

Language for ...

the supermarket

Age: Young adult / Adult

Level: Pre-intermediate

Length: 90 minutes (approx.)

Language Focus: vocabulary related to supermarket shopping, key expressions for speaking to supermarket staff

Skills: speaking, reading

Materials: one copy of the worksheet per student; one role card per student for Task 4; if possible, a IWB/PC/projector with an internet connection in the classroom (but this is not essential)

Aims: to equip students with common vocabulary related to the supermarket, to allow students to effectively understand and use common expressions for shopping at the supermarket



What are red words?

Ninety per cent of the time, speakers of English use just 7,500 words in speech and writing. These words appear in the Macmillan Dictionary in red and are graded with stars. One-star words are frequent, two-star words are more frequent and three-star words are the most frequent. 'Language for' lessons are based on red words and encourage students to improve their English through communicative tasks using collocation and commonly used phrases. <https://www.macmillandictionary.com/learn/red-words.html>

- 1 If possible, begin the lesson by showing an image of a typical supermarket. Ask students to brainstorm some of the most famous supermarket chains in the world. Elicit the names of some big chains. Then reveal that a recent study found that the chains with the most shops are as follows: 1. 7-Eleven, 2. SPAR, 3. Walmart, 4. Aldi, 5. Carrefour

(source = <https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/largest-supermarket-chains-in-the-world.html>). Did any students name some of these big chains?

- 2 Put the students into teams of three or four and hand out the student worksheets. Read aloud the instructions for Task 1a. Before students begin Round 1, make sure they understand the meaning of the words in each section. In particular, make sure to specify that 'household items' are usually products related to cleaning and maintenance of the house (they shouldn't be confused with 'health and beauty' products from Round 2, which are more related to personal hygiene or personal appearance). Highlight that each group must work together to come up with words for each section. Emphasize that for this task, no brand names are allowed (e.g. the word 'crisps' is acceptable but the brand name 'Lays' is not).
- 3 Set the timer and allow the students one minute to start writing words for Round 1. Once the time is up, collect one worksheet from each group and pass it to a different team for correction. Students may now use a dictionary to check unfamiliar words. Monitor the class closely as they correct, taking note of good suggestions. Write these suggestions on the board and elicit definitions for them. Then ask each group to pass back each worksheet to its original group and decide which group in the class had the highest number of correct suggestions for Round 1. Finally, repeat this process for Round 2.
- 4 Students discuss the question in Task 1b and make notes. Elicit other common supermarket sections (e.g. frozen foods; tinned foods; ready meals; deli; sweets; breakfast food; products for pets; baby products; etc).

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- 5 Students work in pairs. Ask students to discuss the questions in Task 1c. Monitor as they speak, taking note of any supermarket-related language they may use. Finally, provide feedback on this language.
- 6 Refer students to Task 2a. Highlight that many of the phrases may be new to students, so it may be good to use a dictionary. Some of the words have tricky pronunciation (e.g. *cashier* = kæʃɪə; *receipt* = rɪˈsi:t; *aisle* = aɪl), so encourage students to also use their dictionaries to listen to the words (online dictionaries) or to check the phonetic transcription. Allow students a few minutes to work in pairs to complete the activity. Then elicit the correct answers, focusing on correct pronunciation.
- 7 Ask students for examples of typical things customers do at the supermarket. To stimulate their imaginations, you could mime out some actions here and elicit the corresponding verbs (e.g. 'take a basket', 'pay', 'find the product', etc). Ask students to read the instructions for Task 2b. Then allow them a few minutes to work in pairs to complete the task. Monitor as they do so, helping weaker students. Finally, elicit the correct order of the actions.
- 8 Tell students that for Task 2c they will work individually. Read aloud the introduction to Conversation 1 and allow students a minute or two to read the text and answer the True/False questions. Monitor as they do this. Once they have answered the questions, ask them to compare answers in pairs. Finally, elicit the correct answers. Focus on new vocabulary which has come up in this text (*brand, weigh, self-checkout*). After this, repeat the process for Conversation 2. Again, focus on new vocabulary from this second text (*points card, PIN*).
- 9 Read aloud the instructions for Task 3a. Ask students to work in pairs to complete the missing words, encouraging them to refer back to earlier tasks to help them remember. As they do the task, monitor the class and perhaps give some hints. Finally, elicit the correct answers.
- 10 Refer students to Task 3b. Perhaps correct the first item together as a class. Then ask students to work in pairs to complete the remaining sentences. For the more difficult sentences, give clues, such as telling students which exact word needs to be corrected. Finally, elicit the correct answers.
- 11 Divide students into groups of three. Tell students that in this task, they are going to have a meeting. Read aloud the instructions for the task and then draw students' attention to the items in the table. Hand out the role cards and ask students to read about their role. As they read, monitor the class and help weaker students to understand. Once the task is fully set up, tell students to begin their meetings, setting a clear time limit (e.g. six to seven minutes). During this time, monitor and take notes on language being used. Once the time is up, perhaps go through the items in the table individually, gauging which decisions seemed to be more popular for the class as a whole. Finally, provide feedback on the language which students used.
- 12 Refer students to Task 5. Ask them to sit in pairs for this task. Give students a few minutes to discuss the questions, encouraging them to incorporate new language from this lesson. To wrap up the activity, ask students to share their ideas for other typical "supermarket" expressions or questions (as per the third question). Finally, provide feedback on this task.

