



ESL Podcast 84 – Bargaining with a Seller

GLOSSARY

garment district – fashion district; an area in a large city with many stores that all sell high-quality clothing, often at low prices

* Amparo went shopping in the garment district and paid \$40 for a name brand dress that usually sells for \$175.

deal – bargain; the act of buying an item for a price that is lower than it usually would be

* The athletic shoes were half their original price, so Micah bought them because he thought it was a great deal.

stall – a booth that sells items; a small outdoor store that sells a limited number of items

* There were many stalls along the walkway, but Penelope only shopped at a few of them.

to come in – to be available in; for a type of item to exist in another color or size than the actual item one sees

* Eduardo liked the style and material of the tie, but he did not like the color and wanted to know if it came in any other colors.

to do better on the price – to offer a lower price; to sell an item at a lower price

* Unless the seller could do better on the price of the car, Mrs. Stefano could not afford to buy it.

bargain – deal; a sale in which the customer pays a lower amount of money than the item he or she buys would usually be sold for

* The television was usually sold for \$450, but Bryce bought it for a bargain at \$275 instead.

best offer – the lowest price a seller is willing to sell an item for; the highest price a customer is willing to buy an item for

* The merchant's best offer was \$50, but the price was still too high for Lindsey, so she did not buy the radio he was selling.

to shop around – to consider buying from multiple stores instead of only one store; to look at the products offered by many sellers instead of buying from one seller

* After shopping around for a while, Anthony realized that the price he saw at the first store was still the lowest.



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to spend – to use money; to give someone money so that one can buy an item from that person

* Matilda wanted to buy a new bicycle, but she did not have any money that she could spend on it.

break – a change meant to make something easier for someone

* Mr. Grise gave his busy students a break and changed the due date of the assignment from Monday to Friday.

to drive a hard bargain – to refuse to accept the price a seller or buyer is offering; to work hard at getting a price or offer that is better for oneself than the original price or offer

* The customer drove a hard bargain and eventually got the seller to drop the price from \$60 to \$45.

to split the difference – to cut the remaining amount in half and to each get or give equal parts of that amount; to subtract a smaller amount from a larger amount, and to cut the amount that remains in half and share it equally

* Blanca wanted six pieces of the remaining candy, but her sister only wanted to give her two pieces, so they split the difference and Blanca got four pieces, instead.

you've got a deal – I accept your offer; a phrase used to agree to the price that someone offers to pay or sell an item for

* Clinton offered to pay his roommate \$20 for his roommate's used textbook, and his roommate agreed, telling him, "You've got a deal."



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CULTURE NOTE

Bait-and-Switch

“Bait” is the food you use to catch or capture an animal. If you are trying to catch a fish, for example, you might use worms, pieces of corn, or some other food fish might like to eat. Once the fish try to eat the food, you can “catch” (take from the water) them for your dinner.

More generally, the word bait can mean anything you use “to lure someone” (to get someone to go somewhere where something else will happen to them) to a certain place. Stores will often try to lure in customers by offering a low price on something, hoping people will come in and buy other things as well. It is illegal, however, for a store to “advertise” (put an announcement in a newspaper, on television, or on the Internet) something for a low price that they don’t actually have and then, when the customers come in, try to “switch” or change them to another, more expensive product. This is called a “bait-and-switch.”

There is now a new type of “bait-and-switch,” a different kind of “fraud” (attempt to cheat or steal from someone by tricking or fooling them) involving fish. According to “DNA” (genetic) studies, about 25% of all the fish sold in U.S. “supermarkets” (large grocery stores) is not what it is advertised to be. It’s often a different, usually cheaper, kind of fish or not the quality that the store says it is. For certain kinds of fish that are popular, such as Atlantic cod or wild salmon, the percentage of “falsely” (incorrectly) advertised products is as high as 70%!



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COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

Welcome to English as a Second Language Podcast number 84: Bargaining with a Seller.

You're listening to English as a Second Language Podcast episode 84. I'm your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, from the Center for Educational Development in beautiful Los Angeles, California.

Today's podcast is about bargaining with a seller. Let's go shopping!

[start of dialogue]

It was Saturday afternoon and I was shopping in the garment district in downtown L.A. If you want to find good deals on clothes, shoes, and accessories, this is the place to come. To get the best deal, though, you have to be ready to bargain.

I walked by a stall and saw a purse I liked. The owner had just finished making a sale.

Lucy: Does this come in any other colors?

Man: Yeah, we have this one in white and blue. I also have this other style in green.

Lucy: How much is the blue one?

Man: It's \$32.

Lucy: \$32? What about the green one?

Man: That's \$30.

Lucy: That seems a little high. Can you do better on the price?

Man: This is a designer bag and it's good quality. It's a bargain at that price.

Lucy: Is that your best offer?

Man: That's the best I can do.



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Lucy: Well, I don't know. I think I'll shop around.

Man: Okay, how about \$28.

Lucy: That's still more than I wanted to spend. What if I take the blue one and the green one?

Man: I'll give you both of them for \$55.

Lucy: That's not much of a break on the price. How about \$50 for both?

Man: You drive a hard bargain. The best I can do is \$54. You won't find it cheaper anywhere else.

Lucy: Why don't we split the difference and make it \$52?

Man: Okay, okay. You've got a deal.

