APEX ENGLISH · A2 BUSINESS

Unit A2·4A

Talking about prices with confidence

Numbers, prices & orders

Student Edition · Classbook + Workbook

UNIT A2·4A

Talking about prices with confidence

Numbers, prices & orders · A2+ · 55–65 min · Business English

“Price is what you pay. Value is what you get.”

— — Warren Buffett

Objectives

- Discuss prices, discounts and value with a client using natural business phrases.
- Understand a real-world listening between a buyer and a supplier negotiating price.
- Write a short professional message (90–110 words) justifying a price to a customer.

Class Book

Warm-up · Quick starter

Solo · about you · 3 min

Think about the last thing you bought for work. Answer these 3 questions in your head — no writing needed.

- Was it good value for money? Why / why not?
- Did you compare prices before buying? Where?
- In your role, who usually decides how much to spend?

Ask the teacher — notes to bring to class

Lead-in · Brainstorm: what makes a price fair?

Brainstorm · quick list · 6 min

You have 90 seconds. In pairs, brainstorm as many factors as possible that make a business customer feel a price is fair. Write your top 5. Then compare with another pair.

Reading · The price conversation nobody wants to have

10 min

Every account manager knows the feeling. The client opens the meeting and says: 'We need to talk about the price.' It usually means one thing — they think it's too high.

The instinct is to give a discount immediately, just to keep the client happy. Experienced sales professionals know this is often a mistake. A quick discount can save the deal today, but it also tells the client that your first price was never the real price.

A better approach is to slow the conversation down. Ask questions: 'When you say the price is high, are you comparing it with another supplier, or with your internal budget?' The answer completely changes the strategy.

If it's a budget issue, you can look at payment terms, smaller quantities, or a phased delivery. If it's a competitor, you talk about value — quality, service, reliability, and hidden costs the competitor is not showing.

Cutting the price should always be the last option, not the first. Because once you cut it, going back up is almost impossible.

Comprehension check

1. According to the text, giving a quick discount is…

- ○ **A.** a smart move that saves the deal
- ○ **B.** often a mistake because it damages trust in your pricing
- ○ **C.** the standard response for experienced sellers
- ○ **D.** always necessary to keep the client

2. The suggested first step when a client says the price is too high is to…

- ○ **A.** offer a 10% discount
- ○ **B.** ask what exactly they are comparing it with
- ○ **C.** walk away from the deal
- ○ **D.** increase the price to negotiate down

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3. If the problem is the client's budget, the article suggests…

○ **A.** changing payment terms or quantities

○ **B.** immediately reducing the unit price

○ **C.** sending them to a competitor

○ **D.** waiting one month

4. The main message of the last paragraph is that…

○ **A.** prices should be cut early to close deals fast

○ **B.** once you lower a price, raising it later is very difficult

○ **C.** clients always accept the first offer

○ **D.** value is less important than price

True, False, or Not Given?

Base your answer only on the text.

1. The text says most clients accept the first price without discussion.

○ **A.** True

○ **B.** False

○ **C.** Not Given

2. According to the text, understanding WHY the client thinks the price is high is essential.

○ **A.** True

○ **B.** False

○ **C.** Not Given

3. The text recommends specific discount percentages for different industries.

○ **A.** True

○ **B.** False

○ **C.** Not Given

4. The text argues that talking about value is a better response than cutting price when a competitor is involved.

○ **A.** True

○ **B.** False

○ **C.** Not Given

Discursive writing · Reflect on the text (120–150 words)

Choose ONE of the questions below and write a short discursive answer. Support your view with a concrete example from your work or industry.

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1. Do you agree that offering a discount too quickly damages the seller's credibility? Justify your view with at least ONE example.

2. Think of a time when you (or your company) had to justify a higher price than the competition. What arguments worked, and which ones didn't?

Vocabulary · Talking about price and value

8 min

Roles

Term	Meaning
quote / quotation	the official price a supplier gives in writing
margin	the profit left after costs are removed
markup	the amount added to the cost to set the selling price
unit price	the price per single item
bulk discount	a lower price for buying large quantities
payment terms	when and how the client pays (e.g. 30 days net)

Smalltalk

Term	Meaning
overpriced	too expensive for what it offers
competitive	similar to or better than the market price
value for money	good quality at a fair price
a ballpark figure	an approximate price, not final
to haggle / to negotiate	to discuss to reduce the price
to match a price	to offer the same price as a competitor

Practice

Complete each sentence with ONE word or phrase from the lists above.

