

ESP: Retail Sales



Compiled, adapted, and written by:

Kevin Mactavish

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INTRODUCTION

The aim of this "traditional classroom" course is to increase the student's proficiencies in using general English and English for the special purpose (ESP) of retail sales.

This is your, the teacher's, manual. It is intended as a guide for use along with the materials developed for students. You should have this manual and a copy of the student version. You will need both!

Students are assumed to be working adults who already use English at the pre-intermediate level or above and have had some experience working with customers.

The objectives for each lesson are focused on increasing vocabulary, improving pronunciation, and speaking correctly in work-related situations. Depending upon how you approach teaching the lessons, the objectives (aims) and grammar points can be shared with the students, or not.

The emphasis is primarily spoken English. Reading and writing are not major parts of the course except as they might stimulate discussion and reinforce language and ideas.

Materials are in some cases challenging and may be found in whole or in part in other sources. Where borrowing has been the rule, so too has the idea that all is within the boundaries of "fair use for instructional purposes". Thus, continue to adapt as necessary. Elevate what is here if the teachable moment inspires; "dumb it down" for the most thorough understanding and retention. You may have to do both!

The manual reproduces much of the student materials in plain text (good for copying and working with) but with comments and such for teacher use. Where there are square brackets or italics, these usually signal "for teacher's eyes only".

This is not a course in sales as such, but useful language when selling and working with retail customers. The perspective from which the course has been developed and materials selected is the following. It may be useful to refer to this frame of reference for development from time to time.

Selling involves person-person communication with a prospect. It is a process of developing relationship; discovering needs; matching the appropriate products with these needs; and communicating benefits through informing, reminding or persuading.

Because the audience for instruction is assumed to have language and sales experience already, both students and teachers will co-create what the course actually becomes. And in this spirit, one of process and learning facilitation in addition to content delivery,

Best of success for teachers teaching and students participating in this course.

ASSESSMENT

To give you, the teacher, an idea of the different levels of English proficiency represented among students taking this course, you should assess what they are capable of at the beginning. This is to establish an understanding of learning needs and how to adjust materials and activities to ensure language development, understanding, and overall satisfaction and success.

There are a number ways to accomplish an initial assessment. For purposes of this course and to save on preparation time, the following cartoon is provided. Individually or in a group situation, you can give the following instruction followed up by focused questions.

Describe what you see in this cartoon and explain why it is humorous or ironic.

The cartoon provides enough context for an assessment of the student's vocabulary, the ability to use different tenses, and to suggest what the dialogue might be like as a traditional or offbeat "retail" situation. It also provides advanced students with the opportunity to explain and perhaps create a caption.

Remember that students will readily understand the drawing by looking carefully at it, but the test (assessment) is to put words to what they see and what they can imagine.



LESSON 1. Meeting and greeting customers, including ice breakers

OBJECTIVE/AIMS: Learners should be able to assess themselves against basic employee-customer interchanges.

PRE-TEST/WARM-UP: Register assessment

Explanation may be needed before or after administration as this lesson's GRAMMAR POINT.

Instruction. When do you say ____? Label each expression below as one of the following.

Omit the suggested answers and place on whiteboard. Do together or individually, and review/discuss answers. Give examples or contexts as necessary. Suggested answers are in parentheses.

I--informal

G--good for everyday use

F--formal

Bye. (I)

Catch you later. (I)

Excellent, and you? (G)

Fine. (G)

Good day, Sir / Madam. (F)

Good morning / afternoon / evening. (G)

Goodbye. (G)

Great! (I)

Have a nice time. (G) [explanation needed]

Have a nice day. (G)

Hello (name), how are you? (G)

Hello. (G)

Hi! (I)

How are you doing? (I)

How do you do. (F)

How's it goin'? (I)

It was a pleasure seeing you. (F)

Later. (I)

Nice to meet you. (F)

Till we meet again. (I)

Very well, thank you. And you? (F)

Very well, thanks. (F)

What's up? (I)

Can you think of more common expressions? What are they? and what register level?

LEARNING ACTIVITIES:

1. Better Expressions

Introduction. There are good and better ways of saying things. This exercise asks you to identify and in some cases supply a better way of saying something. Ask your teacher why one way is better than another if you need help.

Handout. Better Expressions

Key.

cheaper--->less expensive

beginner's guide--->basic guide

it's in great condition--->it's been well cared for

contract--->agreement

mixed colors--->blended colors

loud fashion--->it's a bold look
fix--->fine tune
best--->first class
painless--->pain-free
original--->first of its kind
your offer is too low--->this is a bold offer
make some time--->free up my schedule
broke--->frugal times
not difficult--->it's easy
won't work right--->function less
fully covered--->fully insured
listen to me--->you can consider
I'm sorry--->I apologize
what we sell--->what we offer
can I get your signature--->can I get your approval
down payment--->initial investment

Extend this activity by asking students to say what they do upon first seeing or greeting a customer. Discuss what is good and and what is better. Optionally, use the following reading and discuss or adapt as needed.

2. Breaking the Ice/Opening Lines

Handout. Breaking the Ice/Opening Lines

Introduction. An essential part of the entire sales process is the opening. It is similar to a first impression. It can mean the difference between establishing trust and building loyalty, or losing a possible lifelong customer.

Instruction. Here are some opening sales lines. Read and discuss.

Using the Shopping Experience:

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- * Ask the customer if they've ever been to your store. Come from behind the counter and offer to show them around. "Let me give you a tour of our store."

- * While giving them the tour offer exciting tidbits relating to designer jewelry, color, or diamonds you carry, encouraging them to talk about their favorites.

Compliment Technique:

- * Try a simple compliment to get them talking. "That sweater looks great."

- * Take the compliment one-step further. "Blue really brings out the color of your eyes. Have you ever thought of wearing blue colored stones to make your eyes sparkle even more?"

- * Some good opening lines revolve around sports, clothing, a hairstyle, cars, current events or holidays.

- * A sincere compliment regarding their jewelry from a professional in the business always makes a customer feel good.

Humor:

- * How can I get you in or out of trouble?

- * Allow me to show you something that will make your wife send the kids to grandma's house for the weekend.

