The organisation gave the company a prize for...
- E. Many buyers were unhappy about the...
- F. The company tried to justify its decision by saying...
- G. Wrapping that looks the same but hides smaller sizes can...
- H. People who shop for products are called...



Endings:

- 1. fair or against the law.
- 2. it had higher cocoa and energy bills.
- 3. reduced the size without changing the wrapper.
- 4. mislead customers.
- 5. consumers.
- 6. negative publicity.
- 7. "lying" to the public.
- 8. raise its prices or change the product.

Before we read

Here are some key points from the text. How will they be used in the text? What could be their meaning?

Mondelez

100g

90g

1.49 EUR

1.99 EUR

58 000

8%



Reading - Milka, Shrinkflation, and a Big Debate in Germany



Have you noticed that sometimes products get smaller, but the price stays the same or even goes up? This trick is called shrinkflation. It is happening all over the world, and recently, one of the most famous chocolate brands in Europe, Milka, has been at the centre of a big scandal in Germany.



Earlier this year, the company Mondelez, which makes Milka chocolate, reduced the size of its classic bars from 100 grams to 90 grams. At the same time, the price increased from €1.49 to €1.99. That means customers are paying almost 50% more per gram of chocolate. The problem is that the packaging looks almost the same, so many shoppers did not notice the change.



This led to a strong reaction from consumer groups. The German organisation Foodwatch called the new Milka bars the “most blatant advertising lie of the year.” Every year, Foodwatch gives a negative prize called the Golden Windbeutel (Golden Cream Puff) to the product that tricks customers the most. In 2025, more than 58,000 people voted, and Milka “won” the award.



The story did not stop there. The Hamburg Consumer Protection Agency also took action and filed a lawsuit against Mondelez. The case went to the Regional Court in Bremen. The agency argued that reducing the weight without changing the packaging design misled customers. They believe companies should make such changes very clear on the front of the package or change the size of the wrapper to match the smaller product.



Reading - Milka, Shrinkflation, and a Big Debate in Germany



Mondelez, however, defended its decision. The company said the weight was clearly written on the packaging and that it had informed consumers through social media. Mondelez also explained that production costs, especially for cocoa, energy, and logistics, have gone up sharply. For them, shrinking the bars was necessary to keep the business profitable.

But consumer groups were not convinced. Foodwatch pointed out that chocolate prices had only increased by about 8% between 2024 and 2025, far less than the nearly 50% increase that Mondelez passed on to customers.

The Milka case has started an important discussion in Germany. Should shrinkflation be legal if the weight is printed on the packaging, or should companies be forced to show the changes in a more obvious way? Many consumers feel that this practice is unfair and damages trust. Others argue that rising costs make shrinkflation unavoidable.

Whatever the answer, the Milka scandal has shown that people really do care about what is inside the package—and how much they are paying for it.



Comprehension

- What does the term shrinkflation mean?
- How did Mondelez change the Milka chocolate bars in 2025?
- Why did some consumers not notice the change at first?
- What is the Golden Windbeutel award, and why did Milka “win” it?
- Who filed a lawsuit against Mondelez, and where was the case taken?
- What reasons did Mondelez give for shrinking the chocolate bars?
- Why did Foodwatch disagree with Mondelez’s explanation?



Let's talk!

1. What is worse - shrinkflation or raising the price openly? Why?
2. Should companies be forced to clearly show when they reduce the size of a product? How?
3. What other strategies could companies use instead of shrinkflation when production costs rise?
4. How much do you usually pay attention to the weight or size of products when shopping?
5. Do you think shrinkflation changes people's trust in a brand? Why or why not?
6. In your opinion, what is fairer: smaller packages with the same price, or bigger prices with the same package?
7. How can consumers protect themselves from being misled in the supermarket?
8. Do you think governments should make new laws about shrinkflation, or is it enough that the weight is written on the packaging?
9. Would you stop buying a product if you found out it used shrinkflation? Why or why not?



Answer key

VOCABULARY MATCH

A-5, B-2, C-6, D-8, E-3, F-1, G-7, H-4

SENTENCE MATCH

A-3, B-1, C-8, D-7, E-6, F-2, G-4, H-5



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