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KEY:

- 2. a.** 1. trolley
2. cashier
3. basket
4. checkout
5. receipt
6. aisle
7. card reader
8. queue
9. shelf
- b.** 1. Walk into the supermarket; 2. Take a basket (or if you want to buy a lot of things, take a trolley); 3. Find the aisle which has the product you need; 4. Find the product on the shelf; 5. Go to the checkout area; 6. Queue to pay; 7. Pay the cashier; 8. Take your receipt; 9. Walk out of the supermarket
- c.** 1. False
2. True
3. True
4. False
5. False
6. False
- 3. a.** 1. basket
2. bakery
3. queue
4. bags
5. shelves/aisles
6. receipt
7. dairy
8. weigh
- b.** 1. The Drinks section and the Snacks section are often in the same **aisle**.
2. If you want to buy shampoo, it is usually in the **Health and beauty** section of the supermarket.
3. **Cashier:** That's seven pounds sixty, please.
Customer: Can I pay by card?
4. Supermarkets often put chocolate on a low **shelf**, where little children can see it and ask their parents to buy it!
5. My local supermarket has so many different **brands** of beer: Budweiser, Heineken, Carlsberg, Quilmes, Tsingtao, Fosters, etc.
6. **Cashier:** Can you **enter** your PIN, please?

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Task 4: Supermarket manager role cards

Student A – ideas

- Use **big baskets and trolleys** so that the customer will buy more.
- Put **basic products** at the front of the supermarket so they are easy to find.
- Make the **prices** as simple as possible, like two pounds (£2), or three pounds (£3). The customer will be happy to have prices that are easy to understand.
- Put **non-basic products** in the aisle, on a **shelf** at the same level as the customer's eyes. Here, the customer will see the products easily and buy them.

Student B – ideas

- Use **small baskets and trolleys** so that the customer can walk around the supermarket easily and feel more relaxed.
- Use slow, relaxing **music** that will make the customer stay in the supermarket for a longer time and spend more money!
- Put **fruit and veg** at the front of the supermarket, where the bright colours will make the customer feel happy.
- For **prices**, use a complicated number to make products seem cheap – for example, one pound ninety-nine (£1.99) or two pounds ninety-nine (£2.99).

Student C – ideas

- Use fast, popular songs and **music** that will make the customer feel energetic and happy.
- Put **basic products** at the back of the supermarket so that the customer needs to walk through the supermarket and buy other products!
- Put **fruit and veg** at the back of the supermarket, where the temperature is colder and the **fruit** and veg will stay fresh.
- Put **non-basic products** next to the checkout so that the customer will buy them without thinking.

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1 Warmer



- a. Work in groups. In the tables below, each column shows a different section of the supermarket. For each round, you have one minute to add products to each section.

Round 1

Fruit and veg	Snacks	Household	Drinks
apple	chocolate	paper towels	coffee

Round 2

Dairy	Health and beauty	Bakery	Meat and fish
cheese	shampoo	croissant	chicken

- b. What other sections does a supermarket usually have?
- c. Work in pairs. Discuss the questions.
- How often do you go to the supermarket?
 - Which supermarket is your favourite? Why?
 - What are the products you most commonly buy at the supermarket?

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2 Text

a. Label the images with the correct words from the box below.

aisle basket card reader cashier checkout queue receipt shelf trolley



1. _____



2. _____



3. _____



4. _____



5. _____



6. _____



7. _____



8. _____



9. _____

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- b.** Below there is a list of typical things we do at the supermarket. The first and the final actions have been completed for you.

- 1 Walk into the supermarket
- _____ Queue to pay
- _____ Take your receipt
- _____ Go to the checkout area
- _____ Find the aisle which has the product you need
- _____ Take a basket (or if you want to buy a lot of things, take a trolley)
- _____ Pay the cashier
- _____ Find the product on the shelf
- 9 Walk out of the supermarket

Glossary:

Shelf (noun, countable; plural is 'shelves') = a flat piece of wood, plastic, or glass that is attached to the wall or is part of a piece of furniture, used for putting things on

- c.** Marek is in the supermarket. Read the two conversations. Are the statements true or false?

Conversation 1: Marek can't find the product that he needs, so he speaks to a shop assistant.

Marek: Excuse me.