- * Feel free to browse, if there's anything you like I can model it for only a minimal charge.

The Famous . . . I'm just looking:

- * Is it for a special occasion? Followed by women love surprises.

- * Let me show you what's new and in fashion right now.

- * Tell me a little bit about her/him. Is he/she simple or conservative when it comes to jewelry? Get the customer talking about their loved one and at the same time obtain information regarding their significant other's lifestyle, tastes, and color preferences to be able to offer the right piece for them.

And a favorite of some salespeople, "I'm waiting for something to jump at me":

- * "I'm sorry; we stopped selling jumping jewelry because it gave one of our customers a black eye." I use this one all the time . . . my male customers get a kick out of it.

LESSON ASSESSMENT: Satisfaction survey

Choose several of the following to get feedback on whether or not you and the content of the lesson will be able to meet the learning needs of the students. You can begin with something like: "This is your first lesson. Tell us what you think." You can put selected questions on the whiteboard and collect answers on scrap paper.

Instruction. Answer the following questions.

How much did you understand me? _____%

This lesson for me was

too easy

too difficult

at the right level

This lesson will help me in my job.

Did you like the lesson? What didn't you like?

Did you learn something new today? what?

What would you like more of? less of?

LESSON 2. The steps in the selling process, including techniques

OBJECTIVE/AIMS: Learners should be able to describe the sales process and some general techniques.

PRE-TEST/WARM-UP: Sales process

Elicit the steps or process of sales. Help the class complete as necessary. Use the whiteboard.

Instruction. What should a salesperson do before, during, after a sale? Hint. There are at least six steps, maybe seven!

1. preparation/planning/research/approach (using facilitative methods?)
2. introduction/opening/approach/establish initial credibility
3. questioning/identify needs/ask how and what, etc./establish rapport and trust
4. presentation/explanation/demonstration
5. overcoming objections/negotiating/fine-tuning
6. close/closing/agreement/commitment/confirmation
7. follow-up/after-sales/fulfill/deliver/administer

LEARNING ACTIVITIES:

1. The Selling Process: Steps to Success

This activity refines and reinforces the warm-up.

Handout. The Selling Process: Steps to Success

Introduce the handout and review instructions. Here is an opportunity for new vocabulary and ways of describing what sales people do. You can make this easier or harder. But the cues for titles are right in the paragraphs!

Key

The selling process involves a series of steps that may appear to be a straight-line process, but there is a lot of movement back and forth between the different steps that will ultimately lead to closing the deal. The selling process will vary by industry and personal preference, but these six essential steps will help you close more deals.

1. The Meet and Greet

This initial introduction will set the stage for the rest of the selling process. This is the icebreaker, the time to get the customer to relax and feel comfortable. This is your chance to build rapport with the customer so you need to be sincere, friendly and humorous. You try to capture the customer's interest by asking them questions that make them think.

2. Qualifying the Customer's Needs

This is the step where you ask questions to help you identify what the customer wants. It really is the who, what, where, when, why and how of the selling process. If you qualify the customer properly you will be able to fulfill his/her needs and wants. Don't rush through this step; time spent qualifying will allow a smooth transition into the next step.

3. Presentation or Demonstration

This is the step where the salesperson can show all they know about their products or services. Naturally, the presentation will cover the features of the products, the physical characteristics. But, you need to concentrate on the benefits of your products or services, as well. The benefits will show the customer "what is in it for them" and benefits are why people buy the products/services that they do.

4. Overcoming Objections

This step is critical to the selling process since objections are usually the customer's reasons for not buying your product or service. Objections are just another step in the selling process and give you the opportunity to reinforce in the customer's mind the benefits to them while you move them toward completing the deal. Now is not the time to give up. Ask them why they feel like they do and respond directly to their statements.

5. Closing

After you have handled the objections that the customer presents, you must ask for their business. Generally, the customer will have given you signals along the way. Your job is to pick up on those signals and ask for their business. There are many techniques that can be employed in closing the sale, and you need to find the techniques that you can use comfortably.

6. Follow Up

Now that the sale has been made, don't just let that hard work go to waste. Follow up with the customer and start building that long term relationship that will assure you of a satisfied repeat customer who will most likely send referrals your way. Remember, your future success relies upon making the sale. So, always try to improve the quality of your salespeople through training and skills development.

Extension. Have the student describe and act out (role play) what they do, and give feedback on language--from the teacher and critique of content from fellow students. That is, not only can one identify and read process, but s/he can put it into (better) words orally.

2. Techniques to improve sales success

The following are pieces of advice. Which is a good piece of advice and why? Select several for discussion and illustration by students. Your students are already involved in sales, and so some of the expertise about what to say and do they already have, or they have opinions about these. Use what they know and reinforce the language they or you collectively find useful.

Read a serious newspaper at least once a week. Be aware of current affairs so you can have a sensible conversation on any topic.

Don't use high pressure selling techniques on your customers. They don't work. Treat your customers as you would want to be treated.

Find a mentor. This is someone who is already successful, either in your organization, or elsewhere. This is someone you can talk to and who can give you the benefit of their experience.

Find someone who is already successful and mirror what they do.

Speak slower. We say our names three times faster than other bits of information. If you slow down and sound relaxed, it will relax your customer.

Building rapport. It is necessary to have some small talk or social time before asking for a decision. The amount of time we spend here should be led by the customer. Different cultures have different ideas about this subject.

Make your questions more effective by using prefacing techniques. Examples are: May I ask you . . .? Could you tell me . . .? I would be interested to know . . .? Can we establish when . . .?

Linking questions. Another way to get acceptance for questions is to refer back to a previous statement made by the customer.

When we ask questions we are looking to identify certain things: facts, opinions, needs, problems and feelings. Sales is an emotional process. The sequence of our questions is the key to success and rapport.

Emotional needs relate to how people buy on a personal level. This means that some people buy quickly, some slowly, some like to consult with others, some like to compare alternatives and some like to make buying decisions after having done a lot of research.

Emotional needs include power, achievement, order, safety, affiliation and recognition.