[end of dialogue]

In this podcast, we go shopping in the “garment district” in downtown Los Angeles. The “garment district” (garment) – a “garment” is a piece of clothing. It’s something you wear. And a garment district is a place, usually, where you can buy clothes cheaper than other places. It’s a place where factories -- people who make clothing will often sell their clothes directly to the public. There’s a garment district in Los Angeles, there’s a garment district in New York City and in many cities throughout the world. This is often the place and a “district” is just a place or a neighborhood where you find a lot of companies that make clothing. The person in this particular podcast wants to find a “good deal.” When you say, “I’m looking for a good deal,” you’re saying, “I’m looking for a cheap price, a low price, something that’s not expensive,” at least it is less than what you would normally pay. If you want a good deal, you often have to wait until there is a sale on what you want to buy when they lower the price.

In this particular example, Lucy is looking for some clothes, some shoes, and “accessories.” “Accessories” are what women wear in addition to their dress or their shoes. That would include earrings or a necklace around your neck. Those are accessories. A man can also have “accessories,” like a watch or a belt and so forth. Lucy is ready to “bargain” in the garment district. “To bargain,” the verb (bargain), means that you are going to try to get a lower price than the price that the person selling it wants to give it to you for. And you don’t normally bargain in a regular store in the United States but you can bargain at certain places, and the



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garment district in Los Angeles or many other places, there are many people selling different things all next to each other – is a place where you can often bargain. When you go to a market that has lots of different people selling, usually we talk about each little store as a “stall.” A “stall” (stall) is a small place in a market where someone is selling their goods. You could have a “stall” in a grocery market or, in this case, in the garment district market.

The owner, according to Lucy – she went up to one of the stalls and saw a purse she liked. And the owner was finish “making a sale.” “To make a sale” just means that he was selling something to someone else. The dialogue begins with Lucy asking the seller, “Does this purse come in any other colors?” The expression “to come in” here just means “Do you make it?” Do you have that particular purse, in this case, in another color or in other colors? You can say, for example, “This car comes in black, white, and blue,” meaning you can buy one that’s painted black, painted white, or painted blue. You can talk about the way things “come in” for size as well. You want to buy a shirt and the one that you see is too small, you could ask, “Does this come in a large?” In this case, Lucy asked the man if this purse comes in any other colors and the seller says, “Yes, we have this one in white and blue.” The expression “to have something in a color” is the same as “it comes in a color.”

Lucy asked the price for the blue one and the man says, “It’s \$32,” and Lucy says, “That seems a little high.” When you are bargaining with someone, of course, you don’t want to accept the first price that they give you and so she is indicating here, politely, that this price is too high for her. “That seems a little high.” That’s too much. Then she asked the seller, “Can you do better on the price?” This is a very standard question in English when you are trying to see if the person selling it will lower the price. “Can you do better on the price?” “Can you give me a lower price?” is what we’re asking. Of course, the seller doesn’t want to give a lower price and so, here, he tries to justify, or give you a reason, why the price is as it is. This seller says that the purse is a “designer bag and it’s good quality.” The “bag” here (bag), or bag, just refers to a purse, in this case. A “bag” is anything that you can carry something in that is usually a not solid, that is flexible. A “designer bag” or a “designer purse” is one that’s made by a famous company, designed by a famous designer, someone who figures out what style should be. Gucci, for example, is a famous Italian designer.

The man selling the purse says that, “It’s a bargain at any price.” Here, a “bargain” is a noun, not a verb. We know that “to bargain” – means to try to get a lower price. A “bargain” is the same here as a good deal. If I say, “That’s a bargain” we mean that’s a very good deal. Lucy then says, “Is that your best offer?” When you ask someone that’s selling something, “Is that your best offer?”



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you're saying, "Is that the lowest price you can give me?" The man says, "Yes, that's the best I can do," meaning that's the lowest price. And Lucy says, "Well, I think I'll shop around." "To shop around" means to go somewhere else to buy things or to look at things. Of course, what normally happens when you start leaving in your bargaining with someone is that they decide to lower the price to get you to stay, to get you to buy. And so the seller says, "Oh, how about \$28?" And Lucy says, "That's still more than I wanted to spend." This is another polite way of saying that the price is still too high. "That's more than I want to pay." "That's more than I want to spend." Lucy then offers to buy two purses, one green and one blue, and asked the man what the price would be and the seller says, "\$55." Lucy then responds, "That's not much of a break on the price." When we say that there is a "break (break) on the price," we mean that it's a discount, that it is a lower price. We say sometimes also, "Give me a break on this price" – means give me a lower price, take some of the money off of the price.

Lucy then offers \$50 and the man responds by saying, "You drive a hard bargain." This is kind of a common expression for someone who likes to bargain a lot and try to get the absolute lowest price. "You drive a hard bargain" means that you are trying to get a much lower price than I want to give. The man then says, "The best I can do is \$54." "The best I can do" means this is the lowest price I can give you. It's like the best offer. Finally Lucy uses a good bargaining strategy. Lucy wants to pay \$50. The man wants to charge her \$54. So, Lucy says, "Why don't we split the difference and make it \$52?" "To split the difference" means that we are going to take the price right in the middle. So, 50, 54, "to split the difference" would be \$52. Finally the man says, "Okay, okay. You've got a deal." Here the word "deal" means that I agree to do it, you have a sale. "You've got a deal." It's saying, "Okay, I will sell that to you at that price."

Now let's listen to the dialogue this time at a native rate of speech.

[start of dialogue]

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[end of dialogue]

The scripts for all of the English as a Second Language Podcast, the text of the dialogue or story are all on our website. Go to www.eslpod.com and click on "scripts."



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From Los Angeles, California, I'm Jeff McQuillan. We'll see you next time on ESL Podcast.

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