APEX ENGLISH
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B1 · BUSINESS ENGLISH

UNIT 4 · B1·4B

Negotiating and closing a deal

Theme · Numbers, prices & deals

Unit 4 · B1·4B

Negotiating and closing a deal

Theme: Numbers, prices & deals

B1 · Business English

Learning objectives

- Open, hold and close a simple business negotiation politely.
- Ask for and give a discount, extra service, or better payment terms.
- Use conditional language ('if you …, we can …') to trade concessions.

Ask the teacher — notes to bring to class

Class Book

Warm-up · Deal or no deal

Rank these 5 concessions from the one you'd most like to receive (1) to the one you'd care least about (5). Be ready to justify #1 and #5.

10% discount on the price

30 extra days to pay

free installation

an extra year of warranty

priority support (answer in 2h)

Lead-in · Match the phrase to its function

Match each negotiation phrase to what it's really doing.

1. "Is there any flexibility on the price?"

---

2. "If we sign today, could you…?"

---

3. "That's outside our budget, unfortunately."

---

4. "Let me check with my manager and get back to you."

---

5. "So, just to summarise the final terms…"

---

followUp: Which of these do you use MOST in your job? Which one do you AVOID?

Reading · Never negotiate on price alone

Junior buyers push on price. Senior buyers push on terms. There's a big difference. If you only negotiate on price, both sides end up unhappy: the seller loses margin, the buyer wonders if they could have got even more off. Nobody wins.

A better move is to trade concessions. Instead of asking 'can you do it cheaper?', ask 'if we sign a 2-year contract, can we lock in this year's price?' or 'if we pay 50% up front, can you throw in the training?'. Now both sides gain something specific.

Three golden phrases open the door to almost any negotiation. First: 'is there any flexibility on…?' — softer than 'give me a discount'. Second: 'if you can do X, we can do Y' — the pattern of a professional trade. Third: 'let me sleep on it and come back to you tomorrow' — because a fast yes is often a bad yes.

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1. What is the difference between junior and senior buyers?
   (A) Juniors push on price; seniors push on terms
   (B) Seniors never negotiate
   (C) Juniors always get better deals
2. Why is negotiating on price alone bad?
   (A) It's illegal
   (B) Both sides end up unhappy
   (C) It takes too long
3. What does 'let me sleep on it' really mean?
   (A) I need to sleep now
   (B) I'll come back to you tomorrow with an answer
   (C) I'm not interested

Vocabulary in context

Find these words in the text and match them to the meaning.

margin — the seller's profit on a deal

concession — something you give up to move the deal forward

flexibility — room to move on a term or a price

throw in — add something for free as part of the deal

True / False / Not Given

Based only on the text, choose the correct option.

1. Senior buyers only negotiate on price.
   (A) True
   (B) False
   (C) Not Given
2. 'If you can do X, we can do Y' is called a professional trade.
   (A) True
   (B) False
   (C) Not Given
3. A fast yes is always a good yes.
   (A) True
   (B) False
   (C) Not Given

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4. The article says WHERE these tactics originally come from.
    (A) True
    (B) False
    (C) Not Given
5. 'Is there any flexibility on…?' is softer than 'give me a discount'.
    (A) True
    (B) False
    (C) Not Given

React to the text

Discuss briefly. There is no single correct answer.

1. In your culture, is it normal to negotiate on price for B2B services? Or is the first price usually the final price?

2. What's the WORST negotiation habit you've seen in someone else? (Or been guilty of?)

Scan for meaning

Find the phrase in the text that matches each definition.

1. the seller's profit on a deal

2. something you give up to move the deal forward

3. the pattern of a professional trade

4. add something for free as part of the deal

Vocabulary · Negotiation and closing

table an offer — put forward a price or a deal for consideration

counter-offer — reply with a different offer

meet halfway — split the difference between two positions

walk away — leave the deal because it's not good enough

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trade off — give up one thing to get another

clinch the deal — finalise the negotiation with a binding agreement

payment terms — how and when the buyer pays

net 30 / net 60 — the buyer pays 30 / 60 days after invoice

upfront payment — money paid before the work starts

throw in — add something extra for free

sleep on it — take a day to decide

final terms — the agreed conditions at the end

practice

Complete each sentence with ONE phrase from the lists.

