A2 · Student lesson · 60–90 minutes

Same Money. Smaller Basket.

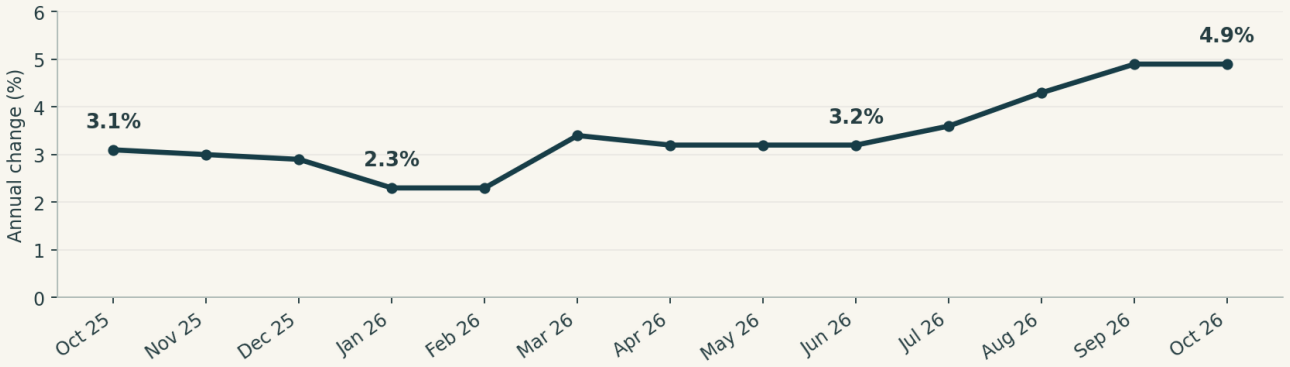
Compare past and present prices, suggest simple savings, and explain what you would keep.

Talk first

1. Which do you notice more: food prices, travel prices or prices for going out?

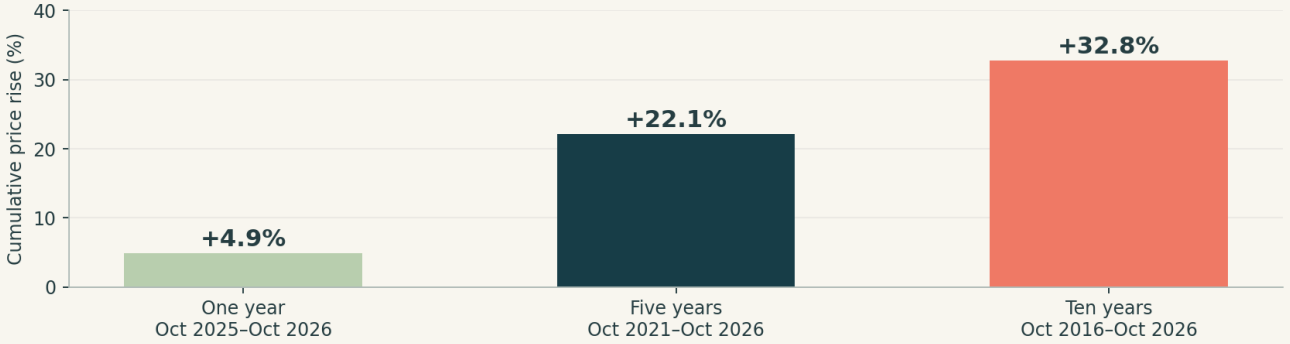
2. A café drink costs more. Do you buy it less often, choose another place or keep buying it? Why?

Inflation changed. Prices kept rising.



Spain · annual CPI rate, each month compared with the same month a year earlier. These are not month-on-month increases. INE; October 2025–October 2026. Latest release: 13 November 2026.

Same endpoint. Different starting prices.



Spain · national general CPI, same-month comparisons ending October 2026. One year: +4.9%; five years: +22.1%; ten years: +32.8%. The periods overlap: do not add them. Illustrative equivalent of a €100 basket: €104.90, €122.10 or €132.80, respectively. Not the prices of a specific grocery list.

Notice the difference: a slowing positive inflation rate still means the price level is rising.

Did pay keep up?

Spain, April–June 2026 compared with April–June 2025: average gross wage cost per worker rose 4.0%. General consumer prices rose about 3.2%. That average comparison does not mean every worker received a raise. Sources: INE wage-cost release and monthly CPI series.

