

Talking About Smartphones in English – Video

In this lesson, you can learn how to talk about smartphones in English.

You'll see the process of buying a new smartphone. You'll also learn how to describe the features of a smartphone, say what's most important to you, and ask questions about what a smartphone can do.

1. What's Most Important For You?

(https://www.oxfordonlineenglish.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/smartphone-3149992_1920.webp)

Lori: Hello, can I help you with anything?

Olivier: Hi, yes, I'm looking for a new phone. I have some ideas, but maybe you can make some recommendations?

L: Of course! What are you looking for in your new phone?

O: Well, for me, the number one priority is good battery life. I travel a lot for work, and I need a phone which can last at least a full day without problems.

L: I see. Is anything else important?

O: I take a lot of pictures, so I want something with a decent camera. It doesn't have to be amazing, but I'd like a phone which can take good-quality pictures. It'd be a bonus if it could take good photos in low light, because a lot of phone cameras don't do well in darker conditions, I've found.

L: That's true, but camera technology is getting better all the time. Even mid-range modern phones can take excellent photos in a wide range of conditions. If I may ask, what's your budget?

O: I guess I'm aiming for something in the mid-range. I don't need something top-of-the-line, so maybe around two, three hundred Euros.

L: That's fine; I have a few ideas for you. Follow me, please.

If you were looking to buy a new phone (<https://www.oxfordonlineenglish.com/buying-a-phone>), what would you look for? What's your top priority? Do you always buy the same brand, or do you look for something different, like good battery life, or the lowest possible price?

In the dialogue, you heard: 'The number one priority is good battery life.' Of course, you can use this phrase with different features, as in: 'The number one priority is a good front camera for selfies.' You could say the same thing in a different way like this: 'The most important thing for me is good battery life.'

You also heard: 'I take a lot of pictures, so I want something with a decent camera.' 'Decent' means 'quite good'. If something is decent, it's above average, but not the best. If you say this, you mean that you don't need the best, most expensive camera there is, but you want something that's good enough. If something is less important, you can use the phrase 'It'd be a bonus if...'. In the dialogue, you heard 'It'd be a bonus if it could take good photos in low light.' A 'bonus' is something which is nice to have, but not absolutely necessary. So, you might say: 'It'd be a bonus if it had a brighter screen.'

Finally, to set your budget, you could say something like this:

I'm aiming for something in the mid-range.

I want to spend as little as possible.

I'd like something cheap, but without compromising on what I need.

Keep practicing money vocabulary with this lesson on How to Talk About Money

(<https://www.oxfordonlineenglish.com/talk-about-money-in-english>) from Oxford Online English.

(<https://www.oxfordonlineenglish.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/bank-money-save-woman-finance.webp>) If you put these phrases together, you should be able to say two to three sentences about what you need in a smartphone, what you'd like to have, and how much you're willing to spend. For example:

The most important thing for me is that it's fast and has good performance. It'd be a bonus if it had over 100 gigabytes of storage (<https://www.lifewire.com/smartphone-buying-guides-577502>). I'm aiming for the upper mid-range, so I'd like to spend maybe four, five hundred maximum.

Could you make an answer like this? Pause the video and make an answer. If you need, you can review this section to get the language you need. Say your answer out loud. Ready? Let's continue talking about smartphones in our next section.

2. Asking Questions About a Smartphone

Lori: I think this would be a good choice, based on what you told me. It has a 48 megapixel dual camera, and great camera software which makes it easy to take good pictures in low light conditions, like you said. The battery should last two to three days with normal usage, and currently it's discounted to 250 Euros.

Olivier: That sounds good! How much memory does it have?

L: Do you mean RAM, or internal storage?

O: Storage, I guess. You know, for music, photos and so on.

L: It has 64 gigabytes of internal storage, and you can also add a micro SD card if you need more.

O: Mmm... Oh yeah, one more thing: does it have a headphone jack? I listen to music on my headphones, and I saw a lot of new phones don't have the connector for wired headphones.

L: Yes, it has a 3.5 millimetre jack for headphones, or an aux cable, or whatever.

O: Ah, good! Last thing, I probably should have mentioned this earlier: can it take two SIM cards?

L: Yes, it's dual-SIM, although the second SIM card goes in the micro SD slot, so you have to choose between two SIM cards or extra storage; you can't have both.

O: That's a little annoying... Are there any phones which don't have that?

L: Yes... I have one idea. Let me show you.

In the dialogue, I asked three questions about the phone's features. Can you remember what you heard? You heard:

How much storage does it have?

Does it have a headphone jack?

Can it take two SIM cards?

Think about these basic question forms.

How much ... does it have?

Does it have a ...?

Can it ...?

Can you think of three more questions you could ask about a smartphone, using these question forms? Pause the video and think about your answers. If you want extra practice, write them down! Of course, there are many possibilities. Here are three suggestions using smartphone vocabulary (<https://quizlet.com/51932811/mobile-phone-vocabulary-flash-cards/>):

How much RAM does it have?