Every presentation you make to your clients should be different. Every buying decision is unique. By asking questions and listening we can make our presentations totally relevant to the needs of each customer.

At the time of closing the salesperson fears rejection and the buyer worries about making a mistake. The role of the salesperson is to ask for the order. Closing is easy. It is not about techniques, but is about confidence and timing!

Don't worry about closing techniques. The only close is the direct close. At the appropriate time, ask: "Would you like to go ahead?" There are only three answers. Yes, no, or maybe.

GRAMMAR POINT: Correct oral work from the activities and extension.

LEARNING ASSESSMENT: What did you learn?

Instruction. List three sales techniques you did not know before this lesson. In two or three sentences tell why you would or would not use each.

Collect responses and evaluate up-take of language and ideas. This can help assess progress as well as guide future lessons.

LESSON 3. Qualifying the shopper--questioning skills

OBJECTIVE/AIMS: Learners should be able to develop relations with and insights into customers through questions.

PRE-TEST/WARM-UP: What is most effective?

Instruction. List the most effective ways to persuade someone to buy your product? For example, presenting your product, using the customer's first name, listening, etc.

List the responses on the whiteboard and then give this statement and survey for reactions.

"Asking questions is three times more persuasive in the sales process than presenting information."

LEARNING ACTIVITIES:

1. Questioning strategies

Introduction. The best salespeople ask more questions and listen effectively. The least successful salespeople think that listening means "waiting to interrupt". So, what are the main things we can do to improve this most important of skills? There are many things to think about, but one of the most important is design--how to ask a question.

Handout. Questioning Strategies

Open questions: Open questions enable us to: establish rapport, open up particular topics, discover how customers feel. Open questions cannot be answered with a simple yes or no but require more information. They bring out facts, opinions and suggestions from the customer.

Examples:

How did you first hear about us?

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What made you decide to come to us?

Tell me about the kind of _____ you have in mind.

Task: List one for each of the following.

How

What

Tell me about

Closed (yes/no) questions. Closed questions enable us to gain specific information. Closed questions bring responses that arm us with facts or specific yes/no opinions.

Examples:

Did you see our advertisement?

Do you like this model?

Task: List one or two closed (yes/no) questions.

Follow-up questions: We ask follow-up questions to: show interest and encourage the customer to keep talking; increase the quality and quantity of information already given; and confirm understanding of what s/he has said. For example, by responding with "really?" or "and then?" you encourage the customer to continue. We can also be more specific with our follow-up questions. Consider these . . .

Examples:

So you bought a _____ and were not satisfied. Why was that?

You say you liked one you saw down the street. What was it like?

Task: List a follow-up question for these statements.

Yes, you had a watch like this. [What functions did it have?]

You mentioned that Valentine's Day is coming. [What would you like to say with your gift?]

2. Questioning strategies, advanced topics

Handout. Questioning Strategies: Advanced Topics

This presentational material may be adapted for classroom use in a number of ways. In order to make the lesson interactive, several of the strategies can be tried with teacher input and guidance. For example, paraphrasing is easy. The rules for correct paraphrasing as a skill are simple. Language correction would be a part of practicing this useful skill.

Note. The following is additional information about how to question and interact with customers. Practice these with someone and get feedback on how what you say affects the other person. Your teacher can set this up and help you.

To help set a customer at ease and to help make him or her feel comfortable with you and your products and services, consider these communication strategies.

Prefacing. The easiest way to help customers feel comfortable is to begin questions with polite phrases such as:

- May I ask you . . . ?
- Could you tell me . . . ?
- I would be interested to know . . . ?
- Can we establish when . . . ?
- Would you mind telling me . . . ?
- It would be helpful to know . . . ?
- Can you explain . . . ?

Labeling. When we label, we introduce a question with a statement about its content or purpose. We achieve several advantages this way.

- We create trust by eliminating surprise.
- We give the other party thinking time.
- We soften the impact of what we say
- We put the other party at ease.

Linking. Another way to get acceptance for questions is to refer back to a previous

statement made by the customer. This is like the follow-up questioning strategy, but its intent is to reassure the customer and show you have been listening. It looks something like this: "You mentioned before that . . ."

Giving feedback. It is important to acknowledge the customer's response before moving to another question. We can accomplish this by using non-verbal communication and by the use of expressions like "I see" or "That's interesting".

We can also achieve acknowledgement with two powerful techniques. One is restating in our own words what has been said. This is called paraphrasing. We can also state how we feel about what has been said. This is called reflecting. Here are some examples.

Statement: I'm concerned that this is too expensive.

Paraphrase: So, what you are saying that you are worried about the price?

Statement: I am looking for a long-term investment.

Paraphrase: You are not looking for a quick return on your investment that might prove risky. Is that correct?

Note that a paraphrase is someone else's understanding in a statement plus a question asking confirmation of your understanding.

Statement: I don't want to be forced into making a quick decision.

Reflection: You are right. It would be better to weigh the pro's and con's before going ahead.

Statement: I'm concerned about making the right decision for her.

Reflection: That is very sensible. It is important to look at this decision carefully before proceeding.

Reflection can be a useful skill. In selling it shows we understand how the customer feels, which can create and build empathy. It can also reveal what we have not understood and encourages clarification by the customer. But be careful. The customer is not always interested in how you feel or what you personally think!

GRAMMAR POINT: Pronunciation and other corrections are built into language production in the above strategies, both basic and advanced.

LEARNING ASSESSMENT: Recall and production

Instruction. List at least three strategies and give examples.

The quality of production from this exercise would indicate learning/assimilation of content as well as language proficiency. Use this feedback for future lessons.

Instruction. What questions do you ask to qualify customers as browsers or buyers?

This question will indicate the methods students actually use. Compare these with the content of this lesson and adjust accordingly in the next lessons.

LESSON 4. Realia-based lesson, Part A

NOTE. This is the idea for a relia-based lesson. Take the company where the student works and use that setting, all their materials, store, etc., and create the learning activities needed to perform the job. Make sure each student understands everything the employer has written about products, services, dress code, etc., including what to say and not to say to the customer.

Given student performance in role play situations, the language already in use working with customers with an eye towards a sale can be reviewed and improved upon. The teacher's skill in capturing and correcting and extending language is here the key to the language lesson's success.

