

Lesson outcome

Learners can exchange ideas about online grocery shopping and participate in a discussion about the future of this phenomenon in France.

Background 1 Work in pairs. Read the background and discuss the questions.

- 1 What is French retailer Carrefour's latest venture?
- 2 What strategies have Carrefour's competitors adopted recently?
- 3 How have French consumers reacted to e-commerce to date, according to the article?
- 4 What do the expressions 'tie-up' and 'ramp up' mean in this context?
- 5 How do you think French consumers will react to the 'new grocery shopping experience'?

BACKGROUND

French retailer Carrefour boosts e-commerce aspirations with Google partnership

France's Carrefour has signed a strategic partnership with tech giant Google to accelerate a long-awaited digital transformation of the world's second-largest retailer by providing a 'new grocery shopping experience'. From early 2019 Carrefour will allow customers to buy its products through a new Google shopping website in France. Carrefour is facing strong competitive pressure in its largest market, where E. Leclerc recently launched in Paris and Amazon has signed a distribution deal with rival Casino. The tie-up represents the most high-profile initiative yet unveiled by Alexandre Bompard, who took over as chief executive of Carrefour in July 2017 and has vowed to ramp up the group's investments in e-commerce, which it had historically been slow to adopt.

adapted from *Financial Times* (2018)



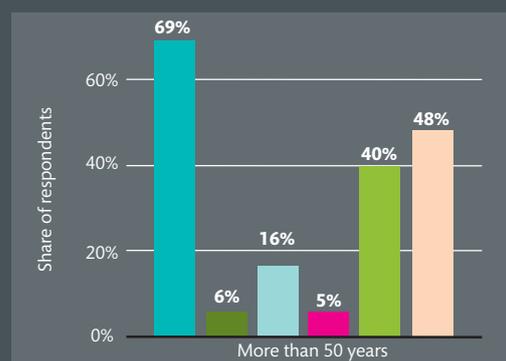
Finding out what consumers think

2A Work in pairs. In 2015, French consumers over 50 were asked their thoughts about online grocery shopping. Look at the survey results. Use the expressions in the box to complete the summary as you read.

- | | | |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------|
| a almost half | c roughly 70 per cent | e only 5% |
| b almost the same number | d just under 5% | f a little over 15% |

While **(a)** _____ of the over 50s in France admit to actually enjoying the grocery shopping experience, **(b)** _____ admit to doing it purely out of habit. **(c)** _____ appreciate being able to look at the fresh produce before they buy them and **(d)** _____ like being able to ask a shop assistant for advice. Access to the Internet, or rather the lack of it, is an issue for **(e)** _____ of the population, but **(f)** _____ still claim to be worried about online payment methods and as a result choose not to shop online for their groceries.

Why don't you regularly buy food products on the Internet?



- I like to see/touch the product before buying
- I need to be advised by a seller
- I do not trust the means of online payments
- I do not have easy access to the Internet
- By habit
- I enjoy going out and going to the shops

Source: adapted from <https://www.statista.com/statistics/766108/reasons-not-buy-sure-internet-products-food-france/> (2015)

B Work in pairs. What are *your* predictions for consumers under 50? Go to Additional materials. How accurate were your predictions? Discuss why (not).

3A Go to Additional materials. Read comments from 3 consumers, Sylvie, Noemi and Khalid, talking about their experience of online grocery shopping. Who is mainly concerned about:

- 1 good service
- 2 good user experience
- 3 quality produce

B Summarise the points the consumers make about improving online grocery shopping in France.

Carrefour responds to demand

4A Read about how Carrefour attempts to provide solutions to the needs of shoppers in France.

Student A: Read the article below.

Student B: Read the article in Additional materials.

B Tell your partner in your own words about the article you read. How is Carrefour responding to the issues raised by the consumers in 4A?

Carrefour buys French meal-kit delivery start up Quitoque

Carrefour has bought a French meal-kit delivery startup as the world's second largest retailer by revenues seeks to ramp up its e-commerce strategy. Carrefour
 5 said on Thursday that it has bought a majority stake in Quitoque, a 'food-tech' company that sells online meal kits. Each week Quitoque's subscribers receive a variety of healthy recipes to be made at home with local, organic and seasonal products. Under new chief executive Alexandre Bompard, Carrefour announced in January a sweeping transformation plan to boost growth and profitability by
 10 2020. As part of this overhaul, Carrefour plans to increase investment in digital six-fold to €2.8bn over five years with a target to reach €5bn in food e-commerce sales by 2022. 'Quitoque will enable us to strengthen our position in the food-tech industry in order to provide an omnichannel response to new consumer habits through the combination of proximity, convenience and quality.' [...].

adapted from *Financial Times* (2018)



TASK

Debating for and against online grocery shopping

5A Read the motion:

This house believes online grocery shopping is the future in France.

Work in two groups: Group A is *for* the motion and Group B is *against* the motion. Use the information in this worksheet and/or go online and carry out your own research to prepare your position. Here are some ideas you may want to consider as well as your own:

- For: practicality, no unwanted purchases, price checking, avoid busy shops
- Against: lack of choice, delivery costs, poor quality, incorrect orders

B Carry out a debate and come to a final decision.

