Susannah Clark's Blog

Shopping tips, bargain hunting, news… I am a journalist who writes about consumer issues from my base in New York.

1 How to haggle

Susannah Clark | 10:30 EST, January 9

In many parts of the world such as Latin America, Africa and Asia, haggling is expected. This is also true in street markets in southern Europe. Local markets are great places to go shopping. You can buy everything under the sun there, but there is a definite technique for haggling. If you see an item you like, don't look too interested. Decide how much it is worth to you, and then let the vendor make the first offer on the item. Make a counteroffer for half as much. Then haggle until you get to a point between the two offers you are happy with. If you are not happy with the price, try walking away. The vendor may make a better offer.

2 Buying online – a good way to shop?

Susannah Clark | 9:35 EST, January 16

Buying online is now well established and often the cheapest way of shopping. Amazon has gone from being an online bookseller to an e-commerce company and a major online provider of electronic goods, toys and games, clothes and shoes. Is it cheaper? Yes, often, but paying for shipping can also increase the cost. eBay is an online auction and shopping website, where people can buy and sell products worldwide. It can be slightly cheaper than Amazon.

3 Are garage sales a waste of time?

Susannah Clark | 11:40 EST, January 22

There are three kinds of garage or yard sale shoppers: browsers, bargain hunters and judicious shoppers. Browsers enjoy going to garage and yard sales and rarely buy anything. Bargain hunters are practical shoppers and take advantage of popular sale items like furniture and baby clothes. Judicious shoppers are the garage sale elite. They usually have a niche and are looking for pieces to fill it, whether it be antique furniture or out-of-print books. They prepare detailed lists of sites, products and prices and will search all summer for the items they collect.

4 Making the most of sales

Susannah Clark | 9:06 EST, January 29

January sales are a good time to find a bargain, but how can you make the most of this opportunity? Do some research about the items you want to buy. A bad product is a bad deal no matter how cheap it is, and some items can be a rip-off, even on sale. Decide how much money you want to spend and try not to go over the limit. It's good to compare product prices on Internet shopping sites such as PriceGrabber.com. Sites like these give good advice to bargain hunters.

b Match the images to blog post headings 1–4.

1

2

3

4

2 Read the four blog posts. Answer the questions in your own words. According to the blogger…

1 What's the first decision to make if you want to haggle for something?

2 Why is walking away from a vendor sometimes a good idea?

3 What are the differences between Amazon and eBay?

4 How are the three types of buyers at garage or yard sales different?

5 What are the three recommendations for finding a bargain in a sale?

3 Read the blog posts again. Find words that mean…

1 transporting goods *(blog 2)*. ⇨
2 a public sale where goods are sold to whoever offers the highest price *(blog 2)*. ⇨
3 sensible and careful *(blog 3)*. ⇨
4 specific interest or area *(blog 3)*. ⇨

4 Work in groups. Discuss the questions.

- Which of the types of shopping mentioned in the blog posts have you experienced?
- How good are you at haggling? What was the last bargain you got?
- What kinds of things do you buy online? Why? What are your favorite websites for online shopping?