Everyday English for ESL

Lesson 6 — Returning Goods

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DIALOGUE

ASSISTANT: Hi, how can I help you?

CUSTOMER: Hi, I'd like to get a refund on this pair of shoes.

ASSISTANT: May I ask why you're returning them?

CUSTOMER: I bought them for my son, but they're too big.

ASSISTANT: Did you keep the receipt?

CUSTOMER: No, I must have lost it.

ASSISTANT: I'm afraid I can't give you a refund if you don't have the receipt. You can exchange them for a smaller size, or I can give you a credit note.

CUSTOMER: OK, I'll take the credit note. How long is it good for?

ASSISTANT: Six months.

LISTENING COMPREHENSION

If you buy something in a shop and it turns out to be damaged, broken or faulty in some way, you have a legal right to return the goods and get your money back, as long as they are still under guarantee.

If you bought something in a shop and then just change your mind about it, you do not have any legal right to return the goods. However, many shops have a returns policy which lets you take your items back to the shop for any reason and get a refund.

Sometimes shops will only let you exchange the goods for something else in the store, rather than giving you a refund. Or they may give you a credit note or voucher to use in their store. This is often the case if you're returning something you bought in a sale.

You'll usually need to show where and when you bought your goods. You can prove this with your receipt if you have one.

If you don't have a receipt and you bought the items using a debit or credit card, you could ask if they will accept a card statement as proof of purchase.

QUESTIONS

- When was the last time you returned goods to a shop?
- Why do shops sometimes give credit notes rather than refunds?
- What do you do with your receipts?
- What would you do if a shop refused to change a faulty article?
- What's your opinion about 'extended guarantees'?
LANGUAGE NOTES

1. **Refund** is a noun here, but it can also be a verb: *The shop refused to refund (verb) my money. The shop refused to give me a refund (noun).*
2. **May** is a polite way of asking permission. Other, less polite, expressions include ‘Could I’ and ‘Can I’.
3. Here it would be wrong to say ‘May I ask why you’re returning it?’ because we refer to the individual items in the pair rather than the pair itself. Compare: *I bought a new pair of jeans. Do you like them? (not ‘it’).*
4. **Bought** is the past tense of the irregular verb ‘to buy’ (buy, bought, bought).
5. **Receipt** is pronounced ‘re-seat’, with the stress on ‘seat’. The ‘p’ is silent.
6. **Must have** is used to express something that the speaker has deduced or is nearly certain about in relation to the past: *The grass is wet. It must have rained during the night.*
7. **To lose** is an irregular verb: lose, lost, lost.
8. **I’m afraid** is used to introduce a polite refusal (as here) or bad news: *I’m afraid I’m going to be late.*
9. Note that you exchange one thing for another thing.
10. A **credit note** is a paper note issued by a retailer to a customer when goods are returned. A credit note can only be used in the particular shop or chain of shops that issued it.
11. Here **good** is used to mean ‘valid’: *My new passport will be good for ten years.*
12. **Turn out** is a phrasal verb meaning ‘to be discovered to be, to prove to be’: *The job turned out to be harder than we thought.*
13. The ‘u’ in **guarantee** is silent, and the stress is on the final syllable. The phonetic transcription is /ˈɡærənˈtiː/.
14. **However** can be used in several ways. Here it is a conjunction used to introduce a contrasting idea.
15. A **policy** is a set of rules which dictate how a company acts in specific situations: *It’s against company policy for me to do that.*
16. **Any** has the meaning of ‘whatever’ here: *You can have any colour you want as long as it’s black.*
17. **Sale** is another word with several meanings, but it can never be a verb (the verb is ‘to sell’). Here, it refers to a period when shops reduce their prices. However, it can also refer to the act of selling: *The government wants to ban the sale of violent video games.*
18. **Prove** is the verb and **proof** is the uncountable noun: *If you want to prove it, you’ll need some proof.*
19. **One** refers to ‘receipt’ here. Here’s another example: *I hope you have a plan, because I don’t have one.*
20. **Items** are things you have bought or plan to buy: *There are six items on my shopping list.*
21. If you use a **debit card** to pay for something, the money is automatically taken from your current account. A **credit card** allows you to buy things and pay for them at a later date.
WORD LIST

accept ........................................ to say yes to something, such as an invitation or request
broken ........................................ not working, or damaged in some way
buy (bought, bought) .................. to get something by giving money for it
credit card ................................. a small plastic card that allows you to buy things and pay for them later
credit note ................................... a piece of paper given by a shop when you return something you do not want, that allows you to buy other goods of the same value
customer ..................................... a person who buys things from a shop
damaged ...................................... broken, harmed, spoiled
debit card ..................................... a plastic card given by a bank that you use for paying for things. It moves money automatically from your bank account to the account of the person you are paying
exchange (v) .............................. to give something to someone and receive something from that person
faulty .......................................... not perfectly made or not working correctly
goods .......................................... objects produced for sale
 guarantee (n) ............................... an agreement that if something that you buy does not work, it will be repaired or replaced, or you can have your money back
item .............................................. an article or thing that you buy
keep ............................................ to continue to have or own something
legal ............................................ to do with the law
lose (lost, lost) ........................... to not be able to find something
money [U] ................................. coins and paper notes you use for buying things
pair ............................................. two things of the same kind or a single thing made up of two parts
proof [U] of purchase ...................... something (e.g., a receipt) that proves you bought something in a particular shop
prove .......................................... to show that something is true
receipt ........................................ a piece of paper that you get when you buy something
refund (n) .................................... a sum of money which is returned to you, for example because you have paid too much or because you have returned goods to a shop.
return (v) ..................................... to take or send back
returns policy .............................. rules used by stores to manage the process by which customers return or exchange unwanted or faulty goods
right (n) ...................................... something you are officially allowed to do
sale ............................................. a time when goods are sold at a cheaper price than usual
shop (n) ...................................... a place where goods are sold
size ............................................. a standard measurement according to which goods are made or sold
son .............................................. your male child
statement ................................... an official document that tells you how much money is in your bank account
store (n) ...................................... a shop of any size in the US, but usually a big shop in the UK
voucher ...................................... an official piece of paper that you can use instead of money to buy a particular product or service
EVERYDAY ENGLISH LESSON 6 — RETURNING GOODS