1. Our standard ___ ___ are net 30 — payment 30 days after the invoice.

2. If you can commit to a 2-year contract, I can ___ ___ the setup fee.

3. It's a big decision — let me ___ ___ ___ and come back to you tomorrow.

4. We're €500 apart. Shall we ___ ___?

5. Their price was 40% above ours. We had to ___ ___.

6. Let me summarise the ___ ___ before we sign.

Collocations · deal verbs

Match each verb with the noun it usually goes with.

reach — an agreement

close — a deal

sign — a contract

extend — a deadline

waive — a fee

lock in — a price

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Odd one out

Choose the word that does NOT belong.

1. offer · counter-offer · deal · sunset
   (A) offer
   (B) counter-offer
   (C) deal
   (D) sunset
2. net 30 · upfront · deposit · overtime
   (A) net 30
   (B) upfront
   (C) deposit
   (D) overtime
3. walk away · meet halfway · close the deal · take the stairs
   (A) walk away
   (B) meet halfway
   (C) close the deal
   (D) take the stairs

Word building · verb ↔ noun

Complete the pair.

1. to negotiate → a ___
2. to agree → an ___
3. to offer → an ___
4. to propose → a ___
5. to concede → a ___

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Grammar · 1st conditional for trading concessions

1. Form — IF + present simple , will / can + base verb • If you sign today, we can waive the setup fee. • If we pay 50% upfront, will you throw in the training?

2. Why 'if' + present, NOT 'if' + will — ✗ If you will sign today, we can waive the fee. ✓ If you sign today, we can waive the fee.

3. Order doesn't matter — meaning is the same — • If you commit to 2 years, we can lock in this price. • We can lock in this price if you commit to 2 years.

4. Softeners: 'would' + 'if' + past — even more polite — • If you signed today, we could waive the fee. (softer, more hypothetical) • Would you agree if we included the training?

5. Common negotiation openers — • What if we…? / Would you consider…? • Is there any flexibility on…? • Let me sleep on it. I'll come back to you tomorrow.

Exercise A — Build the 1st conditional

Match the two halves into a full sentence.

1. If we pay 50% upfront, ___

2. If you sign today, ___

3. If they don't drop the price, ___

4. If we order 500 units, ___

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5. If you extend the deadline, ___

Exercise B — Find and fix the mistake

Each sentence has ONE mistake with 1st conditional or negotiation language.

1. If you will sign today, we can waive the setup fee.

2. We are going to walk away if they don't will drop the price.

3. Is there any flexibility about the price?

4. Let me sleeping on it.

Exercise C — Trade a concession

Write ONE 'if you …, we can …' sentence for each situation.

1. The client wants a 10% discount. You can give it — if they sign a 2-year contract. →

2. The supplier wants payment in 15 days. You need 60. →

3. The client wants free installation. You'll do it — if they pay 50% upfront. →

4. The vendor wants €200 more per unit. You'll consider it — if the warranty doubles. →

Exercise D — Rewrite in softer, hypothetical form

Rewrite each sentence using 'if + past → would/could' (more polite/hypothetical).

1. If you sign today, we can waive the fee.

2. If we pay 50% upfront, will you throw in the training?

3. If they don't drop the price, we'll walk away.

Exercise E — 5 polite negotiation moves

For each situation, write ONE polite sentence you could actually say.

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1. Ask for flexibility on the price. →

2. Soft-reject the offer without saying 'no'. →

3. Buy 24 hours to think. →

4. Ask for training to be included. →

5. Summarise before signing. →

Exercise F — Complete the negotiation dialogue

Complete each answer.

1. — Your price is a bit above our budget. Is there any ___ (flexibility) ___ (on) the price? — If you ___ (order) 200 units instead of 100, we ___ (can) drop it by 8%.

2. — OK, let's talk terms. If we ___ (pay) 30% upfront, ___ (will/you) waive the delivery fee? — Sure. Then just to ___ (summarise), we're at €95/unit, 200 units, 30% upfront, free delivery. Deal?

Listening · A short pricing call between buyer and vendor

A buyer and a vendor talk about a first order. Notice how the vendor says 'no' politely, and how they trade concessions instead of dropping the price.

pre

When a supplier says 'that price is fixed', do you believe them? Why or why not?