Shop assistant: Yes?

Marek: Where can I find the toothpaste?

Shop assistant: Toothpaste? That's in aisle four, in the Health and beauty section.

Marek: Great, thank you. And do you know if you have the Aquafresh brand?

Shop assistant: Oh, probably. We have about twenty different brands, so I'm sure you'll find the one you want.

Marek: Excellent. And just one more question ...

Shop assistant: Sure!

Marek: I got these apples in the Fruit and veg section. Do I need to weigh them?

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Shop assistant: No, no. The cashier will **weigh** them for you at the checkout. Oh, but if you go to the self-checkout, you'll need to **weigh** them there.

Marek: Oh, right. No, I'll go to the checkout with the cashier. Thanks again!

Shop assistant: You're very welcome.

1. Aquafresh is a type of shampoo.
2. Marek doesn't know the exact cost of the apples.
3. The supermarket has two different types of checkouts.

Conversation 2: *Now Marek is at the checkout. He speaks to the cashier.*

Cashier: Hello.

Marek: Hi. Can I have two **bags**, please?

Cashier: Sure. **Medium** or **large**?

Marek: **Large**, please.

Cashier: Ok, here you go. And do you have a points **card**?

Marek: No, I don't.

Cashier: Ok. So, that's thirty-one pounds sixty in total.

Marek: Can I pay by **card**?

Cashier: Of course! Just **insert** your **card** into the **reader**.

Marek: OK.

Cashier: And when you're ready you can enter your PIN.

Marek: Right.

Cashier: Thank you. And here's your **receipt**. Have a nice afternoon.

Marek: Thanks, you too.

4. Marek has a **card** to show that he is a regular customer at this supermarket.
5. Marek pays in cash.
6. The cashier isn't very friendly.

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3 Language in use

a. Complete the sentences using words and phrases from the conversations in Task 2c.

1. I never use a **trolley** at the supermarket. I prefer to use a _____ because I usually only buy a few things.
2. The supermarket near my house has a big _____ section, so there's always a delicious smell of fresh bread when you walk through the door.
3. I hate going to the supermarket on Saturday mornings . It's always full of people and you need to _____ for a very long time!
4. To protect the environment, many supermarkets prefer to use paper _____, and not plastic ones.
5. "Before the hurricane arrives, people are buying a lot of food and water. The _____ in the supermarkets are almost completely empty!"
6. If you want to return a product to the supermarket, you need to show the _____ so that the cashier knows that this product isn't from a different supermarket.
7. These days, many people prefer not to eat _____ products like milk, cheese, or butter.
8. In some supermarkets, the customer must _____ **fruit** and vegetables before going to the checkout. In others, the cashier does it.

b. Each sentence contains one mistake. Find it and correct it.

1. The **Drinks** section and the **Snacks** section are often in the same **shelf**.
2. If you want to buy shampoo, it is usually in the **Household** section of the supermarket.
3. **Cashier:** That's seven pounds sixty, please.
Customer: Do I pay by **card**?
4. Supermarkets often put chocolate on a low aisle, where little children can see it and ask their parents to buy it!
5. My local supermarket has so many different groups of beer: Budweiser, Heineken, Carlsberg, Quilmes, Tsingtao, Fosters, etc.
6. **Cashier:** Can you say your PIN, please?

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4 Communication



Work in groups of three. You are the managers of a new supermarket. You want the supermarket to attract lots of customers and make lots of money. Today, you need to have a meeting to decide on some important things.

Read your role card. Then, talk about each idea in the table below. Try to think of two more ideas for the supermarket to get customers and to make money.

Idea	Decision
Baskets and trolleys	Big or small?
Music	Fast or slow?
Basic products (e.g. bread, milk, sugar, cereals)	Front or back?
Prices	Simple or complicated?
Fruit and veg	Front or back?
Non-basic products (e.g. chocolate, beer, crisps)	Checkout or aisle?
<i>Other idea:</i>	
<i>Other idea:</i>	

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5 Discuss

Discuss the questions with your classmate.

- In Task 4, you read about ways that supermarkets try to make customers spend more money. Does your local supermarket do any of these things?
- When you go to the supermarket, do you often buy products that you don't need? Explain.
- In Task 2, you saw a typical conversation between a customer and a cashier. Can you think of other typical expressions or questions in this type of conversation?
- Do you notice any differences between supermarkets in your country and ones in other countries? Explain.
- How can supermarkets help to protect the environment?
- Which do you prefer: shopping in the supermarket or online? Explain.

Red Words

fruit (noun)***	snack (noun)*	household (noun)***	drink (noun)***	health***
beauty (noun)***	meat***	fish (noun)***	trolley*	basket**
reader***	receipt**	queue (verb)*	shelf (noun)**	brand (noun)**
bag (noun)***	medium (adjective)**	large (adjective)***	insert (verb)***	weigh**