

online shopping

Age: Adult



Level: Intermediate

Time: 45–60 minutes

Language focus: key vocabulary for online shopping

Skills: speaking, listening

Materials: video and worksheets, internet access

Aims: to provide students with language to help them shop online

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.

- 1 As preparation for the lesson, you could ask students to look at one or two UK-based shopping websites before class (e.g. www.amazon.co.uk, www.johnlewis.com), note down any words they see repeatedly (e.g. *basket*, *checkout*, *delivery*, *sign in*) and check their meanings in the Macmillan Dictionary.



Teaching Tip: If students have computer access, they could be invited to share their findings in a word cloud platform (e.g. <https://answergarden.ch/>), which could be displayed and informally looked at as the class begins.

- 2 Make a copy of the worksheet for each student.
- 3 Start the lesson by asking students if they shop online, and if so, what was the last thing they bought? Ask them to read the statement in exercise 1 and elicit opinions. Which way of shopping do they prefer? Why?

- 4 Tell students that they're now going to watch a video in which different individuals talk about their experiences of shopping online. Ask them to read the sentences in exercise 2a in preparation. Play the video. Give students time to complete exercise 2a, and then replay the video so that they can check their answers. Go through the answers as a class.
- 5 Before completing exercise 2b, explain that you're going to play a section of the video and that students will need to listen out for two words to complete each of the sentences. Ask them to read the sentences and briefly think about what the words might be. Play section **2:00–4:18** of the video, pausing if necessary. Once students have completed the exercise, check the answers as a class, showing how the questions highlight typical phrases which crop up in this situational context, i.e. *get something delivered*, *make a purchase*, *look like the picture/photo*, *send something back* (= return), *go through* (= of a payment, be approved/completed), *wrong item*, *customer services*, *rectify* (= correct) *the problem*.
- 6 Ask students to carefully read the sentences in exercise 3a and then work in pairs to complete the exercise. Encourage them to first complete any answers they immediately know so that they can be eliminated. Check the answers as a class and point out some features of the vocabulary, e.g. we can *add* items *to* or *remove* items from *the basket*, products can be either *in stock* (= available) or *out of stock* (= unavailable), you can *sign in* to or *sign out* of your *account*. Note that *sign in/out* has a conventional meaning students may be familiar with (that of officially adding or removing your name from a list), but with online shopping accounts it's a common synonym for *log in/out*.

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- 7** Exercise 3b puts the words featured in the previous exercise in a context simulating what students might encounter if they're making a purchase on a UK-based shopping site. Ask students to complete the exercise, and if they need help, tell them to look back at sentences 1–8 in Exercise 3a. Check answers.
- 8** Complete the reordering exercise, 3c, as a class activity, ensuring that the correct answers are available for all to see, as they will form a resource for students in the following productive exercise.
- 9** Divide students into pairs for exercise 4. Tell them to read the question and each note down some ideas for instructions. Remind them to look back at the words and phrases featured in earlier exercises, as well as the suggestions in the box at exercise 4. Ask them to take turns in giving each other instructions. (If they have computer access, they might like to complete the exercise whilst both looking at a live UK/US shopping site – suggest that they use websites that neither they nor their partner have used before.)
- 10** Ask students to change pairs and discuss the questions in exercise 5. They should interview each other, taking notes, then each share their partner's answers with the class.
- 11** As a wind-up, ask students if they know or can guess what is meant by the new English word *showrooming* (= looking at product in a shop before buying it online more cheaply – see verb entry *showroom* in the Macmillan Dictionary). Have students done this? Did they save money?

Answer key:

1 students' own answers

2a 1 T 5 F
2 T 6 F
3 F 7 T
4 T 8 F

b 1 get, delivered
2 made, purchase
3 look, like
4 send, back
5 go through
6 wrong item
7 services, problem

3a 1 h 5 d
2 a 6 c
3 e 7 g
4 f 8 b

b 1 sign
2 delivery
3 stock
4 quantity
5 basket
6 postage
7 packing
8 checkout

c 1 Remove the item from your basket.
2 First you need to create an account.
3 Review your order and go to checkout.
4 Enter the payment details and wait for confirmation.
5 Delivery is free if you spend over £50.
6 This item is currently out of stock.
7 Always sign out when you have finished shopping.
8 Remember to select the correct quantity.

4, 5 students' own answers