OBJECTIVE/AIMS: In Part A, learners should be able to greet customers, show and present products, and conclude a sale in mock situations and receive comments and corrections by fellow students and teacher. The lesson concludes in Part B with a written process with appropriate language informed by the experience and input from all participants and observers.

PRE-TEST/WARM-UP: The take-away

Instruction. Some companies instruct salespeople to take away a customer's objections. Consider these sample dialogues of the take-away technique.

Salesperson: What brings you into our store today?

Customer: I'm just looking.

Salesperson: That sounds like fun. (You take away the objection.) What are you looking for?

Salesperson: What brings you into our store today?

Customer: I'm just looking.

Salesperson: Great. (Take-away.) What kinds of things would you like us to have?

Salesperson: What brings you into our store today?

Customer: I'm just killing time.

Salesperson: We all need a little more time to kill. What are you looking for while you are killing time?

Imagine that you are the shopper. What are you trying to tell the salesperson with each of your reasons for being in the shop (your objection to interruption)? Now, how effective do you think the take-away will be for you as shopper? Another way to look at this is if someone takes away something from you, how do you feel?

LEARNING ACTIVITIES: Sell me something

The learning activities follow the objective/aims closely. That is, set up role play situations with salespeople and customers. At first, run the situations so that the customer finally purchases. Then instruct customers to respond critically to what is said and on offer and try to leave the store. The sales person will have to invent more than standard lines to keep the shopper and turn him or her into a customer. The structure of the interchange could be along the lines of a sales process or pattern.

Introduction. Some companies provide mnemonic devices to help salespeople perform in certain preferred ways. An example is the acronym BEST, which means Build rapport, Establish needs, Sell product, and Thank the customer.

Sales process, in a nutshell

Instruction. What could these mnemonic devices mean?

LESS [Listening, Empathize, Speak softly, Solutions]

CARE [Contact, Ask customer needs, Respond, Encourage sale]

FAB [Features, Advantages, Benefits]

TGIF [Thank God It's Friday (end of the week)]

FUN [Whatever they can come up with . . . have FUN with this one!]

GRAMMAR POINT: These are embedded in the role play situations. One or two for each role play situation should suffice in terms of language practice and development. This lesson should produce a lot of material to consider both from content and language points of view.

LESSON 5. Realia-based lesson, Part B

NOTE. This is the idea. Take the company where the student works and use that setting, all their materials, store, etc., and create the learning activities needed to perform the job. Make sure each student understands everything the employer has written about products, services, dress code, etc, including what to say and not to the customer.

Given student performance in role play situations, the language already in use of working with customers with an eye towards a sale can be reviewed and improved upon. The teacher's skill in capturing and correcting and extending language is here the key to lesson success.

OBJECTIVE/AIMS: In Part B, learners should be able to greet customers, show and present products, and conclude a sale in mock situations and receive comments and corrections by fellow students and teacher. The lesson concludes with a written, idealized process with appropriate language. There may be several "scripts" based on different types of customers.

PRE-TEST/WARM-UP: Objections and answers

Introduction. Last lesson we challenged salespeople with customers who played "hard to get." Just before the customer concluded the interaction, s/he said something like, "I will be back" or "I can't decide right now."

Instruction. Consider these answers to objections like these. How effective are they? Again, put yourself in the customer's position. If there are more effective ways of responding to the objection, suggest it.

"I will be back."

"Since you are interested, let's start with the paperwork, so it will be ready when you come back."

"I can't decide right now."

"There are people that think and people that do . . . if you don't play, you can't win."

"I need to ask my husband."

"Allow me to ask you something, and please tell me the truth: Do you always ask him before you buy something?"

LEARNING ACTIVITIES:

1. Not small talk

This activity helps students get into the creative groove, so to speak, and it relates to relating well with customers. Consider this a kind of short stretching exercise. Once the aim is met, move on to the main learning activity.

Instruction. For at least three of the following, what do you do or say in the situation? Share your words and techniques. Ask your teacher to help you word your responses correctly.

How can you apologize to a customer?

How can you be a good listener?

How can you be assertive with an abusive customer?

How can you empathize with an upset customer?

How can you establish rapport with a customer?

How can you follow up a customer interaction?

How can you get feedback from customers?

How do you handle customer complaints?

How do you interact with a customer you can't understand?

How can you make a positive first impression on the customer?

How can you make a positive lasting impression on the customer?

How do you refuse an unreasonable demand from the customer?

How can you say you don't have an answer?

How do you say "Good-bye" to a customer?

What words and phrases do customers like to hear?

What words and phrases upset a customer?

What words and phrases calm down an upset customer?

How can you win a customer's trust?

How can you work collaboratively with the customer?

2. Sell me something, Part 2

The learning activities follow the objective/aims closely. Again set up role play situations with salespeople and customers. The structure of the interchanges could be along the lines of a sales process or pattern. Based on the experience and several typical or common interchanges, focus on a script that appears good, and effective. This is a model. Have students create additional scripts based on labeled typical or common interchanges. A way of labeling might be to characterize the customer--friendly types, talkers, doers, thinkers.

Instruction. What is the product you want to sell? Write a paragraph describing it in a way that the common person would understand. For example, you can describe a watch technically or more generally, as an item of jewelry, an asset to the person, etc. Stick with the latter for purposes of this description. Don't forget to use adjectives--a handsome timepiece, readable and attractive digits, etc.

If students need assistance generating adjectives and other descriptors for their products, the teacher will have to step in, or alternatively rely upon the language specific to gems or watches or whatever. Let the students use their product, or service.

To underline transferable sales skills, you can have students try to sell a product or service that is foreign to them but would require creativity and flexibility on their part. This last approach could be a lot of fun and alter the business-like routine of the learning activities thus far.

GRAMMAR POINT: These are embedded in the role play situations. One or two for each role play situation should suffice in terms of language practice and development. This lesson should produce a lot of material to consider both from content and language points of view.

LEARNING ASSESSMENT: The scripts are products of the learning and should reflect correctness and effectiveness. Their quality is an indicator of the learning in this and the

previous lesson.

