

# Price and value

## Discussion

What would you normally spend on:

a new shirt

a hi-fi system

a pair of shoes

food for a week

a one-week holiday

a party for your friends

What do you think is a reasonable amount of money to spend on:

a haircut

a wedding

decorating a bedroom

a flat

a car

a nanny/childminder for a week

a coat for a child

a night out

a year's membership of a gym

Compare your answers in pairs or small groups.

## Reading

Read the article below and compare what the stars spend with what you thought was reasonable. How do you feel about it? Choose from the options below.

- I think it's disgusting and wasteful that they spend so much money.
- They've earned their money. If I was a movie star, I'd do the same.
- Sometimes it's wasteful, but sometimes they're just doing what they have to to keep in the business.

Do you have a different reaction? If so, what?

### THE PRICE OF EVERYTHING, THE VALUE OF NOTHING!

*Variety* magazine, the American film industry 'bible', recently published the astonishing 'fact' that an American movie star needs £36.65m to maintain a movie-star lifestyle. Figures quoted include £1.5m a year on entertaining; £720,000 a year on hair, make-up and grooming; and £280,000 on holidays.

Celebrity in Britain comes a little cheaper but will still leave most of us gasping. Take celebrity grooming: a visit to a top stylist will cost £125; a personal trainer £695 for 12 sessions (you can't just join the gym at £1,750 a year!). And what about that weekly pedicure and manicure, the legwax, and a Swedish massage every week? It all adds up to about £30,000 a year.

Homes and home life is always the biggest expense. Guy Ritchie and Madonna spent over £5m on their London home; the Beckhams a modest £2.5m for a seven-bedroom mansion in Hertfordshire. Mrs Beckham describes it as 'very

cosy'. The Beckhams then spent £3m on refurbishment including £20,000 on fibre optic lights to recreate the night sky in Brooklyn's bedroom; while Madonna had a £200,000 glass kitchen installed. £8m a year to run a house.

Cars: well, allow anything up to £150,000 – a Ferrari for Mr Beckham, please. Weddings: Madonna spent £1.5m on hers, whereas the Beckhams' was cheap at only £500,000.

Children: don't ask. Hospital fees at the time of the birth at £1-2,000 a night, nannies at £1,000 a week (including the solicitor to make sure they don't sell your story to the papers), and as for children's clothes! A Gucci baby leather jacket is £900.

Then there's clothes, staff, holidays, PR people – all at prices you and I probably wouldn't believe. British movie stars still aren't in the same league as their US counterparts but at £15m a year to keep it all going, they're not doing too badly!

## True or false?

Are the following sentences true (T) or false (F) according to the passage above?

- On average British movie stars spend more on grooming than American movie stars.
- The Beckhams spent more on redecorating their home than the house itself cost.
- Gucci baby clothes are not very expensive.
- On average, American movie stars spend more money maintaining their lifestyle than British movie stars.