Does it have a fingerprint scanner?

What about you; were your questions similar, or did you get something different? There are many other questions you could ask, but next, let's see how to describe other features of a smartphone in more detail.

3. Describing the Features of a Smartphone

(<https://www.oxfordonlineenglish.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/smartphone-technology-chart-graph-future-futuristic-network.webp>)

Lori: So, this one is a little more expensive, but I think you do get a lot more for your money. It has dual-SIM capability, 128 gigs of storage, which can be expanded with a memory card if you need, and a much better screen. The screen is very hi-res, so everything looks sharp, and it also has extremely accurate colours, which might be of interest if you're into photography.

Olivier: Colour accuracy? What does that mean?

L: Just that the colours you see on the screen are exactly how they look in real life. Some screens, especially on cheaper phones, don't have accurate colour reproduction, so everything looks too blue, or too orange, or whatever.

O: OK, I don't think that's so important...

L: It also has an 8-core CPU and 8 gigabytes of RAM, so everything runs fast, and you can multi-task, have several apps open at once...

O: What's this thing on the back?

L: It's the fingerprint scanner. This phone also has face recognition, so you can unlock it just by looking into the camera.

O: Hmm... And, how much is it?

L: It's 750 Euros, but I could take 50 Euro off the price, so 700.

O: That's too much! I think I'll take the first phone you showed me.

L: Of course.

Here are some things you heard in the dialogue. Could you explain what they mean in English?

It has dual-SIM capability.

The screen is very hi-res.

It has an 8-core CPU, so you can multi-task.

Imagine you're an English teacher (<https://www.oxfordonlineenglish.com/about-our-online-english-teachers>), and you want to explain these words to someone who doesn't know them. How would you do it? 'Dual-SIM' means that the phone can use two SIM cards at the same time, so you can have two phone numbers on one device. 'Hi-res' is short for 'high resolution'. This means that the screen has more pixels, so text and images will look clearer. An 8-core CPU is a processor which can run many different calculations at the same time. So, you can multi-task: you can have several apps open, and you can use your phone to do several things at once without it slowing down.

Do you remember any other smartphone features which were mentioned in the dialogue?

You heard:

The screen has extremely accurate colours.

It also has face recognition.

It has 8 gigabytes of RAM.

What about your phone? At this point in the lesson, you should have enough language to talk about smartphones in English and describe the features of your phone in detail. Your job is to make a longer answer talking about your phone. Remember that you can review earlier sections if you need to! Aim to make at least five sentences. Pause the video and do it now.

OK, how was that? Could you make a clear, fluent answer? Let's look at one more point.

4. Talking About Accessories and Extras

(<https://www.oxfordonlineenglish.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/smartphone-accessories.webp>)

Lori: So, will you be needing any accessories?

Olivier: Like what?

L: Well, for sure you should get a screen protector. It'll stop the glass from getting scratched or damaged.

O: How much is it?

L: 10 Euros, and we can put it on for you right now.

O: Can't I do it myself?

L: You can, but it's fiddly.

O: OK, I'll take one of those. Is it worth getting a case to protect it?

L: Perhaps, although phones are a lot tougher than they used to be. Of course, I don't recommend it, but you can drop it and it'll be fine nine times out of ten.

O: I think I'll take a case, too. I broke my last phone by dropping it, and I'd be so angry if it happened again.

L: Sure. Take a look over here; any of these cases will fit, and they'll keep your phone safe.

O: Hmm... This one's nice. It's fifteen?

L: That's right. Also, one more thing: if you're worried about breaking your phone, you could buy an extended warranty. It covers you for three years, and it includes insurance against accidental damage, so if you drop your phone, or it falls in water, or anything like that, you can bring it back and we'll repair it at no extra cost.

O: How much is it?

L: It costs 65 Euros,

O: Oh, no, no thanks.

L: No problem. Is that everything?

O: Yes, thanks so much. Where do I pay?

L: Come with me and I'll show you.

When you buy a new phone, you might also buy some accessories. 'Accessories' mean small, extra things which go with something larger you bought. Accessories can be cosmetic, like a case, or functional, like a screen protector. Can you think of other examples of smartphone accessories? You could also buy a spare charger, a Bluetooth headset, or a mount so that you can see your phone while you're driving.

During the dialogue, the salesperson also offered me an 'extended warranty' (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Warranty>). Do you know what this means? A 'warranty' and a 'guarantee' have the same meaning here. The manufacturer, or the retailer, are responsible if anything goes wrong with the product. Normally, a warranty lasts one year. Some retailers and manufacturers offer extended warranties, which are a kind of insurance. At this point, you should be able to buy a new smartphone in English, describe exactly what you need, and buy any accessories which you want.

Here's a question: what kind of phone do you have? Would you recommend it to others? Why or why not? Please share your ideas in the comments, and practise your English! Try to use the language which you've learned in this lesson to talk about smartphones in English. Thanks for watching!