

- 1 a. You will read an article about the advantages and disadvantages of convenience stores compared with supermarkets. Before you read, discuss the following in pairs.
- 1 What do you understand by the term 'convenience stores'? In what ways are they convenient?
  - 2 Do you usually shop at the supermarket, or do you prefer to use the local corner shop/general store? What are the differences in terms of a) price, b) convenience, c) service, d) quality and variety of produce, and e) opening hours?
  - 3 How has the rise of supermarkets affected smaller local shops?
- b. Look at the title. What might be the 'cost of convenience'?

- 2 a. Now read the article. Six paragraphs have been removed. Choose from the paragraphs A-G the one which fits each gap (1-6). There is one extra paragraph.
- b. Underline the parts of the article which helped you to decide on the missing paragraphs, then compare with a partner.

### Vocabulary Practice

- 3 a. Match the columns to make collocations. Then make sentences with them based on the text.

A	B
1 supermarket	a a shopping list
2 hike up	b to pay
3 draw up	c minimarket
4 queue up	d cashback
5 the weekend	e longer hours
6 open	f chains
7 local	g the prices

# The Cost of Convenience

How often have you sat comfortably at home and thought: Fresh chocolate croissants for breakfast would be nice, or freshly laid eggs scrambled, with smoked salmon would hit the spot, but let it go because it's too much trouble to make yourself look presentable in public, get into something outdoorsy, find the car keys, get the car out of the garage – the list gets longer – and you go off the boil?

1

If you live in a city, one or another of the big supermarket chains will have opened such a store near you, and they all have plans for many, many more.

2

It's not just the improvement in convenience stores that is encouraging shoppers to stay local. By walking to the shop, you not only help your health and the environment, you also save the cost of petrol. If you are one of the many people who only use the car for the weekend shop, you could ditch it altogether.

3

Not surprisingly, owners of more old-fashioned, independent stores feel threatened. Their main fear is that the supermarkets' greater buying power will enable them to price the smaller stores out of the market.

4

The difference doesn't look like much in terms of pounds and pence – 10p extra on six eggs, 3p on a litre of fabric softener, 6p more for 80 teabags compared with the prices in the main branches. But if you pop into your local minimarket on a regular basis, the premium prices soon add up.

5

Supermarkets defend their policy, pointing out that overheads vary from one type of store to another: "We have a national pricing policy, so our prices are the same in similar formats throughout the country. Prices do, however, vary between our differing formats as their resourcing requirements and cost structure vary. For example, our local convenience stores are open longer hours, and are generally in higher cost locations, such as city centres."

6

If you are one of those who can't resist nipping in to your local shop there are several ways to contain costs. Draw up a shopping list and stick to it. Cook from scratch if you have time; pre-prepared food costs more. Only take up special offers, such as three for the price of two, if it applies to items you use regularly, and supplement with items from cheaper sources when possible – fruit and vegetables from your local market or farm shop, and the supermarket's own brand tinned, frozen