What's your favourite polite way to ask for a discount?

gist

1. What is being sold?

2. What discount does the buyer ask for at first?

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3. What does the vendor offer instead?

detail

1. What is the vendor's list price per laptop?

2. What was the final agreed price?

3. What extra concessions did the buyer secure?

Third listen — read between the lines

Answer from what is IMPLIED.

1. Who feels more in control at the end — buyer or vendor?

2. Would you say the vendor is experienced? Why?

Useful language from the audio

Match each phrase to what it does in the call.

"Is there any flexibility on the price?" — polite opener from the buyer

"15% is a bit tough for us on this quantity." — soft 'no' from the vendor

"If you can sign this week, we can go to 8%." — trades a concession — 'if you X, we Y'

"We'd also throw in the 3-year warranty." — adds a sweetener without cutting price further

"Let me send you the paperwork today." — closes the deal — action step

Voice A: So — 50 laptops at €980 each. Before we go further, is there any flexibility on the price?

Voice B: Honestly, at 50 units, 15% is a bit tough for us. But if you can sign this week, we can go to 8%.

Voice A: 8%. That's better. But 8% off a €980 list — I was hoping for closer to 12%.

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Voice B: I hear you. What I CAN do — we'd also throw in the 3-year warranty instead of 1, and we'd add priority support for the whole team.

Voice A: Priority support is nice — 2-hour response?

Voice B: 2 hours, business days. And if you order more than 80 units, we'd revisit the discount.

Voice A: 50 is what we need. OK — 8%, 3-year warranty, priority support. That works.

Voice B: Deal. Let me send you the paperwork today so we lock it in.

Fourth listen — fill the gaps

Complete the exact phrases from the call.

1. Is there any ___ on the price?

2. ___ you can sign this week, we ___ go to 8%.

3. We'd also ___ ___ the 3-year warranty.

4. Let me send you the ___ today.

Speaking · The 3-minute mock negotiation

In pairs, run a 3-minute mock negotiation. Cover: (1) polite opener, (2) at least ONE 'if you …, we can …' trade, (3) ONE soft 'no', (4) a 'just to summarise' close.

Scene: Software renewal — vendor wants +18% this year

A: You: the customer. Same features as last year — you don't accept a big increase without a fight.

B: You: the vendor. Your cloud costs went up 22%; you MUST recover at least 10% or the deal is a loss.

Scene: Office cleaning contract — 12 months

A: You: the office manager. You want longer cleaning hours for the same price.

B: You: the supplier. You can give more hours only if the contract goes from 12 to 24 months.

Scene: Freelance rate for a 3-month project

A: You: the freelancer. Your normal day rate is €400. The client is offering €280.

B: You: the client. Your budget is fixed at €280/day but you could extend the project or pay upfront.

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Discussion · your negotiation style

Choose 2 questions and speak for 30–45 seconds each.

In a negotiation, do you prefer to make the FIRST offer, or let the other side start? Why?

What's the LAST time you walked away from a deal? Was it the right call?

Which is harder for you in English: making an offer, or saying 'no' politely?

Do you prefer to negotiate in person, on video, on the phone, or by email? Why?

Role-play · The deal that almost died

Read your role, prep 30s, run the 3-minute call. End with a clear yes, no, or 'let me sleep on it'.

Scene: Long-term client asks for 25% off, out of nowhere

A: You: account manager. You've served this client for 4 years. 25% off would wipe out your margin. Prepare 2 counter-offers.

B: You: the client. Your CFO has told you: 25% off or you switch supplier next quarter. You'd rather stay — but not at any price.

Scene: New supplier — first order, big potential

A: You: buyer. You want to test them with a small order (20 units) at a good price. Prepare 1 concession you can offer to make it attractive.

B: You: the supplier. You need this reference client. But 20 units at a big discount hurts. Ask for something in return (case study, referral, longer contract).

Mini-presentation · 60-second 'my best negotiation ever'

Deliver a 60-second talk to a partner about YOUR best negotiation. Follow the 4-beat structure.

Beat 1 (10s) — What was on the table (product / service / value).

Beat 2 (15s) — The other side's opening position.

Beat 3 (20s) — The trade or move that unlocked the deal (use 1 conditional).