1. Could you give me a ___ for 500 units? We need something in writing.

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2. Our ___ on this product line is very tight — under 8%.

3. For orders over 1,000 pieces, we can offer a ___.

4. Their offer is 15% cheaper, but I think 90 days is fair — can you ___ their price?

5. Honestly, at 200 euros a licence, I find it a bit ___ compared to alternatives.

6. I don't have exact numbers yet — as a ___, we're around 40k.

Collocations · verbs that go with price / offer

Match each verb with the correct completion.

Term	Meaning
raise	prices (make them higher)
undercut	a competitor (offer a lower price)
negotiate	payment terms
waive	a fee (cancel it as a favour)
quote	a price (give an official number)

Odd one out — which word doesn't fit?

Choose the word that doesn't belong to the group.

1. quote · estimate · invoice · guess

- ○ **A.** quote
- ○ **B.** estimate
- ○ **C.** invoice
- ○ **D.** guess

2. overpriced · pricey · steep · a bargain

- ○ **A.** overpriced
- ○ **B.** pricey
- ○ **C.** steep
- ○ **D.** a bargain

3. margin · markup · profit · deadline

- ○ **A.** margin
- ○ **B.** markup
- ○ **C.** profit
- ○ **D.** deadline

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Grammar · Quantifiers & comparatives with prices

14 min

1. How much / how many + quantifiers

How MUCH + uncountable: How much does it cost? How much revenue?

How MANY + countable: How many units? How many suppliers?

Softeners: a bit / a little (uncountable), a few (countable), quite a lot of (both).

2. Comparatives for negotiating

cheaper / more expensive than · slightly / significantly / considerably more expensive · roughly / around the same price · nowhere near as expensive as.

3. Enough / too / not enough

The price is too high. · The margin isn't high enough. · We don't have enough time to negotiate. · There aren't enough units in stock.

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Exercise A — Complete with the correct quantifier or comparative

Use ONE word or short phrase.

1. Their offer is ___ more expensive than ours — only 3% higher.

2. We simply don't have ___ margin on this product to give a big discount.

3. How ___ suppliers did you contact before choosing us?

4. The new supplier is ___ as reliable as the old one — service is much worse.

5. For an urgent delivery, 48 hours is ___ short — we can't guarantee it.

6. Could you give me a ___ of a discount on the software licence?

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Exercise B — Rewrite as a negotiation-friendly sentence

Reformulate the direct sentence into something more diplomatic.

1. Your price is too high.

2. That's expensive.

3. I want a discount.

4. Your competitor is cheaper.

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Exercise C — Form the question

Write a natural business question.

1. (how much / discount / for 500 units)

2. (payment terms / flexible)

3. (any / hidden costs / this quote)

4. (price / include / delivery)

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Exercise D — Discursive writing (60–80 words)

Write a short paragraph explaining, in your own words, the difference between 'price' and 'value' in your industry. Use at least TWO comparatives and ONE quantifier.

1. Your paragraph:

Describe the picture

Look at the picture. Imagine you are the owner of this café. Write 5–6 sentences using the unit grammar (quantifiers + comparatives). Talk about your prices, how they compare with the competition, and what makes them fair.

Target language: Our prices are slightly / significantly… than… · We don't have enough… to… · How much / How many…? · It's nowhere near as… as… · Quite a lot of our customers…

Listening · A supplier defends the price

10 min

Sofia (procurement, Voice A) is negotiating with Daniel (sales, Voice B) on a repeat order. She wants a better price. Daniel needs to defend the current offer without losing the client.

Before you listen

• What arguments do you expect the buyer to use to ask for a lower price?

• What arguments do you expect the seller to use to defend the price?

Gist

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1. What is the buyer's main argument for a lower price?

2. Does the seller agree to reduce the unit price?

Detail

1. By how much is the competitor's offer cheaper?

2. What TWO concessions does Daniel finally offer instead of a price cut?

3. What does Sofia say she will do at the end of the call?

Listen and complete

Complete each gap with ONE or TWO words.

