

IKEA store in Beijing

Instructions: This is the IB English B listening practise test one. Text C, the start and end of the audio text will be indicated by this sound. Text C you now have four minutes to read the questions. Text C you are going to listen to a reporter who visited an IKEA store in Beijing where he observed a new shopping experience for customers

Reporter: One Sunday last month I packed up the family and headed out to Su Yuan Shao IKEA store in northeastern Beijing. It looks like any other but it's just much much bigger. And inside too the crowds are bigger up to 30,000 people can pass through in a day and it feels that way the walkway that snakes through the store to the cashier was absolutely chockers. Often coming to a standstill this was not going to be the quick get in and get our job that I was hoping for, but among the chaos, I spot two small children fast asleep on the display bed under the display blankets. Curious I take a closer look no parents around it seemed odd then the elderly Chinese gentleman next to me tells me that the parents are shopping and the bed is very comfortable. Then just around the corner, I see a mother whose bunk down in one of the display bedrooms. She tucks her child into the cot and then gets into the bed next to it and pulls the sheet over ahead totally oblivious to the thousands around her. And she's in for the long haul.

Next to the bed, she's carefully laid-out some toys water and lunch for when they awake. So what is happening here the scene is repeated everywhere people sleeping on the Knossberg or Karlstad sofas kids doing their homework at desks and people having deep and meaningful in the display kitchens. It's different, to say the least IKEA with Chinese characteristics but it's just so bizarre I had to return and ask why.

So I went back last week and was greeted with the same scenes a newly engaged couple was sound asleep on the Oblem bed. I waited till they awoke. 32-year-old Miss Tian said they'd been at IKEA all day and were tired and after all, it was good to try before you buy.

Woman: I was tired and this bed it's quite good so I came here for a little rest in Beijing when old women buy cucumber at the market they try it before they buy since IKEA has put out the beds the customers have the right to sleep and try them.

Reporter: In the next display room another young couple were just tidying the bed they slept in. They come to IKEA two to three times a month Mr Wong says people sleeping is actually good marketing.

Man 1: When a customer sleeps soundly at IKEA it's a good advertisement for IKEA it means the bed is comfortable he may buy it and others would too it's good.

Reporter: Then an almost touching scene a grandfather feeding his two-year-old granddaughter before he puts it down for a nap Mr. Soon says he comes to IKEA at least once a week and each time tries out a different display room. He says it's better than going to the park the kids can play and he gets a free coffee.

Man 2: Some people don't like it that we sleep in the beds but to me it's good it greatly IKEA motto it's our home. I come for the good experience and it's been years and it's free. No IKEA staff have ever stopped me. I think their service is great so the customers like coming here.

Reporter: I came to realize that for the Chinese IKEA is a kind of theme park a complete day out of family fun well you can try out the display rooms, play with the toys and enjoy the novelty of cheap Swedish food. Apparently, IKEA tried to mount a crackdown on sleeping customers last year putting in place a nationwide ban but it's clearly not working and IKEA has admitted it's not going to do much about it. Saying in a statement they were happy if customers felt at home and would only stop them if it inconvenienced others and it's clearly good for business. China is IKEA is fastest-growing markets an eighth of the 10 biggest IKEA stores are here, in fact, the stores are designed with extra room displays to accommodate Chinese customers and their habits. I've been to IKEA three times now and I've got to say I've become almost unfazed by the sleeping and have been tempted to have a nanny nap myself but I won't be leaving my kids alone for a kip on a Stockholm couch any time soon.

Instructions: You now have two minutes before you hear Text C for a second and final time.

Script repeated.

Instructions: You now have 2 minutes and 30 seconds to finish answering the questions.