6 Prepare a report (150-200 words) to defend your personal views on the subject, whether you are for or against the motion. Try to present a balanced view.

Self-assessment

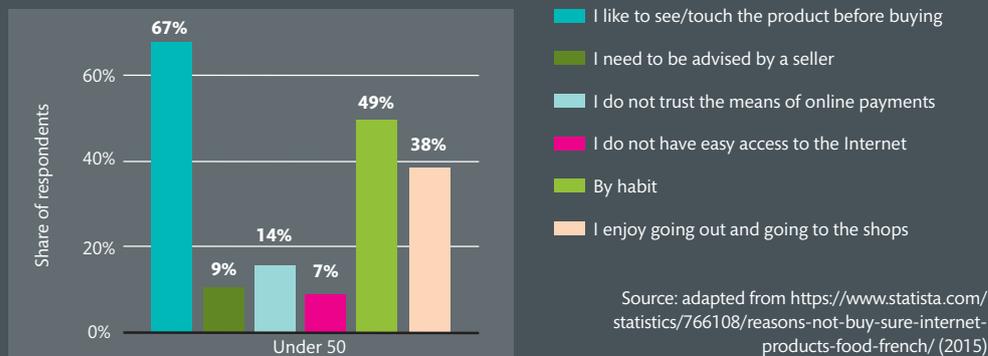
- How successfully have you achieved the lesson outcome? Give yourself a score from 0 (I need more practice) to 5 (I know this well)
- Go to My Self-assessment in MyEnglishLab to reflect on what you have learnt.



Additional materials B1+

Additional materials 2

Why don't you regularly buy food products on the Internet?



3A

Sylvie

Personally, convenience is not really an issue for me, it's the quality of the food that counts. My family are very fussy, so no bruised fruit or wilting lettuce please. I'm also quite traditional; I want to see what I'm buying before I buy it; I want to be reassured the produce is fresh, organic if possible and of good quality. The one time I did buy groceries online, I complained – they'd chosen the smallest veg and the worst quality meat products – just not the things I would have chosen for myself. You'll really need to try hard to convince me this is the future of shopping!

Noemi

Time is precious, especially when you're managing a job, three small kids and a dog! If I have to hang around at home waiting for a grocery delivery, I don't want to know. And to be honest, I pass the supermarket on the way home from work every day, so why not just pop in and do the shopping? That said, if I could save time by not having to go to the supermarket, I would. I heard some places are offering a 'click and collect' system – now that would work for me.

Khalid

I'm a millennial, I grew up with tech. I buy most of my clothes online, so why not my food too?

The user experience is so key. I think the clothes market has got it right – the labelling, the photos, auto-correction assistance and easy to navigate sites with proper search algorithms. I haven't found one supermarket that really encourages me to shop online. If grocery shopping is going to be even more laborious and time-consuming on a badly designed, poorly functioning Web site, then I'll stick with the live version, thanks!

Additional materials 5

FRENCH RETAILER CARREFOUR BOOSTS E-COMMERCE ASPIRATIONS WITH GOOGLE PARTNERSHIP

In January Carrefour CEO, Alexandre Bompard announced a five-year growth strategy as part of a push to reach €5bn in food e-commerce sales by 2022. As part of the tie-up with Google, Carrefour will open an innovation lab with Google Cloud to work on developing new services based on artificial intelligence. Google will also help train 1,000 Carrefour employees in new technologies. Carrefour is the first retailer in France to partner with Google, which recently launched a new Shopping Actions program that allows customers to shop for products on the Google Assistant and Search with a universal cart across their mobile, desktop and Google Home devices. Google has already teamed up with major US retailers on voice-based shopping, which lets customers buy from their websites through the Google Express app or by placing a voice order with the help of the Google Assistant.

adapted from *Financial Times* (2018)



Answer key B1+

- 1 1 Carrefour is launching new brands and buying other properties.
- 2 E.Leclerc supermarkets have opened in Paris and Casino has signed a distribution deal with Amazon.
- 3 They have not been willing to shop online.
- 4 'tie-up' = link; 'ramp up' = improve

2A

- a almost half
- b almost the same number
- c roughly 70 per cent
- d just under 5%
- e only 5%
- f a little over 15%

3A

- 1 Noemi
- 2 Khalid
- 3 Sylvie

3B (Sample answers)

Sylvie is a traditional shopper who is more interested in good quality, organic produce that is fresh than convenience. She has ordered food online once but was forced to complain about the quality of the food she received. For the moment, she is not convinced online is the future of grocery shopping.

Noemi is a busy working mum and convenience is important for her. She currently shops on her way home from work and doesn't want to waste time waiting for grocery deliveries. However, she is interested in the 'click and collect' system some supermarkets offer.

Khalid is young and sees online grocery shopping as the future. However, for the moment, he hasn't found a supermarket that offers the quality of online service he wants. Most sites are difficult to navigate and are not optimised (e.g. marketing opportunities). He thinks supermarkets can learn a lot from the clothing industry.