Beat 4 (15s) — The final terms and what YOU learned.

sample: Last year I was negotiating a €40,000 training contract with a corporate client. Their opening was 'we love the programme, but 40k is out of reach — we can go to 28'. Instead of arguing on the price, I said: 'if you commit to a second cohort in Q2, I can drop the per-cohort price by 15%'. That got us to a €68,000 two-cohort deal at €34k each — actually more revenue for me and a lower per-unit price for them. What I learned: always look for a way to grow the pie before you split it.

Writing · A short counter-offer email

The client asked for 15% off your quote. You can only give 6% AND you want a longer contract. Write a 5-line counter-offer email. Include: subject, greeting, 1 line of context, ONE clear counter-offer using 'if …, we can …', ONE deadline for their decision, warm close. Max 80 words.

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bonus: Bonus task — write the SAME counter-offer in a much friendlier tone (imagine a client you've known for years) AND in a much more formal tone (a first-contact enterprise client). Compare the two.

Wrap-up · What did we cover?

Never negotiate on price alone. Trade concessions.

'If you …, we can …' is the professional negotiator's pattern.

Polite openers: 'is there any flexibility on…?', 'what if we…?'

Never say a fast yes. 'Let me sleep on it' is a valid, professional move.

Always close with 'just to summarise the final terms…' — no ambiguity.

Quiz

1. Which is the correct 1st conditional?
   (A) If you will sign today, we can waive the fee.
   (B) If you sign today, we can waive the fee.
   (C) If you signing today, we can waive the fee.
2. The politest opener for a discount is:
   (A) Give me a discount.
   (B) Is there any flexibility on the price?
   (C) Your price is too high.
3. 'Let me sleep on it' means:
   (A) I need to rest first.
   (B) I'll come back to you tomorrow with an answer.
   (C) I'm rejecting the offer.
4. 'Throw in' means:
   (A) reject completely
   (B) add something for free
   (C) pay upfront
5. The BEST way to close a negotiation is:
   (A) OK, sounds good, bye.
   (B) Send me an email whenever.
   (C) Just to summarise the final terms — [X, Y, Z]. Are we agreed?

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Workbook — home practice

1. Vocabulary gap-fill

Complete each sentence with ONE phrase from the box.

Word bank: throw in · sleep on it · meet halfway · walk away · payment terms · final terms

1. If you sign a 2-year deal, I can ___ ___ the installation for free.

2. It's a big decision — let me ___ ___ ___ and come back tomorrow.

3. We're €500 apart. Shall we ___ ___?

4. Their price was 40% above ours. We had to ___ ___.

5. Our standard ___ ___ are net 30 — payment 30 days after invoice.

6. Let me summarise the ___ ___ before we sign.

2. 1st conditional trades

Rewrite each request as a professional 'if you …, we can …' sentence.

1. The client wants 10% off. You'll give 5%.

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2. The supplier wants payment in 15 days. You need 60.

3. The buyer wants free installation. You want a 2-year contract.

4. The vendor wants €200 more per unit. You'll accept — if warranty doubles.

3. Make it politer

Rewrite each blunt sentence into a polite negotiation phrase.

1. Give me a discount.

2. That price is too high.

3. I need to think.

4. OK sold, bye.

4. Find and fix the mistake

Each sentence has ONE mistake with 1st conditional or negotiation language.

1. If you will sign today, we can waive the setup fee.

2. We are going to walk away if they don't will drop the price.

3. Is there any flexibility about the price?

4. Let me sleeping on it.

5. Listening — three closing moments

Three deals reach the closing moment. Notice who closes cleanly and who leaves it ambiguous.

1. Which close is CLEAREST?

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2. Which close is AMBIGUOUS?

3. Which close is TOO PUSHY?

Voice A: OK, sounds good then. Talk soon.

Voice B: Just to summarise the final terms — €95 per unit, 200 units, net 30, delivery by the 15th. Are we agreed?

Voice C: Great, I'll send you the contract to sign in the next 5 minutes.

6. Writing — a short counter-offer email

The client asked for 15% off. You can only give 6% AND you want a longer contract. Write a 5-line counter-offer using 'if …, we can …', a deadline for their decision, and a warm close. Max 80 words.

