

A Life of Luxury

“Whoever said money can’t buy happiness didn’t know where to shop.”
— Gertrude Stein

Warm up

- What’s the most ridiculous or unnecessary thing you’ve ever seen a rich person buy?
- Do you think money changes people or does it just reveal who they really are?
- Is being a billionaire still impressive or is it becoming socially unacceptable?
- Would you rather have:
 - \$100 million and a normal life
 - \$5 billion but with constant security guards and press attention?
- If you had the power to redistribute wealth, what *simple rule* would you create? (e.g., “no one can earn more than 50× their lowest-paid employee.”)



1. You just became a billionaire overnight. What’s on your “zero-guilt shopping list”?
Choose 3 items from below (or add new ones), the more outrageous, the better.



Private jet



Super yacht



Private chef



Space tourism



Villa



Sports team

Talking About Pros & Cons

Giving Advantages

One advantage of...is... → *One advantage of flying private is saving time.*

A benefit is... → *A benefit is not having to wait in airport lines.*

The biggest pro is... → *The biggest pro is flexibility; you can fly whenever you want.*

Giving Disadvantages

However, the downside is... → *However, the downside is the astronomical cost.*

A major problem is... → *A major problem is the emissions per passenger.*

The biggest con is... → *The biggest con is the environmental impact.*

Cause & Effect

Due to... → *Due to the low number of passengers, private jets emit more CO₂.*

so... → *Fuel is three times more expensive, so most airlines don't use SAF.*

as a result... → *Only 1% of people fly private, but as a result they cause almost half of aviation emissions.*



2. Work in pairs or small groups. Talk about the good and bad sides of each idea. Use the phrases above to explain your reasons.

"Luxury travel should be taxed heavily to protect the environment."

"There should be a maximum wealth limit, just like there is a minimum wage."

"If you can afford a private jet, you should be allowed to use it."

"There should be a global limit on how many flights a person can take each year."

"Ultra-rich people should not be allowed to buy scarce cultural items (e.g., T. Rex skeletons)."

"Billionaires should not be allowed to run for political office."

Match the Item to the Correct Price

\$150 \$4000 \$5,000 \$5,300 \$10,000 \$18,000
 \$25,000 \$28,000 \$115,000 \$380,000 \$1,800,000 \$31,800,000

	ITEM	PRICE
a.	 <u>A lock of Elvis Presley's hair</u> : Collected by his personal barber and kept in a sealed jar for decades. Sold at auction in 2002 to a private collector.	\$115,000
b.	 <u>Andy Warhol's "Medicine Cabinet" photo print</u> : A large photographic print of Warhol's bathroom cabinet, showing his pills, plasters, and vitamins. Sold at auction as "art."	\$25,000
c.	  <u>The Sugar Factory 24K Gold Monster Burger (Las Vegas)</u> : Wagyu beef, truffle cheese, gold-dusted fries, and a gold milkshake, all covered in edible 24-carat gold.	\$150
d.	  <u>FleurBurger (Las Vegas)</u> : Kobe beef, foie gras, truffle sauce, served with rare wine at a luxury restaurant.	\$5,000
e.	  <u>Louis Vuitton Jenga Set</u> : A classic wooden block game... except every block is wrapped in LV leather and stored in a designer trunk.	\$4,000
f.	  <u>Hermès Diamond Birkin Bag</u> : Crocodile leather handbag with 10+ carats of diamonds on white gold hardware, owned by celebrities & investors.	\$380,000
g.	 <u>A full T. Rex skeleton ("Stan")</u> : 39-foot dinosaur fossil, 67 million years old, bought by a private buyer for display.	\$31.8m
h.	  <u>24-karat gold PlayStation 5</u> : A working PS5 completely plated in real gold, sold by a luxury tech brand – limited edition.	\$10,000
i.	  <u>Kanye West's used Nike Air Yeezy sneakers</u> : Worn on stage, then resold at auction, one of the most expensive pairs of shoes ever sold.	\$1.8m
j.	  <u>Salvatore Garau's Invisible Sculpture ("Io Sono")</u> : A "sculpture" with no physical object, only empty space. Sold with a certificate and instructions to display it in a 5x5 foot area.	\$18,000
k.	  <u>Grilled Cheese with the Virgin Mary Image</u> : A 10-year-old grilled cheese sandwich said to show the Virgin Mary's face. Never molded, sold online as a "miracle snack".	\$28,000
l.	  <u>Scarlett Johansson's Used Tissue</u> : A tissue she blew her nose into on live TV. Sold on eBay with the tissue, bag, and photo for proof.	\$5,300