More money—or more shopping?

Original source-informed classroom reading · Research snapshot: 13 November 2026

You go to the supermarket with the same money as before. You buy fewer things. The cost of living is the money we need for everyday life: food, a home, travel and bills. When many prices rise, we call this inflation. But prices do not all change in the same way. One food can become cheaper while another becomes much more expensive.

The charts compare prices in Spain. Look at the dates carefully. The one-year, five-year and ten-year figures all finish in October 2026. The OCU food chart uses a different study period. OCU is a Spanish consumer organization. Its basket is not the same as the government's basket. Both can help us ask better questions about shopping.

People can try to spend less. They can compare prices, buy store brands or use food they already have. Some eat out less often or wait before buying new clothes. These are possible choices, not rules for every family. A cheaper shop is not always near home. A large pack is not useful if you cannot finish the food.

A pay raise helps, but we also need to ask what that money can buy. Imagine your pay rises by 3% and your usual shopping costs 5% more. You have more money, but you can buy less with it. This is an example, not a report about everyone's pay.

What should the government do? It could limit some prices or give extra help to people who need it. Shops also need enough money to pay workers and buy products. There is no easy answer for every situation. Start with a simpler question: what would you spend less on, and what would you protect?

Read, think, connect

Choose one sentence you agree with and one idea you want to question. Explain your choices to a partner. You may use fictional examples.

A useful phrase from the article: _____

My example: _____

Language worth keeping

cost of living — the money people need for everyday things

bill — a request to pay for something, such as electricity

afford — have enough money to pay for something

save money — keep money or spend less than before

spend less on — use a smaller amount of money for something

store brand — a product sold with a shop’s own name

do without — live or manage without something

pay raise — an increase in the money you earn at work

Use two expressions to describe different spending choices. Give enough context to show their meaning.

Useful language

• Food is more expensive than it was before.

• I spend less on ___ because ___.

• We could save money by ___.

• I would rather keep ___ and give up ___.

• I can do without ___, but ___ is important to me.

Find the evidence

1. Does inflation mean every price rises?

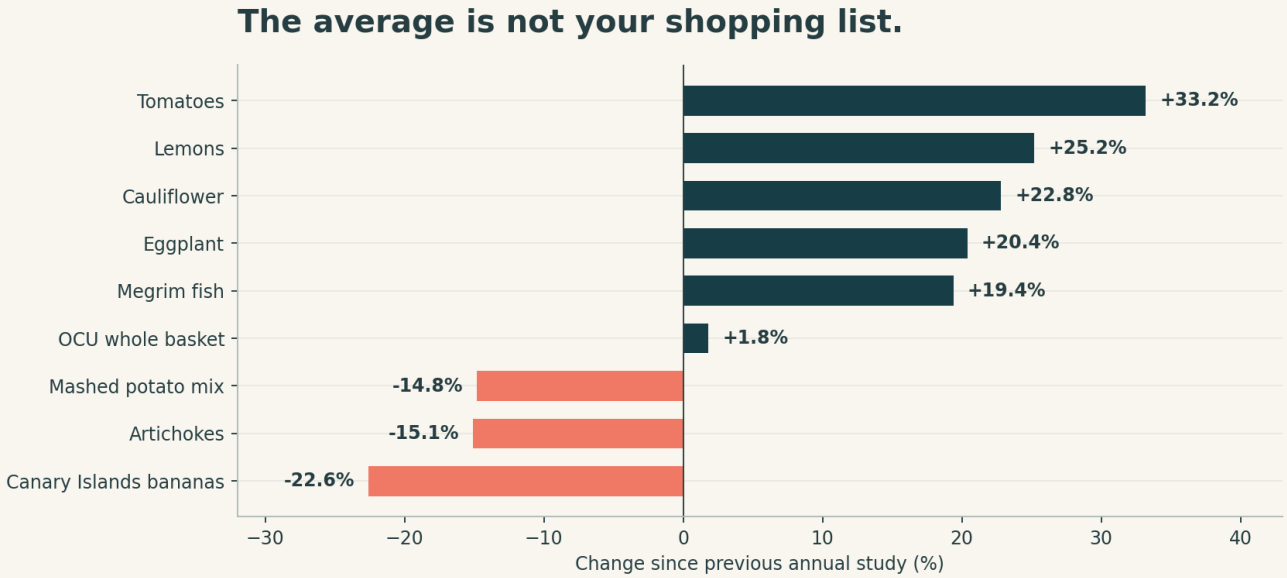
2. Why can a large pack be a bad choice?

