



Five College Center for the Study of World Languages

Conversation Preparation Guides

Title: Buying from Street Vendors

Topic: Shopping Skills

Level: Novice-Intermediate

Practice on Your Own

Imagine you are wandering around the streets of a city where the language is spoken. There are people who are selling things on the sidewalk: CDs and DVDs, vegetables, clothing...

- Identify some items that may be sold on the street. What are their names in the target language?
- Learn how to ask about prices: How much is this? How much are they? How much per kilo? How much per package? How much per bunch? ...
- List words for scales, weight, length, package...
- As you go around during the week, try to read prices in the language you are learning. See if you are getting faster in saying tens, hundreds...
- Now imagine a situation where you are on the street and you stop where someone is selling vegetables.
 - Think of the possible sentences that the seller may say to you, and questions he/she may ask. Our vegetables are fresh. Our tomatoes are the best. Our vegetables are cheap/the cheapest. How many potatoes for you? ...
 - Think of the questions you want to ask, mainly about prices. How much are the tomatoes? (Also prepare the response.) How much is this? How much is that? Is this fresh? I want five of these/onions? ... Remember that it may be very common to use some polite expressions such as "excuse me," "please," "thank you," etc.
 - Try to buy a kilo of something. Express how much you want. Is it possible to negotiate the price? If you are not sure, look it up or ask your conversation partner. Do you know expressions like "It is too expensive"; "It is good"; "It is cheap"; "I want this" ...?
- Do the same practice for other items, like CDs or clothing. How much is this CD/DVD? How much is this T-shirt? Is this shirt brand new? ...

Practice in Conversation Session

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- Pronounce the items you have identified for your conversation partner. Make sure that you pronounce them correctly. As you name each item try to express its color in a sentence like this: "Tomato. It is red."
- Now you are going to shop for some vegetables. Your conversation partner will play the part of a street vendor. Try to inquire about the prices, the quality... Then buy some vegetables, trying to negotiate the price if appropriate.
- Switch roles so that you are now a seller. Try to sell your products by being nice, using greetings, advertising the freshness/price...
- Now role play buying and selling clothing. (The prices are higher and better for practicing higher numbers.) How can you advertise your items if they are clothes?