

5. Services

Mother decided that 10-year-old Cathy should get something 'practical' for her birthday.

'Suppose we open a savings account for you?' mother suggested. Cathy was delighted.

'It's your account, darling,' mother said as they arrived at the bank, 'so you fill out the application.'

Cathy was doing fine until she came to the space for 'Name of your former bank.' After a slight hesitation, she put down 'Piggy.'



Questions

1. What can be done if your house needs redecorating or rebuilding?
2. What do you do if you need to have some small repairs done in the household?
3. What is involved in proper car maintenance?
4. What services does a post office offer?
5. Who are the main competitors of post offices?
6. What services do banks offer?
7. Why is internet banking useful?
8. What are the most important types of financial institutions?
9. Why is it useful to have a bank card?
10. What is an ATM used for?
11. What are the most widespread kinds of bank accounts?
12. What are student loans?
13. What are the most important types of insurance?
14. How is it possible to take out insurance?
15. Why do people buy travel insurance?
16. What are public utility services?
17. Why do people use car rental services?
18. How can you rent a car?



19. What services do travel agencies offer?
20. How can people arrange their holidays?
21. What is the job of tour operators?
22. How and where can you exchange currency?
23. What is a warranty?
24. What can you do if you are not satisfied with the product you have bought?
25. Where can people eat out?
26. What explains the popularity of self-service and takeaway restaurants?
27. What is a new service offered by a lot of restaurants?

**Answers**

Track 29–34.

1. What can be done if your house needs redecorating or rebuilding?

It is possible to do the redecorating alone or with the help of friends, or with the help of professionals. If you decide to do it yourself, not only do you have to do the work, but you also have to spend a lot of time going to the shops to buy all the necessary materials. Another possibility is to turn to professionals who usually work well, though occasionally you have to ask them to redo some work when you are not satisfied with what they have done. Employing professionals is quite expensive but they work faster and better than friends and family members who do not have so much time and experience. As for rebuilding, you have to get permits from different authorities and commission an architect to design the changes. Hiring a building contractor who oversees the work of the bricklayers, joiners, plumbers, electricians, tilers and painters is advisable.

2. What do you do if you need to have some small repairs done in the household?

Usually when something goes wrong, like the tap is dripping, it is enough to call a repairman who comes in a couple of days. You can look up a repairman in the Yellow Pages or read through the classified advertisements in a newspaper, or search on the net. I think it is best to ask friends if they know a reliable repairman and ask for his phone number and then make an appointment. If there is a problem with an electrical appliance, you can take it to a repair shop or back to the store where it was bought to get it repaired.

3. What is involved in proper car maintenance?

As soon as you feel there is something wrong with your car like any kind of irregular noise, vibration or shudder, or you notice some leak or any warning light comes on while driving, you should have your car inspected at a dealer or a garage since it might be unsafe to drive. Even if there is no problem with the car, it is advisable to take it to a garage every six months or after every 15,000 kilometres. They check the car thoroughly, change the oil and the filter, check the coolant level, and repair everything that does not work properly. A mechanic can

also lift the car and check major components such as brakes and suspension. This is important because many components, for example, ball joints, cannot be inspected visually.

4. What services does a post office offer?

Post offices offer a wide range of services. They deal with selling stamps, envelopes, postcards, scratch cards, phone cards, and in some countries also lottery tickets. You can post letters and parcels, send telegrams and faxes, pay your bills, transfer money, and subscribe to newspapers or magazines or buy them. Some post offices also provide insurance services and foreign currency exchange. What is more, it is possible to withdraw money from your bankcard or refill your pre-paid mobile phone card there.

5. Who are the main competitors of post offices?

The main competitors of post offices are private businesses which offer postal services mainly for enterprises. These companies include Federal Express, UPS, that is, United Parcel Service, and DHL. They operate outside normal business hours too, and provide reliable door-to-door services all over the world. Moreover, they offer a range of non-standard handling services which is particularly useful when you want to send shipments that require special handling and documentation.

6. What services do banks offer?

Banks offer a wide choice of services. People can open accounts and sign a contract for internet banking. Banks also deal with savings and deposits, payment services, various kinds of loans, insurance, foreign currency exchanges, and leasing. Moreover, they issue bank cards, that is, debit and credit cards, and provide safe deposit boxes as well as investment services. People who make fixed payments at regular intervals can arrange a standing order for the bank to settle their bills.

7. Why is internet banking useful?

Internet banking makes life easier since people do not have to queue in banks to carry out different kinds of business transactions. They can give orders to the bank simply by logging on to the bank's website and they can also check the balance of their accounts whenever they want to do so. Some people are sceptical about the security of websites though most banks use some kind of security method, such as the PIN/TAN system, to protect the data of the customers.

8. What are the most important types of financial institutions?

The most important financial institutions include several kinds of banks, brokerage firms, insurance companies, pension funds. There are three main types of banks, that is, retail banks, investment banks and central banks. Most people have an account with a commercial or a savings bank since they are the most widespread types of retail banks. Investment banks operate mainly in the US and they buy stocks and shares and sell them to the public. Central banks do not deal with accounts but are responsible for a country's money circulation and for issuing banknotes and coins. Brokerage firms offer investment advice to their clients,