A good way to reinforce learning is to collect the scripts and copy them so that students have models to take home. Minor editing should produce such models, and they can be distributed at the next lesson.

LESSON 6. Modal verbs for politeness and making recommendations

OBJECTIVE/AIMS: Learners should be able to acknowledge people, greet and take leave of the customer, make small talk with the customer, offer assistance to the customer, etc., all in a polite and friendly manner.

PRE-TEST/WARM-UP: Recall

Introduction. The scripts we worked on previously used modal verbs. Examples are must and can.

If you have copies of the scripts as suggested at the end of the last lesson, you can point out examples.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES: Modals

1. Presentation

Introduction. We use modals to be polite, to make suggestions or to give advice about something or someone. Below are common modals in English.

Should

1. Suggestion or Advice: You should go to the doctor.
2. Obligation: I should see my dentist soon.

Could

1. Past of can meaning ability: I could speak French when I was a child.
2. Polite suggestion or request: Could you help me?
3. Condition: If you had money, you could come.

Can

1. To be able to do something: I can drive.
2. Polite suggestion or request but more direct than could: Can I have your telephone number, please?

May

1. Polite suggestion or request: May I help you?
2. Possibility: She may move next year.

Might

We might go to the cinema tonight.

Must

1. Obligation: My father must do his taxes.
2. Supposition: He must be at home.

Will

Intention: I will finish this next week.

Would

1. Condition: I would if I could.
2. Polite invitation or request: Would you like to have a drink ?
3. Past of will: Yesterday, the car wouldn't start.

Have to

I have to talk to my teacher about the exam.

2. Example in context

Sales Clerk: Hi. May I help you?

Janet : Yes, thank you. I'm looking for the shoe department.

Sales Clerk: Sure, that'd on the sixth floor, right next to the stationary department.

Janet : Great, thanks for your help.

Sales Clerk: My pleasure.

. . . In the Shoe Department

Janet: Excuse me, do you have these shoes in a size 10 , black leather?

Shoe Clerk: Let me check. I'll be right back. Yes, you're in luck*. We have one pair of size ten left in black leather.

Janet . Excellent, I'm so happy. It's difficult to find a nice pair of shoes in my size.

Shoe Clerk: I guess this is your lucky day*! Let's try them on to see how they fit.

Janet : They look great! They are really comfortable and the price is right!

Shoe Clerk: So you are going to take the shoes?

Janet: Yes. Do you accept credit cards?

Shoe Clerk: Certainly, Visa, Mastercard, American Express.

Janet: Great! I am going to use my Visa.

Shoe Clerk: That will be \$69.99, please.

Janet: Here's my card.

Shoe Clerk: Thank you. Here's your bill and have a nice day.

Janet: Thank you, same to you.

*Note. The expression *you're in luck* means you are lucky. We usually use this expression when we are referring to something that we need which we are able to get. *It's your lucky day* means that you are very lucky today. *The price is right* means that the price is reasonable for you. It is exactly the price you wanted to pay. *Same to you* is an expression we use when we want to repeat the same compliment or respect to a person. In other words, the same as you just said to me.

3. Practice

Instruction. Practice the conversation above and then change some of the details to make up your own conversation. Alternatively or in addition, write six sentences or questions using the modals indicated.

1. (could) _____

2. (may) _____

3. (would) _____

4. (can) _____

5. (should) _____

6. (must) _____

GRAMMAR POINT: Embedded in the learning activities.

LESSON 7. Closing sales and handling objections

OBJECTIVE/AIMS: Learners should be able to respond appropriately to customer requests for clarification, objections, and complaints and bring about a sale with appropriate responses in return.

A part of being able to respond is to have a wider vocabulary, and thus this is built into this lesson.

PRE-TEST/WARM-UP: Nine closing techniques

Handout. Nine closing techniques

Instruction. Place the title with the proper description.

Key

1. Ask for the order

It has been estimated that 7 out of every 10 presentations end without the salesperson asking for the order. Of the 3 salespeople who do ask for the order, 2 give up after the second refusal. Having presented to your customer in a professional way, you have the right to ask for the order, and the customer expects you to do so. This technique alone will improve your sales results and give you more confidence in the selling situation. Remember that closing is about timing. The best closers recognize there is a time to ask for commitment and they have the confidence to do so. If you get rejected, so what? What have you actually lost? In fact you are better off because even if you get rejected at least you now know where you stand.

2. The Assumptive Close

By assuming that the order is being placed, you can remove the responsibility for decision-making away from the buyer. This uses the buyer's natural inertia. The assumptive close uses words like "will" and "when".

This will solve a lot of problems when it is installed.

When will be the best time to deliver?

Will 4 units be sufficient to meet your requirements?

3. The Alternative Close

This close gives the buyer the choice between 2 alternatives, both of which have been chosen by you.

Do you require delivery Tuesday or will next week be more convenient?

Will you take the option of alloy wheels or do you prefer central locking?

Would you prefer the green or the red?

4. Closing on a small issue

Often the buyer finds it easier to make small decisions than large ones. However, having made the smaller decision the larger one becomes easier to make. Choose a minor feature of your product and gain agreement from the buyer on that feature.

Delivery can be made on a weekly basis. Does that meet your requirements?

We can arrange for the colors to match your company logo. Would that be what you are looking for?

If storage is a problem we can arrange for a split delivery at no extra cost. How does that sound?

5. The Pressure Close

This enables you to put pressure on the buyer in terms of special offers or inducements that are available or penalties for not placing the order.

This price is only available up until the end of the month.

If you order the smaller quantity the higher price will apply.

We are giving a free mobile phone with orders of 500 units and above. This offer ends tomorrow.

6. Converting on Objections

An objection can be a very strong buying signal. If the buyer raises an objection, and it is the only objection that is preventing the order from being placed, you can use this to gain commitment to buy.

You have said Mr. Jones that you are interested in our products but the discount terms that we offer are unacceptable. Is this the only objection you have?

If we were able to work out a compromise would you be willing to place the order today?

7. The Negotiated Close

Standard negotiating techniques are very useful at the closing stages of the sales process.

