

Adjective auction

by David Riley and Simon Greenall

Age: Adult

Activity: Pairwork, whole class – speaking, writing

Level: Intermediate

Aim: To choose adjectives and use them to write an advertisement

Time: 20–25 minutes

Grammar and functions: Adjectives and adverbs

Vocabulary: See worksheet

Materials: One of the worksheet for each pair of students plus an extra copy for you (the extra copy must have the lots cut into strips); some advertisements showing different products to inspire the students, e.g. computers, shampoo, hotels, washing machines, cosmetics, clothes, holidays, insurance (enough for each pair in the class to choose one)

Procedure

1. Tell the students that they are going to write an advertisement.
2. Ask the students to work in pairs. Pass round the press advertisements and ask each pair to choose a product or service they would like to advertise.
3. Explain that the students must buy the adjectives and adverbs they want to use to advertise their product. The adjectives will be sold in lots of five by open auction, and each pair has a budget of £1,000. The reserve price (minimum) of a lot is £100. They do not have to use all the adjectives they buy, but they may not use any others.
4. Hand out the worksheets. Ask the students to decide together which adjectives they want and how much they are willing to pay for them. Allow enough time for them to plan this fully.
5. Run the auction, selling off the adjectives to the highest bidder.
6. Ask the students to write the advertising copy.
7. When they have finished, ask pairs to read their advertisements aloud to the class or put them on the wall for others to read.

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The following adjectives are all available in today's auction. Many of them can be used as adverbs by adding 'ly'. They can be used to promote a variety of products: computers, cars, holidays, banking services, insurance policies ... The reserve price on all lots is £100.

★ LOT 1 ★

amazing • beautiful • improved • square • convenient

★ LOT 2 ★

luxurious • low-priced • economical • elegant • broken

★ LOT 3 ★

exciting • expensive • slow • complicated • easy

★ LOT 4 ★

old-fashioned • modern • new • traditional • happy

★ LOT 5 ★

innovative • rapid • miniaturised • prestigious • striped

★ LOT 6 ★

safe • large • superior • surprising • included

★ LOT 7 ★

essential • useful • boring • invaluable • cheap

★ LOT 8 ★

classic • comfortable • convenient • dynamic • useless

★ LOT 9 ★

available • nice • guaranteed • ugly • flexible

★ LOT 10 ★

oblong • revolutionary • purple • fragile • hot