Ask the teacher — notes to bring to class

Answer key — Class Book

Lead-in · Match the phrase to its function

1. polite opener — asks for a discount
2. trades speed for a concession
3. soft rejection — keeps the door open
4. buys time, doesn't say no
5. closes the deal by naming what's agreed

Reading · Never negotiate on price alone

1. (A) Juniors push on price; seniors push on terms
2. (B) Both sides end up unhappy
3. (B) I'll come back to you tomorrow with an answer
1. (B) False
2. (A) True
3. (B) False
4. (C) Not Given
5. (A) True
1. Model: in Portugal, in B2B it's expected. First quote is a starting point — I would lose respect if I didn't push back at least once, politely.
2. Model: talking too much. I've watched people 'sell past the close' — the client already said yes, and then the seller talked so much they created a new objection.
1. margin
2. concession
3. if you can do X, we can do Y
4. throw in

Vocabulary · Negotiation and closing

1. payment terms
2. throw in
3. sleep on it
4. meet halfway
5. walk away
6. final terms
1. (D) sunset
2. (D) overtime
3. (D) take the stairs
1. negotiation
2. agreement
3. offer
4. proposal
5. concession

Grammar · 1st conditional for trading concessions

1. will you throw in the training? / can you throw in the training?
2. we can waive the setup fee.
3. we'll walk away from the deal.
4. will you give us a bigger discount?
5. we can send you a much better draft.
1. If you sign today, we can waive the setup fee.
2. We're going to walk away if they don't drop the price.
3. Is there any flexibility on the price?
4. Let me sleep on it.
1. If you sign a 2-year contract, we can offer you a 10% discount.
2. If you can give us net 60, we can commit to a full year of orders.
3. If you can pay 50% upfront, we can include the installation for free.

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4. If you double the warranty from 2 to 4 years, we can accept the €200 extra per unit.
1. If you signed today, we could waive the fee.
2. If we paid 50% upfront, would you throw in the training?
3. If they didn't drop the price, we'd walk away.
1. Is there any flexibility on the price?
2. That's slightly outside our budget, unfortunately. Could we look at option B?
3. Let me sleep on it and come back to you tomorrow morning.
4. If we sign for two years, could you include the training?
5. Just to summarise the final terms — €120 per unit, net 30, delivery by the 15th. Are we agreed?
1. Is there any flexibility on the price? — If you order 200 units instead of 100, we can drop it by 8%.
2. If we pay 30% upfront, will you waive the delivery fee? — Sure. Then just to summarise, we're at €95/unit, 200 units, 30% upfront, free delivery. Deal?

Listening · A short pricing call between buyer and vendor

1. 50 laptops for the client's new office.
2. 15%.
3. 8% off, plus free 3-year warranty and priority support if they sign this week.
1. €980.
2. €901.60 per laptop (8% off €980).
3. 3-year warranty (up from 1) and priority support (2h response).
1. Both feel like winners — the buyer got more than the list price and extras; the vendor kept the margin and locked the deal this week.
2. Yes — never says 'no', trades concessions instead of dropping the price, and closes with 'let me send you the paperwork today'.
1. flexibility
2. If … can
3. throw in
4. paperwork

Quiz

1. (B) If you sign today, we can waive the fee.
2. (B) Is there any flexibility on the price?
3. (B) I'll come back to you tomorrow with an answer.
4. (B) add something for free
5. (C) Just to summarise the final terms — [X, Y, Z]. Are we agreed?

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Answer key — Workbook

1. Vocabulary gap-fill

1. throw in
2. sleep on it
3. meet halfway
4. walk away
5. payment terms
6. final terms

2. 1st conditional trades

1. If you can double the order, we can offer you 10% off.
2. If you give us net 60, we can commit to a full year of orders.
3. If you sign a 2-year contract, we can include the installation at no extra cost.
4. If you double the warranty, we can accept the €200 extra per unit.

3. Make it politer

1. Is there any flexibility on the price?
2. That's slightly outside our budget, unfortunately.
3. Let me sleep on it and come back to you tomorrow morning.
4. Just to summarise the final terms — [X, Y, Z]. Are we agreed?

4. Find and fix the mistake

1. If you sign today, we can waive the setup fee.
2. We're going to walk away if they don't drop the price.
3. Is there any flexibility on the price?
4. Let me sleep on it.

5. Listening — three closing moments

1. Voice 2 — restates every agreed term and asks for an explicit 'yes'.
2. Voice 1 — 'sounds good' with no summary; both sides may remember different terms tomorrow.
3. Voice 3 — assumes agreement and asks for the signature without confirming the buyer is in fact ready.

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