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## Panic buying sparks toilet paper shortages – 10th March, 2020

### Level 4

Shoppers are panic buying over fears of the coronavirus. People worldwide are emptying supermarket shelves of toilet paper, masks, sanitiser and food. Governments told people there is no need to "panic buy". Panic buying reduces the supply of products needed by medical staff. This could worsen the problems caused by COVID-19. Videos of shoppers in Australia fighting over a pack of toilet roll in a supermarket have gone viral across social media.

Panic buying is an "irrational" behaviour. It is part of the FOMO condition - the fear of missing out. There is a "herd mentality" that makes people copy each other. They rush to the stores to do the same as others. People are overestimating the risk of dying from COVID-19. More people die in car accidents but we don't panic about this when we go to work. Singapore's prime minister said: "We have ample supplies. There's no need to stock up."

### Level 5

Shoppers are going on panic buying sprees over fears of the coronavirus. People in England, Japan, Singapore and Australia are emptying supermarket shelves of toilet paper, face masks, hand sanitiser and dried food. Governments have told people there is no need to "panic buy". They added that panic buying would reduce the supply of products needed by medical staff, which could exacerbate the problems the COVID-19 virus is causing. Videos of shoppers in Australia fighting over the last pack of toilet roll in a supermarket have gone viral across social media.

A psychologist said panic buying is an "irrational" behaviour. It is part of a condition called FOMO - the fear of missing out. A "herd mentality" sets in during disasters that makes people copy each other. People see items being bought in bulk and immediately rush to the stores to do the same. People are overestimating the risk of dying from the coronavirus. A doctor said "far more" people die in car accidents but we don't panic about this when we go to work. Singapore's prime minister reassured Singaporeans that: "We have ample supplies. There's no need to stock up."

### Level 6

Shoppers around the world are embarking on panic buying sprees because of fears over the coronavirus. People in countries as far afield as England, Japan, Singapore and Australia have been emptying supermarket shelves of toilet paper, face masks, hand sanitiser and dried and canned food. Governments have advised their citizens that there is no need to "panic buy". They added that panic buying would only reduce the supply of products needed by medical staff and carers, which could exacerbate the problems the COVID-19 virus is causing. Footage of shoppers in Australia brawling over the last pack of toilet roll in a supermarket has gone viral across social media.

Psychologists say panic buying is an "irrational" behaviour that is part of a condition called FOMO - the fear of missing out. Dr Katharina Wittgens said a herd mentality sets in during disasters that causes people to copy the actions of others. People watch the news of items being bought in bulk and immediately rush out to the stores to do the same. She said people were overestimating the risks of dying from the coronavirus. She said: "Far more people die in car accidents or household accidents per year but we don't panic about these things in the morning before we go to work." Singapore's prime minister reassured Singaporeans that: "We have ample supplies. There's no need to stock up."