



---

**William:** Hello and welcome to *How To* – my name is William Kremer. Coming up in today’s programme...

**Customer:** ... I mean it’s a nice computer but I was wondering if you could do me a better deal on it.

**Salesman:** Um, I’m not sure I can do that.

**William:** We’re going to look at how to haggle - that is, how to try to buy something for a lower price – or sell something at a higher price. Now, haggling happens a lot more in some cultures than in others. Here in Britain, people don’t normally haggle when they’re buying things... but it is OK to haggle for very expensive things or very cheap things.

So, for example, if you want to, you could haggle at the market, buying some flowers. Now, in this situation, it sounds a bit strange to say *Can I have a discount please?* That sounds too formal. Listen to this conversation – the customer wants to buy some chrysanthemums, which is a type of flower.

**Customer:** How much are the chrysanthemums?

**Stallholder:** Er... chrysanths... they’re £3 a bunch.

**Customer:** Right... OK... I’ll give you £5 for two. How does that sound?

**Stallholder:** Ah, go on then.

**William:** The flowers are £3 a bunch, a *bunch* being a group of flowers. What does the customer offer?

**Customer:** I’ll give you £5 for two. How does that sound?

**William:** She says, *I'll give you £5 for two*. She's offering to buy two bunches if she gets a £1 discount. The market stallholder says *Go on then*, meaning, 'OK'.

Notice that customer's useful English structure – *I'll give you £5 for... something*.

**Voice 1:** I'll give you thirty pounds for this sofa.

**Voice 2:** I'll give you two pounds for both books.

**William:** But what if the market stallholder wants to make a deal? What language can he use? Listen to this conversation.

**Customer:** How much are the chrysanthemums?

**Stallholder:** Er... chrysanths... they're £3 a bunch.

**Customer:** Right... OK...

**Stallholder:** Tell you what, since I'm in a generous mood, you can have two for a fiver.

**Customer:** Yeah OK, that sounds great.

**William:** Did you hear what the stallholder said?

**Stallholder:** Tell you what, since I'm in a generous mood, you can have two for a fiver.

**William:** *You can have two for a fiver*. You can have two bunches of flowers for five pounds.

Now that little phrase, *Tell you what*, sounds a bit strange, but people often say this when they're trying to make a good deal. It means, 'How about this?' Just say *Tell you what*, and then make your offer.

Now I mentioned before that in Britain people haggle over cheap things and expensive things. So it's quite acceptable to haggle if you're buying a

computer or a car. And in this situation, it is good English to ask *Do you think you can give me a discount on that?* Notice that preposition *on*: *Can you give me a discount on that computer?* Listen to this conversation – how does the woman ask for a discount on a new computer?

**Salesman:** So that's er, that's the price.

**Customer:** OK, and can you... I mean it's a nice computer but I was wondering if you could do me a better deal on it.

**William:** *I was wondering if you could do me a better deal on it.* That's one way to ask for a discount. Now listen to the next bit of the conversation. In this clip, what phrasal verb means to give something extra for the same price?

**Customer:** OK, and can you... I mean it's a nice computer but I was wondering if you could do me a better deal on it.

**Salesman:** Um, I'm not sure I can do that. Er, I mean, what sort of thing are you looking for?

**Customer:** Well, some kind of discount or incentive. It's... you know. 'Cause I'm happy to pay cash, but I was wondering if you could sort of throw something in or do some kind of deal for me?

**Salesman:** Um well, I could probably throw in the delivery for free – that's £20.

**William:** That phrasal verb *throw in* means to give something extra for the same price.

**Customer:** ... but I was wondering if you could sort of throw something in or do some kind of deal for me?

**Salesman:** Um well, I could probably throw in the delivery for free – that's £20.

**William:** The salesman offers to throw in the delivery of the computer, worth £20. Now, here's another very useful phrasal verb for haggling – *knock off*. But what does *knock off* mean?

**Salesman:** I'll tell you what I can do for you.

**Customer:** OK.

**Salesman:** I can knock, I can knock forty off it – that's pretty much my absolute maximum discount I could offer.

**Customer:** Forty?

**Salesman:** Yeah.

**Customer:** Discount of forty?

**Salesman:** Yeah, that's pretty much the best I can do for you and er... you can, you can walk away with it now for 406.

**William:** *To knock some money off something* means to reduce the price. The salesman offers to knock forty pounds off the computer.

That's all for this week but if you go to the *How To* webpage on BBC Learning English dot com you'll find a listening exercise which uses a complete clip of this conversation. And I hope today's language will be useful to you and that it will save you some money! Goodbye.