If I can reduce my price by 15 per unit will you agree to place the order today?

If I can agree your delivery terms, can we agree today on a long-term commitment for you to use us as your main supplier? I will ring my boss now.

If he agrees to reduce the price by 10 percent, do we have a deal?

8. The Trial Close

During your presentation the buyer may make a remark that suggests a decision to buy may have been made. In these situations, listen to what the buyer says, summarize what has been said, and ask for the order/close the sale.

9. The Balance Sheet Method

One closing technique that can be used is to list all the points in favor of your product and all the points against on a sheet of paper. This can be repeated for the other products being considered by the buyer and can influence the decision of where the "balance of power" lies. If your product is the stronger of the alternatives available to the buyer, this method can help the final decision be made in your favor.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES:

1. A foolproof method?

A reading, gap-fill.

When you're in sales you will at sometime hear your customers say, "I have to think about it" or "I have to think it over". This can be discouraging to hear, but there is an easy way of overcoming this objection and it will help you close more sales once you begin employing it.

There are some times when this statement really is the case and your customer honestly just needs to step back and mull the decision over a little. However, this is really quite

rare, unless what you sell is very new or very unique and this is the first time that it is being presented to them. When you hear this phrase from a customer, it can be safe to assume that there is a specific reason why they have decided not to purchase and they are not telling you the real reason why. It seems to most people that it is more polite to say, "I want to think it over", rather than express the real reason that they have "cold feet".

When you hear the "I want to think about it" objection, there are several reasons why this happened, but here we will address only the three most common reasons. Focusing in on only these three reasons is usually enough to encourage your customer to open up to you so that you can discover the real reason why they have decided not to buy. Here are the three reasons:

- * You have said something that has confused them and they feel they need to do more research before they can make an informed decision -- this can include verifying the price.
- * They do not like the product or it is not what they thought it was and it is no longer needed or wanted.
- * You have rubbed them the wrong way and they just don't feel comfortable buying from you.

So here is the best way to overcome their objection. When your customer says, "I want to think about it"; take a deep breath and very politely say something like this, "Sure, no problem, but before you go may I ask you something? (get their approval before continuing) I have been in sales a long time and usually when someone tells me that they have to think it over it means one of three things; either there is a problem with the price, the product or it is something I said or did . . . which one of these is it for you?"

I have never had a customer be offended with this question and in almost all cases you will discover that it is at least one of these three things. It will then be your job to discover if this is their only objection or, in other words, isolate the objection. Once you know what their real reason(s) is, you now have a second chance to back up and try to recover the sale. Many times your customer will appreciate your frankness and it can often put them at ease because you have very respectfully allowed them to get the real reason off of their chest. Most people are basically honest and feel uncomfortable when they have withheld the truth.

By the way, don't be too surprised if they reconsider and you make the sale on the spot!

Key

1. discouraging
2. employing
3. step
4. from
5. real
6. over
7. cold
8. common
9. up
10. research
11. rubbed
12. deep
13. price
14. did
15. you

2. Objections lead to rejections

Instruction. What do you think?

Often, what the customer is looking for is reassurance that their decision to buy is the right one. This is why objections are commonly raised.

The problem is that if we observe the behavior of salespeople during this process, it can be quite negative. The most common thing that happens when a salesperson hears an objection is that they interrupt the customer.

The customer says, “It looks a bit expensive”, and the salesperson, who has heard the objection many times before, interrupts and jumps in to the conversation.

What often then happens is the salesperson effectively says to the customer, “We are not too expensive” and then offers evidence to prove the statement.

Psychologically, what has happened is the salesperson has said in effect, “You are wrong and I can prove it”. I don't know about you but I don't like:

1. Being interrupted,
2. Being told I am wrong,
3. Being proved I am wrong.

Most salespeople when faced with an objection tend to react too quickly and don't ask enough questions. This is a bad tactic since none of us like to be wrong and all of us hate to be proved wrong. This method, therefore, of responding to an objection with a statement of fact is unwise since it puts the customer in the wrong frame of mind. Rather than attacking our customer's beliefs or opinions we should try to get them on our side. The golden rule should be that, whatever the objection, you should never openly contradict a customer.

GRAMMAR POINT: The texts supply more than enough.

LEARNING ASSESSMENT: Sympathy/Empathy

Instruction. In simple terms, to feel sympathy is to feel sorry for or sad about. To have empathy is to share the same feeling as another person. This lesson has emphasized which one of these? And what does this have to do with being a good salesperson? Write your answer in a few complete sentences and share them with the class.

LESSON 8. Sales psychology

OBJECTIVE/AIMS: Learners should be able to identify and give examples of their own sales abilities as well as identify how they help fulfill the psychological needs of their customers.

PRE-TEST/WARM-UP: What Every Successful Sales Person Needs

Elicit responses to the question. Then complete the list and elaborate as necessary. The following is a teaching resource for reference. Remember to tie answers in with the concept of psychology--sales people need to use psychology and be aware of psychological factors when selling.

Effective Communicator

Communication covers a lot of territory. I am not talking about superb orator skills here, but the ability to speak clearly and in a manner that is easy to understand. Sales is all about talking to people and getting them to understand what you are trying to communicate.

Ability to Listen

Along with speaking, a great salesperson knows when to stop talking and listen. They never cut someone off while they are talking, because in doing so they would fail to hear a key element in identifying what that person's needs might be.

Asks Great Questions

Salespeople are naturally inquisitive and know that in order to isolate what the real need or desire is in the buyer, they need to ask questions that will lead them to the answer. They naturally ask questions because they have a desire to help solve their problem.

Problem Solver

Another natural skill is the desire and ability to solve problems. Great salespeople are always solving problems. The ability to hone in on what the buyer's problem is and offering suggestions that will effectively solve the problem with respect to what products or services you sell, generally results with a sale.

Well Organized

I am not necessarily speaking of your personal surroundings, but more with your thoughts and methods of planning. Sales people have a keen ability to break things down into smaller steps and organize a plan of action. They know how to analyze what their goal is and in what order the steps need to be in in order to reach that goal.