3. In the example, does a 3% pay raise buy more when prices rise 5%?

4. Are OCU’s basket and the government’s basket identical?

Discuss your answers and point to a supporting sentence. Opinion questions can have more than one defensible answer.

The average is not your shopping list



Selected products from OCU's 2026 annual supermarket study compared with its previous study. Prices collected April–May 2026. Percentage changes, not euro prices; selected examples are not a representative average. The whole basket also includes household and hygiene products.

1. Which two foods became cheaper in the OCU chart?

2. Which is the biggest increase?

3. A basket cost €100 one year ago. About how much is its CPI equivalent now?

Budget food, with a side of economics

In the US, Hamburger Helper is a box of pasta and sauce mix. For one popular type, you add ground beef, water and milk. It makes the meat go further. Instant ramen noodles are another familiar student-budget meal. Neither food is everyone's choice! What do you eat when you want a cheap meal?

What people report cutting

ONS, Great Britain, August 2026: 59% of adults reported spending less on non-essentials because of higher living costs; 43% shopped around more; 38% spent less on food shopping and essentials. Multiple actions were possible. This is not a Spanish survey.

Optional listening · opening excerpt, maximum 3 minutes

Federal Reserve Education: Inflation. Use the official video and transcript; preview playback. If unavailable, your teacher can read the short original fallback.

1. Name two things the speaker compares with the past.

2. Why do we need to compare old pay as well as old prices?

Open official video and transcript

A conversation worth having

Choose questions that interest you. Ask a follow-up, respond to a different view and use an expression from the language page. Fictional answers are welcome.

Everyday choices

1. What is a good cheap meal? Explain how to make it.
2. Which food would you choose instead of an expensive food?
3. What can friends do together without spending much?
4. Would you rather buy fewer good things or more cheap things?

Save, swap or keep?

1. What would you find easy to do without for a month?
2. Which small treat would you keep? Why?
3. Is buying a large pack always cheaper for you?
4. When is repairing something a good way to save?

Work and help

1. What costs should a pay raise help people pay?
2. Which people need the most help when food costs more?
3. What problem could a price limit help with?
4. How could a price limit be difficult for a small shop?

Decision challenge

The fictional household has €2,100 a month and currently spends €2,100. Next month, essential costs rise by €80. Choose changes worth at least €80 from the options. Keep essential care and enough food. Explain two changes and one thing you want to protect.

30-minute extension

Plan a low-cost evening for four friends. Give three options, explain travel costs and choose one together.

Exit ticket: one useful expression, one evidence-based claim and one idea you reconsidered.

Make the plan work

Fictional monthly budget	Amount
Housing and bills	€1050
Food and household goods	€420
Transport	€160
Health and essential care	€90
Phone and internet	€60
Social life and subscriptions	€120
Savings / emergency buffer	€100

Income €2,100. Current spending €2,100. Essential costs rise €80.

Possible monthly change	Saving
Switch some brands / reduce food waste	€25
Cancel one subscription	€15
Two fewer takeout meals	€30
Walk or use an existing bus pass for suitable trips	€20
Renegotiate phone plan	€10
Delay a non-urgent purchase	€30
Reduce the savings contribution this month	€40

Illustrative estimates only. Do not double-count food savings. Discuss time, transport and access; protect essential care and adequate food.

Should the government step in?

Limit some prices: The government sets a maximum price for a few important products. This can help shoppers. But shops must still pay for products and workers. What if the maximum price is too low?

Give extra help: The government gives money or food vouchers to people who need help. Who should receive it? How can people apply easily?

Reduce taxes or improve choice: Lower taxes on some products could reduce prices if shops pass the saving on. More choice between shops could help too. How would we check that shoppers benefit?

Who benefits, who pays, what might go wrong, and what evidence would justify changing the plan?

Full source links, chart data and student activities online

Keep the conversation going.
Scan for this version’s free student lesson, source links, charts and student PDF. No account needed.