Tips about Shopping in English

Description
This is a role-play in which one student is a customer returning/changing/buying goods at a shop and the other student is a shop assistant. (See page 77 of the book)

Each student has a role card with the information they need to give or find out from their partner, and the answers that they will give to their classmate.

The customer has items to return or change (broken or wrong size/colour) and things to buy. The receipt on their role card provides the information they will need to give to the shop assistant. The customer wants his or her money back . . . but the shop assistant knows their manager doesn't like returning money! You need to resolve the situation.

Common phrases:
• "I would like to return this . . ."
• "There is a problem with this . . ."
• "It is a very nice shirt/T-shirt but the colour/size is not quite right."
• "I'm very sorry but . . ."
• "I'm afraid that . . ."

Asking about refunds and exchanges
The western world loves to please the customer to make shopping an "experience," and one way they do this is with exchanges and returns.

• Can I exchange this if… (situation)?
• What is the return/exchange policy?

Don't forget to think about 'register' - the degree of politeness in the role-play; for example, which of the following do you think would get a better response?

• "This shirt is the wrong colour. Give me my money back."
• "I would like to return this shirt because . . ."

Work on pronunciation, focusing on sentence stress and intonation.
Haggling isn’t always culturally acceptable.

If you are visiting an English-speaking country or that is in the western world like the U.S, Canada, the U.K. or Australia, let you know that while it may be okay to negotiate and haggle in some places in your country, haggling almost never happens in English-speaking countries. The good news is that you do not have to cover things like negotiating and haggling in these activity!

Employees are often trained to be more forward and social.

Again, if students are visiting one of the English-speaking countries in the western world, the clerks will usually approach them with a “Can I help you with anything?” or something along those lines. Clerks and salespeople are often trained to seek out and interact with customers. They try to be friendly, social and helpful.

Asking about specifications

There are so many things in so many colours, shapes, sizes, brands, models and more. It is overwhelming sometimes, but knowing what questions to ask about the specific aspects of the product you are looking for can really help.

Common phrases:

- Do you have this/these in… (colour/size/material)?
- Do you have... (brand name) (products)? — For example, “Do you have Nike athletic shoes?”
- What (colour/size/material) do you have this/these in?

Asking about price

- How much is this?
- How much are these/those?

Asking about payment

The best way to approach the situation is to decide how you want to pay (whether it is credit card, traveller’s check or even a bank transfer) and ask the simple question:

- “Can I pay with ...(payment method)?
- “What are your accepted forms of payment?”

You should be prepared to hear and give answers of “cash only,” “credit,” “debit” and “checks.”

Other questions

- When will (product) be available?
- What (product/colour/style) do you recommend?