Self-Starter and Self-Finisher

A successful sales person moves forward on their own. They never need anyone to tell them when it is time to go to work because they know that if they do not work they will not earn. They are also very persistent to finish what they start. They achieve their goals, even if they are small ones.

Positive Self Image

Having the attitude that they can do just about anything that they put their mind to is usually very common among sales people. They do not cower from meeting or talking to people or trying something new. They rarely allow negatives that are either spoken to them or about them to effect what they are trying to accomplish because they know who they are and what they are capable of doing.

Well Mannered and Courteous

The best sales people are very well mannered. You may not realize it, but good manners is a way of showing respect for others. People are attracted to those that respect them and mutual respect is fundamental in building lasting relationships with people . . . including buyers.

Naturally Persuasive

Another very common inherent skill with great salespeople is that they are very persuasive or know how to get what they want. They focus on what they want and they are persistent to keep chipping away until they get what they want. They almost never give up or give in.

Person of Integrity

A salesperson without integrity will have many struggles which will often include hopping from job to job. Honesty in sales is so important and it is almost impossible for this skill to be taught. You or the person you are looking to hire is either a person of integrity or are not. Be as analytical as possible on the evaluation of this skill.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES:

1. Vocabulary Development: Social Styles

See the handout with the same title, and use the picture. There is an embedded scale for each of the dimensions, giving four quadrants, or four types. It might be helpful to draw a large grid on the whiteboard, one vertical line and one horizontal. Label each, etc.

The Social Styles model "measures" a person on the two dimensions of "Assertiveness" and "Responsiveness" which describe those who are more responsive as emotionally responsive or expressive and those who are less responsive and emotionally controlled.

The styles are:

Analytical (low Assertive + low Responsive): serious, exacting, logical; values accuracy and facts.

Driving (high Assertive + low Responsive): independent, practical, formal; values actions and results.

Expressive (high Assertive + high Responsive): animated, forceful, impulsive; values approval and spontaneity.

Amiable (low Assertive + high Responsive): dependable, open, supportive; values security and relationships.

How does this relate to sales?

Drivers like to buy from drivers, amiables like to buy from amiables, expressives like to buy from expressives and analyticals like to buy from analyticals.

Which social style is most like you? Once you know you, then you can type others and adjust to their preferred ways of being treated.

Instruction. Find which column best describes you. Then look at the other columns in terms of how you will have to adjust to be most effective with a buyer.

The four columns provided in the handout list descriptors. Have the students act as resources to each other on what each means. You, the teacher, and dictionary are additional resources.

2. Decoding what customers say

Introduction. When customers talk with you, they not only express something about something, they also reveal their feelings and motivations. Here are some statements you might hear from customers. What are they really saying?

Example. Are you really sure that this guarantee is better than anyone else's?
TRANSLATION I am skeptical, unsure.

I am really ;not sure about this . . . it is for a very special person on a very special occasion.

This looks too expensive for me to wear.

All you salespeople are the same.

I am not certain which one to buy and I don't want to make a mistake.

You can extend the examples and draw this out as much as seems useful in terms of what people say and how to interpret (understand) what they say.

3. Why People Buy

Instruction. People buy for different reasons. Are these the only ones? What have you heard from customers? Can their motives for buying be put under one of these categories?

Benefits Categories:

Though benefits can be described in a million ways, there are really" only five categories:

1. Convenience: Saves time or effort.
2. Saves money or increases money.
3. Provides peace of mind.
4. Appeals to image or ego.
5. Fun or enjoyment.

GRAMMAR POINT: Vocabulary development.

LEARNING ASSESSMENT: Vocabulary

Take up to ten terms from all the materials and elicited language and give an old fashioned spelling test.

Instruction. This is a spelling test. Take a piece of paper and a pen. Now, I will say a word. Write it on your paper and spell it correctly. Then use it in a sentence. No talking!

Collect papers and grade before class ends so they can learn/gain reinforcement.

LESSON 9. Realia-based lesson--company sales policies, etc.

OBJECTIVE/AIMS: Learners should be able to repeat and clarify information, give directions, and explain procedures to the customer (e.g., returns policy, etc.).

PRE-TEST/WARM-UP: The shop's floor plan

With student help, draw a floor plan of the retail outlet and have students fill it in as to who, what, where, etc. Provide language where needed.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES: *These are suggested or illustrative activities. The teacher can create others based on the salespeople/students in the class and the specific place of work. It is best to use student/work realia when possible.*

1. Concrete sales item/service

Introduction. You sell something. What is it? In order to sell you have to know what you are selling--in detail.

Instruction. Take one example from your inventory of things/services for sale and describe everything you know about it. Get help from others who deal in the same product/service.

Your description needs to be more than something like this!

The emerald is a very transparent green. Emeralds are very rarely flawless. The stones are often oiled to fill in the cracks of imperfect emeralds. When they oil the emeralds they often help enhance color. The finest emeralds come from Columbia. Other good sources are Australia, India, Austria, Brazil, South Africa, Egypt, U.S.A., Norway, Pakistan, and Zimbabwe.

It also needs to be not too technical for the customer. After all, it is s/he you want to convince (of your knowledge), not an expert.

Correct and help students elaborate on their descriptions. Provide advice on getting more information and education. For example, students in this business might see <http://www.gemstone.org/gem-by-gem/english/emerald.html>. Alternatively, if a student works in a jewelry shop or for a chain, s/he has access to books and materials on gemstones. Encourage reading and research as much as they can to be fully conversant with the language of the gem(s).

2. Gemstone example

This is an alternative to the above. The teacher should take a sample page or two from a reputable source on gemstones and help students deconstruct some of the language. Here is a sample text, to get an idea of the difficulty of both lesson planning and reading this kind of specialist language. Care should be taken to make sure that the students can use such a learning activity for the purpose of sales. It may not be necessary for most sales jobs in this business.

Sample text

Emeralds are fascinating gemstones. They have the most beautiful, most intense and most radiant green that can possibly be imagined: emerald green. Inclusions are tolerated. In top quality, fine emeralds are even more valuable than diamonds.