LANGUAGE ACTIVITIES

A. MATCH THE WORDS WITH THE PICTURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>credit card</th>
<th>guarantee</th>
<th>money</th>
<th>sale</th>
<th>shoes</th>
<th>size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>label</td>
<td>receipt</td>
<td>shop assistant</td>
<td>purchase</td>
<td>customer</td>
<td>store</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. 
2. 
3. 
4. 
5. 
6. 
7. 
8. 
9. 
10. 
11. 
12. 

EVERYDAY ENGLISH

JEFFREY HILL
B. TRUE OR FALSE?

1. By law, shops must refund your money if you return an article that is still under guarantee.
2. If the shop has a returns policy, you will always be able to get a refund.
3. Shops frequently prefer to give a credit note instead of a refund on sale goods.
4. A receipt is not a proof of purchase.
5. A credit card statement may sometimes be used to prove you bought something.

C. CHOOSE THE CORRECT WORD

If you buy something in a shop and it turns (1) out/up to be damaged, broken or faulty in some way, you have a legal right to return the goods and get your money back, as long as they are (2) always/still under guarantee.

If you bought something in a shop and then just change your mind (3) about/for it, you do not have any legal right to return the goods. (4) However/Therefore, many shops have a returns policy which lets you (5) take/to take your items back to the shop for any reason and get a refund.

Sometimes shops will only let you exchange the goods (6) by/for something else in the store, rather than (7) giving/to give you a refund. Or they (8) may/must give you a credit note or voucher to use in their store. This is often the case if you're returning something you bought (9) in/on a sale.

You'll usually (10) must/need to show where and when you bought your goods. You can (11) prove/proof this with your receipt if you have one.

If you don't have a receipt and you bought the items using a debit or credit card, you could ask if they will accept a card (12) statement/voucher as proof of purchase.
EVERYDAY ENGLISH LESSON 6 — RETURNING GOODS

ANSWER KEY

A. MATCH THE WORDS AND PICTURES

1. receipt  
2. shoes  
3. store  
4. label  
5. credit card  
6. customer  
7. shop assistant  
8. size  
9. guarantee  
10. sale  
11. payment  
12. money

B. TRUE OR FALSE?

1. FALSE — only if the goods are damaged, broken, or faulty  
2. FALSE — it depends what the shop’s returns policy says  
3. TRUE — ‘often the case if you’re returning something you bought in a sale’  
4. FALSE — a receipt is the most common proof of purchase  
5. TRUE — some shops will accept a card statement as proof of purchase

C. CHOOSE THE CORRECT WORD

1. out  
2. still  
3. about  
4. However  
5. take  
6. for  
7. giving  
8. may  
9. in  
10. need  
11. prove  
12. statement
EVERYDAY ENGLISH LESSON 6 — RETURNING GOODS

CROSSWORD

Across
1 I _____ £20 for these shoes (4)
7 You have a legal _____ to return the goods (5)
8 Alternative to a refund (6,4)
10 Some shops _____ you exchange goods without a receipt (3)
11 Proof of purchase (7)
12 I bought these shoes for my _____ (3)
14 Could I _____ this shirt for another size? (8)
17 This _____ of shoes cost £50 (4)
18 _____ I help you? (3)
19 Things that are sold (5)
21 The shop has a no-returns _____ (6)
23 Not working properly (6)
24 A shop should not sell _____ goods (7)
25 How big something is (4)
26 Period when goods are sold at a discount (4)
27 Bad (quality) (4)

Down
2 Article (4)
3 Take back (6)
4 Means of payment (6,4)
5 How long _____ did you buy them? (3)
6 Another word for 8 across (7)
8 Some shops offer a discount for _____ (4)
9 A large shop (5)
13 The washing instructions are on the _____ (5)
15 This watch has a five-year _____ (9)
16 Place where you buy things (4)
17 Buy (8)
20 You wear them on your feet (5)
22 You should always _____ the receipt (4)
EVERYDAY ENGLISH LESSON 6 — RETURNING GOODS

WORD SEARCH

Exchange Damaged Policy C F M N E C X C X
C G R C B W P E N D C U R W
R F U P Goods S C K T B S C
E F A X D H I U N V F B R T R
D P R U S Z B N G S C D E O E
I P A N L Y V B S H N S C R D
T U N V M T J H A J T V E E I
C R T D B S Y P L R F H I G T
A C E X E N U A E O C R P N N
R H E O R F G I O U S E T S O
D A H U W E A R O O I F V I T
Z S T I L C P V A U T U E Z E
L E U G Q L B R O K E N I E F
R I G H T L A B E L M D U B W

Bought
Broken
Credit card
Credit note
Damaged
Exchange
Faulty
Goods
Guarantee
Item
Label
Legal
Pair
Policy

Proof
Purchase
Receipt
Refund
Return
Right
Sale
Shoes
Shop
Size
Store
Voucher
EVERYDAY ENGLISH LESSON 6 — RETURNING GOODS

CROSSWORD — SOLUTION

WORD SEARCH — SOLUTION