1. Sofia says the other supplier came in ___ cheaper.

2. Daniel refuses to cut the unit price because his ___ is already very tight.

3. Instead of a discount, he offers ___-day payment terms.

4. Sofia agrees to confirm by ___.

Useful negotiation phrases

Match each phrase to its function.

Term	Meaning
I appreciate the offer, but…	soften a disagreement
Is there any flexibility on…?	ask for a concession diplomatically
What I can do is…	propose an alternative concession
Let me get back to you on that.	buy time before committing
Just to make sure we're aligned…	check understanding

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Speaking · Defend, negotiate, decide

10 min

Prepare a short 60-second talk, then take part in a mini-negotiation with your partner.

Writing · A professional reply defending a price

10 min (or homework)

A client has emailed asking for a 10% discount. Write a 90–110 word reply. Politely decline the discount, but offer TWO alternative concessions (e.g. payment terms, free delivery, extended warranty). Use at least ONE comparative and ONE softener from this unit.

Workbook

Talking about prices with confidence — Workbook

1. Vocabulary in context

Complete each sentence with ONE word or phrase from the box. Two items are extra.

1. Could you send me a written ___ for 300 licences by tomorrow?

2. Our ___ on this product is under 10%, so there's very little room to negotiate.

3. For orders above 1,000 units, we can offer a proper ___.

4. It's not the cheapest option, but the service is excellent — real ___.

5. I don't have exact numbers yet — as a ___, we're looking at around 45k.

6. Their competitor came in at 20 euros; can you ___ that offer?

2. Comparatives, quantifiers & softeners

Rewrite each direct sentence in a more diplomatic, negotiation-friendly form.

1. Your price is too high.

2. That's expensive.

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3. I want a discount.

4. Their offer is 3% cheaper.

5. There's no margin left on this product.

6. Your competitor is much cheaper.

3. Which sentence is more natural in a price conversation?

Choose the more professional / natural option.

1. You want to say the offer is 15% higher than expected.

○ **A.** Your price is very much bigger than we thought.

○ **B.** Your price is significantly higher than we had anticipated.

○ **C.** Price too high for us.

2. You want to ask for room to negotiate, politely.

○ **A.** Is there any flexibility on the pricing?

○ **B.** Give me discount please.

○ **C.** You must lower the price.

3. You want to defend a higher price using value.

○ **A.** We are more expensive but we are better, ok?

○ **B.** Our offer includes support and warranty that the cheaper option doesn't cover.

○ **C.** Cheap is bad, always.

4. You want to postpone a decision politely.

○ **A.** Let me get back to you on that.

○ **B.** I no can decide now.

○ **C.** Wait please, I think.

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5. You want to propose a non-price concession.

○ **A.** What I can do is offer you 60-day payment terms.

○ **B.** I give you 60 days for pay.

○ **C.** Money later, ok?

4. Find and fix the mistake

Each sentence has ONE mistake. Rewrite it correctly.

1. How much units do you need this quarter?

2. Our margin isn't enough high to give a 15% discount.

3. Their offer is more cheap than ours.

4. Can you match to their price?

5. We have quite lot of clients asking for that discount.

6. The price is nowhere as competitive as last year's.

5. Listening — a phone call about a quote

A client, Ana, calls her account manager, Pedro, to react to a recent quote. Listen (or read the transcript) and answer.

1. What is Ana's main problem with Pedro's quote?

2. What does Pedro refuse to change, and why?

3. What TWO alternative concessions does he offer?

4. What is the final agreement at the end of the call?

6. Writing — email reply defending a price (100–120 words)

A client has emailed you asking for a 12% discount on your latest quote. Write a polite reply that (a) acknowledges their request, (b) explains why you cannot match the discount, (c) offers TWO alternative concessions (e.g. payment terms, free delivery, additional service), and (d) invites them to reply if they'd like to discuss it further. Use at least ONE comparative and ONE softener from the unit.

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7. Reading & discursive reflection

Re-read the classbook article 'The price conversation nobody wants to have'. Then answer in 100–130 words.

1. The text argues that cutting the price should always be the LAST option in a negotiation. In your industry, is this realistic? Give at least ONE concrete reason for and ONE against.

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