The name emerald comes from the Greek 'smaragdos' via the Old French 'esmeralde', and really just means 'green gemstone'. Innumerable fantastic stories have grown up around this magnificent gem. The Incas and Aztecs of South America, where the best emeralds are still found today, regarded the emerald as a holy gemstone. However, probably the oldest known finds were once made near the Red Sea in Egypt. Having said that, these gemstone mines, already exploited by Egyptian pharaohs between 3000 and 1500 B.C. and later referred to as 'Cleopatra's Mines', had already been exhausted by the time they were rediscovered in the early 19th century.

Written many centuries ago, the Vedas, the holy scriptures of the Indians, say of the precious green gems and their healing properties: 'Emeralds promise good luck ...'; and 'The emerald enhances the well-being ...'. So it was no wonder that the treasure chests of Indian maharajas and maharanis contained wonderful emeralds. One of the world's largest is the so-called 'Mogul Emerald'. It dates from 1695, weighs 217.80 carats, and is some 10cm tall. One side of it is inscribed with prayer texts, and engraved on the other

there are magnificent floral ornaments. This legendary emerald was auctioned by Christie's of London to an unidentified buyer for 2.2m US Dollars on September 28th 2001.

Emeralds have been held in high esteem since ancient times. For that reason, some of the most famous emeralds are to be seen in museums and collections. The New York Museum of Natural History, for example, has an exhibit in which a cup made of pure emerald which belonged to the Emperor Jehangir is shown next to the 'Patricia', one of the largest Colombian emerald crystals, which weighs 632 carats. The collection of the Bank of Bogota includes five valuable emerald crystals with weights of between 220 and 1796 carats, and splendid emeralds also form part of the Iranian National Treasury, adorning, for example, the diadem of the former Empress Farah. The Turkish sultans also loved emeralds. In Istanbul's Topkapi Palace there are exhibits with items of jeweler, writing-implements and daggers, each lavishly adorned with emeralds and other gems.

3. Walkabout

Instruction. Give your teacher a tour of your shop. Ask about what things are in English.

4. The fine print

Instruction. Take the guarantee/warranty from the company or companies where you work. Explain it to customers (your fellow students).

Sample warranty

The Saffron Designer Jewelry line has a manufacturers warranty to the original consumer from the date of purchase that the purchased article of jewelry is free of defects in materials and workmanship under normal wear. This warranty is void if the article of jewelry has been damaged by accident, negligence, unauthorized service or other factors not due to defects in material or workmanship. Should warranty service be required, please send a copy of the sales receipt along with a description of the defect, and a ten dollar check or money order to SJ Inc., c/o warranty dept., 5956 Sherry lane, Suite 502, Dallas, Texas 75225. Out of warranty repairs may be sent for an estimate of cost to repair.

Certificate of authenticity

It is hereby certified that the Saffron Designer Jewelry line was hand crafted by expert jewelers and consists of the highest quality lab-created simulants on the market today. The rough is faceted by skilled cutters to the exact proportions of any natural gemstone. The result is a perfect lab-created stimulant stone that approaches the hardness and brilliance of any flawless natural stone. Only an expert gemologist can determine the difference after precise weight and heat probe tests.

It is not our intention to mislead any customer who is purchasing one of our laboratory created stones. Although they are visually the same, they are not chemically identical to the mined stones they represent. If any customer would prefer to substitute natural mined gemstones, we have a complete selection of natural diamonds and gemstones and would be happy to assist you in any way with this choice.

GRAMMAR POINT: Embedded in the language of realia presented.

LESSON ASSESSMENT:

Introduction. This lesson has been about you and your work.

Instruction. Please rate this lesson as helpful (useful) or not using this scale.

- 1 not helpful and useful
- 2 somewhat helpful and useful
- 3 helpful and useful
- 4 very helpful and useful
- 5 wonderfully helpful and useful

The results will help future teachers of this course. Thanks for your candid answer.

LESSON 10. Special topics and final assessment

OBJECTIVE/AIMS: Learners should be able to say what they liked and what they didn't, including asking for answers or clarification on any language points they wish. Students may also demonstrate their accomplishments in different.

PRE-TEST/WARM-UP: Loose ends

Instruction. Brainstorm any language needs not covered by the course. Ask your teacher to help you with these. For example, if you wanted how to talk to the English-speaking manager about a day off or a raise, ask your teacher how to say what you want to say. If you do not know where to find out more about the language of something, sale negotiation for example, ask your teacher to make some suggestions on where to find examples of this language.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES: What did you learn?

Instruction. This course has given you language. This course has let you practice and discover new language you might need. This course has asked you to contribute (add to) the language you need for your work, and to gain satisfaction serving customers. It is time to show briefly what you remember most. Please answer these questions.

What English words, phrases, or sentences did you learn that were new?

What English words, phrases, or sentences did you find most helpful for your work?

Students can write their answers on scrap paper and the teacher should collect and evaluate for self, school, or contractor.

COURSE ASSESSMENT: Satisfaction survey

Instruction.

1. Brainstorm criteria with which to evaluate this language course. Make the list with the students and check to see that everyone understands what each item means.

Using the scale below, rate how satisfied were you with each criterion listed.

Scale:

Very Satisfied
Satisfied
Neutral
Dissatisfied
Very Dissatisfied

2. Answer in the same way how satisfied you were with the following aspects of this language course.

How satisfied are you?

that you were understood and appreciated in the lessons?

the emphasis on speaking and practical words, expressions, and sentences you could use?

with the amount of time in class to practice new language?

with the choice of topics for the different lessons?

with the classroom and room setup?

with the helpfulness of the teacher's answers to your questions?

with the helpfulness of what was put on the whiteboard?

with the instructor's teaching?

with the practical value of the English presented?

with the quality of the course?

with the quality of the learning materials and handouts?

with the quality of the learning tasks or activities?

with the quality of the lessons?

with the usefulness of the language presented?

The teacher should note that this survey is a language lesson in itself; concept checking,

vocabulary, etc., are also a part of this final activity. Adequate explanation and set-up need to take place for it to be successful and useful.

GRAMMAR POINT: None as such, but points should emerge from the activities above, although not a great deal of time during this lesson should be spent of corrections.]