3. Discuss in pairs or small groups.

- Which item shocked you the most? Why?
- Which one (if any) do you secretly *kind of* want?
- At what point does a purchase stop being “luxury” and start becoming “ridiculous”?
- Why do you think people pay huge amounts for things like celebrity hair or invisible art?
- Who do you think is more responsible for these extreme prices: the people selling the items or the people buying them? Why?
- Are these purchases a sign of wealth, boredom, or status addiction?
- If you had unlimited money, do you think *you* would stay sensible – or eventually buy crazy things too?



4. Match these words to their definitions. You will use these words in this worksheet and hear them at the end of the lesson in a short video.

- | | | |
|-------------------|---|---|
| a. jet setter | 5 | 1. Gases released into the air, especially CO ₂ |
| b. emissions | 1 | 2. A large building where airplanes are stored and repaired |
| c. hangar | 2 | 3. Extremely high, unbelievably large |
| d. astronomical | 3 | 4. To balance or reduce a negative effect. |
| e. to offset | 4 | 5. A person who travels often to luxury places |
| f. discrepancy | 7 | 6. A person who travels by plane very often |
| g. frequent flyer | 6 | 7. A noticeable difference between two things |



5. Fill in the gaps with the correct vocab from exercise 2.

- a. The cost of flying a private jet is so *astronomical* that even millionaires sometimes think twice.
- b. Some celebrities try to *offset* their carbon footprint by donating to tree-planting projects.
- c. A private plane needs its own *hangar* which can cost more per year than most people's houses.
- d. There's a huge *discrepancy* between how much pollution rich travellers create and how much ordinary people create.
- e. My cousin is such a *jet setter*. She flies somewhere new with her rich husband almost every weekend!
- f. Private jets create far more CO₂ *emissions* per passenger than commercial flights.
- g. Many *frequent flyers* earn so many air miles that they never have to pay for upgrades anymore.



6. You're about to watch a TED Talk about private jets, the ultra-rich, and climate impact. Before watching discuss the questions below in pairs or small groups.

- What do you *expect* the speaker will say about them? Will it be positive or negative? Why?
- Who do you think uses private jets the most?
- What do you think is the biggest problem with them: cost? environment? inequality?
- Do you think private jets will ever be banned?



7. Watch the TED Talk 'How much does it cost to fly private?'¹ and answer the questions below.

- a. How many private jet flights did one celebrity take in a single year? *396*
- b. What's the price per hour for a private jet in the U.S.? *\$7,500 - \$17,00 per hour*
- c. How much does a new private jet cost? *\$2 million to \$65 million*
- d. How many times more CO₂ does a private jet emit per passenger compared to commercial? *10 to 20 times more*
- e. What % of flyers cause almost half of aviation emissions? *1%*
- f. What is SAF made from? *Waste materials like used cooking oil, and renewable crops like corn and algae*
- g. Why don't airlines use it widely yet? *It's extremely expensive (3× the cost of normal fuel) and production is still small-scale.*
- h. What role could wealthy private jet users play in changing aviation fuel? *By choosing SAF and paying the extra cost, they could fund large-scale production and development, making the fuel cheaper and more accessible for everyone.*

¹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vOBjtotp-Gw>