



Anti-Valentine's Day

A critical look at love,
pressure & consumption

B2

Warm-up!

- What comes to mind when you hear Valentine's Day?
- Do you usually celebrate it? Why / why not?
- Do you think Valentine's Day is more about love or money?
- How do people who don't celebrate it usually feel on that day?



Gift rating

Rate the gift from the best ones to the worst ones. Explain your decision.

- a box of chocolates
- plant/flowers
- candles
- personalised card/letter
- romantic dinner
- jewellery
- teddy bears



- **Which gift is expensive?**
- **Which gift is romantic?**
- **Which gift is stressful?**



Vocabulary

Look at the words below. What do they mean? Are they verbs, adjectives or nouns?

- considerable
- significant
- pressure
- closeness
- to judge
- self-esteem
- to intensify
- to highlight
- existing
- to reveal
- to strengthen

Make a story with all of them!



Before we read A

We will read a text about the less discussed sides of Valentine’s Day. Look at the areas below. Predict what the text might say about each one.

Area	Your prediction
Money & spending	
Environment	
Mental health	
Relationships & breakups	
Single people	



Before we read B

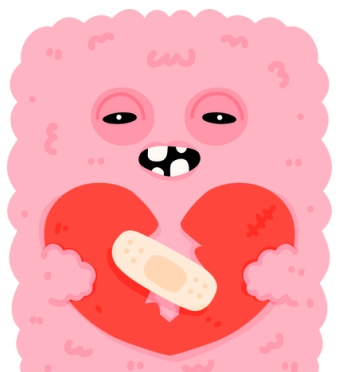
Match the numbers (A) with what you think they refer to (B).

A - Numbers

- 1. 14.6 billion
- 2. 25 million
- 3. 7,500 tonnes
- 4. 450 years
- 5. 7%

B. Meanings

- a. The amount of money spent on Valentine's Day in the US
- b. The time some Valentine's Day waste needs to decompose
- c. The number of Valentine's cards thrown away annually in the UK
- d. The percentage of people who break up on or around Valentine's Day
- e. The amount of plastic packaging waste produced



Reading - The hidden costs of Valentine's Day

Valentine's Day is often presented as a celebration of love, romance, and connection. However, behind the hearts and flowers, the holiday has a significant financial, environmental, and psychological cost.

In the United States alone, people spend around 14.6 billion dollars on Valentine's Day every year. On average, individuals feel social pressure to buy gifts, book expensive dinners, or plan "perfect" experiences. For many couples, this creates stress rather than closeness, especially when expectations are not clearly communicated.

The environmental impact of Valentine's Day is also considerable. In the UK, around 25 million Valentine's cards are bought and thrown away every year. In addition, approximately 7,500 tonnes of plastic packaging are produced for gifts, chocolates, and decorations. Items such as balloons can take up to 450 years to decompose, contributing to long-term pollution.



Reading - The hidden costs of Valentine's Day

Valentine's Day can also increase emotional pressure. People in relationships may feel judged if their celebration does not meet social or online standards, while single people often report feelings of loneliness or lowered self-esteem. Studies suggest that holidays focused on romantic success can intensify social comparison, particularly on social media.

Relationship pressure sometimes leads to conflict. Surveys show that around 7% of people have ended a relationship on or around Valentine's Day. For some couples, the holiday highlights existing problems rather than strengthening the bond.

Overall, while Valentine's Day can be enjoyable for some, it also reveals how commercialised celebrations may negatively affect mental health, relationships, finances, and the environment.



Comprehension gap-fill

Complete the sentences using information from the text.

1. Around 14.6 billion dollars are spent on Valentine's Day in the _____.
2. About 25 million Valentine's _____ are thrown away in the UK every year.
3. Valentine's Day creates around 7,500 tonnes of plastic _____.
4. Some Valentine's Day waste can take up to _____ years to decompose.
5. About 7% of people report breaking up on or around _____.



Cute Writing – Anti-Valentine Poems

Write 4–6 lines

It can be:

- funny
- anti-commercial
- about self-love or friendship
- rhyming is optional 😊

***Roses are read,
Violets are blue.
Money is tight.
Let's go to the park.***





Speaking A - Rethinking celebrations

Brainstorm alternative ways to celebrate holidays that are:

- less stressful
- cheaper
- better for the environment
- better for mental health

Examples categories:

- Activities
- Gifts
- No-gift ideas
- Celebrating alone / with friends



Speaking B - let's talk!

1. Do you think Valentine's Day puts unrealistic pressure on people? Why / why not?
2. Is it possible to celebrate Valentine's Day in a healthy way?
3. Should holidays be more about personal meaning than tradition?
4. Would you like to change how Valentine's Day is celebrated in your culture?





Answer key

Gap Fill (Comprehension)

1. United States / US
2. cards
3. packaging / waste
4. 450
5. Valentine's Day

Sources

1. <https://www.cnbc.com/2025/02/14/americans-to-spend-14point6-billion-on-valentines-day-report-finds.html>
2. <https://www.businesswaste.co.uk/seasonal/valentines-day-waste/valentines-day-waste-facts/>
3. <https://today.yougov.com/society/articles/27894-valentines-day-break-up-relationships-poll>





Thank you!
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