

Retail and E-Commerce English Jargon Quick Reference

Field-specific terms, contrast pairs, and high-pressure sentence frames

Audience: retail managers, e-commerce teams, merchandising staff, store operations leaders, fulfillment teams, customer service managers, marketplace sellers, and growth operators

Focus: A retail and e-commerce English curriculum for merchandising, pricing, inventory, fulfillment, marketplaces, customer complaints, returns, conversion metrics, promotions, and vendor coordination.

Designed for advanced ESL learners who already use professional English and need industry-specific terminology, realistic meetings, role-play pressure, careful pushback, and polished workplace outputs.

Teaching stance: this is language and workplace-communication training, not legal, medical, financial, safety, or regulatory advice. Instructors should connect every scenario to the learner's current company policies, local rules, and approved procedures.

Nomenclature and Jargon

These are classroom working definitions. Learners should adapt wording to their organization's policies, systems, and local regulatory environment.

Merchandising and Assortment Planning

Term	Working meaning
assortment	Working retail and e-commerce term used in merchandising and assortment planning; define the owner, evidence source, governing document, risk, and decision impact before using it in a meeting.
SKU	Working retail and e-commerce term used in merchandising and assortment planning; define the owner, evidence source, governing document, risk, and decision impact before using it in a meeting.
sell-through	Working retail and e-commerce term used in merchandising and assortment planning; define the owner, evidence source, governing document, risk, and decision impact before using it in a meeting.
gross margin	Working retail and e-commerce term used in merchandising and assortment planning; define the owner, evidence source, governing document, risk, and decision impact before using it in a meeting.

Pricing, Promotions, and Margin

Term	Working meaning
markdown	Working retail and e-commerce term used in pricing, promotions, and margin; define the owner, evidence source, governing document, risk, and decision impact before using it in a meeting.
promotion	Working retail and e-commerce term used in pricing, promotions, and margin; define the owner, evidence source, governing document, risk, and decision impact before using it in a meeting.
gross margin	Working retail and e-commerce term used in pricing, promotions, and margin; define the owner, evidence source, governing document, risk, and decision impact before using it in a meeting.
cannibalization	Working retail and e-commerce term used in pricing, promotions, and margin; define the owner, evidence source, governing document, risk, and decision impact before using it in a meeting.

Inventory, Allocation, and Replenishment

Term	Working meaning
allocation	Working retail and e-commerce term used in inventory, allocation, and replenishment; define the owner, evidence source, governing document, risk, and decision impact before using it in a meeting.
replenishment	Working retail and e-commerce term used in inventory, allocation, and replenishment; define the owner, evidence source, governing document, risk, and decision impact before using it in a meeting.
stockout	Working retail and e-commerce term used in inventory, allocation, and replenishment; define the owner, evidence source, governing document, risk, and decision impact before using it in a meeting.
inventory turn	Working retail and e-commerce term used in inventory, allocation, and replenishment; define the owner, evidence source, governing document, risk, and decision impact before using it in a meeting.

Fulfillment, Shipping, and Returns

Term	Working meaning
fulfillment	Working retail and e-commerce term used in fulfillment, shipping, and returns; define the owner, evidence source, governing document, risk, and decision impact before using it in a meeting.
SLA	Service-level agreement defining expected service performance or response commitments.

Term	Working meaning
return rate	Working retail and e-commerce term used in fulfillment, shipping, and returns; define the owner, evidence source, governing document, risk, and decision impact before using it in a meeting.
carrier	Working retail and e-commerce term used in fulfillment, shipping, and returns; define the owner, evidence source, governing document, risk, and decision impact before using it in a meeting.

Conversion, UX, and Digital Analytics

Term	Working meaning
conversion rate	Working retail and e-commerce term used in conversion, ux, and digital analytics; define the owner, evidence source, governing document, risk, and decision impact before using it in a meeting.
funnel	Working retail and e-commerce term used in conversion, ux, and digital analytics; define the owner, evidence source, governing document, risk, and decision impact before using it in a meeting.
cart abandonment	Working retail and e-commerce term used in conversion, ux, and digital analytics; define the owner, evidence source, governing document, risk, and decision impact before using it in a meeting.
A/B test	Working retail and e-commerce term used in conversion, ux, and digital analytics; define the owner, evidence source, governing document, risk, and decision impact before using it in a meeting.

Marketplace and Vendor Management

Term	Working meaning
marketplace	Working retail and e-commerce term used in marketplace and vendor management; define the owner, evidence source, governing document, risk, and decision impact before using it in a meeting.
vendor scorecard	Working retail and e-commerce term used in marketplace and vendor management; define the owner, evidence source, governing document, risk, and decision impact before using it in a meeting.
SLA	Service-level agreement defining expected service performance or response commitments.
defect rate	Working retail and e-commerce term used in marketplace and vendor management; define the owner, evidence source, governing document, risk, and decision impact before using it in a meeting.

Customer Service and Escalations

Term	Working meaning
return policy	Working retail and e-commerce term used in customer service and escalations; define the owner, evidence source, governing document, risk, and decision impact before using it in a meeting.
goodwill credit	Working retail and e-commerce term used in customer service and escalations; define the owner, evidence source, governing document, risk, and decision impact before using it in a meeting.
chargeback	Working retail and e-commerce term used in customer service and escalations; define the owner, evidence source, governing document, risk, and decision impact before using it in a meeting.
customer lifetime value	Working retail and e-commerce term used in customer service and escalations; define the owner, evidence source, governing document, risk, and decision impact before using it in a meeting.

Store Operations and Omnichannel Execution

Term	Working meaning
BOPIS	Working retail and e-commerce term used in store operations and omnichannel execution; define the owner, evidence source, governing document, risk, and decision impact before using it in a meeting.
inventory accuracy	Working retail and e-commerce term used in store operations and omnichannel execution; define the owner, evidence source, governing document, risk, and decision impact before using it in a meeting.

Term	Working meaning
queue	Working retail and e-commerce term used in store operations and omnichannel execution; define the owner, evidence source, governing document, risk, and decision impact before using it in a meeting.
labor model	Working retail and e-commerce term used in store operations and omnichannel execution; define the owner, evidence source, governing document, risk, and decision impact before using it in a meeting.

Industry-Specific Meeting Moves

Situation	Useful language
Merchandising and Assortment Planning	Before we commit, I want to confirm assortment, SKU, the owner, and the evidence behind the decision. If shelf space, demand signal, margin, inventory risk, and vendor capacity need review., I recommend we document the risk and agree on the next step.
Pricing, Promotions, and Margin	Before we commit, I want to confirm markdown, promotion, the owner, and the evidence behind the decision. If gross margin, cannibalization, inventory, customer acquisition, and brand impact matter., I recommend we document the risk and agree on the next step.
Inventory, Allocation, and Replenishment	Before we commit, I want to confirm allocation, replenishment, the owner, and the evidence behind the decision. If allocation, demand, lead time, logistics cost, and service level require planning., I recommend we document the risk and agree on the next step.
Fulfillment, Shipping, and Returns	Before we commit, I want to confirm fulfillment, SLA, the owner, and the evidence behind the decision. If order status, carrier capacity, customer promise, refund policy, and service recovery matter., I recommend we document the risk and agree on the next step.
Conversion, UX, and Digital Analytics	Before we commit, I want to confirm conversion rate, funnel, the owner, and the evidence behind the decision. If instrumentation, device mix, payment errors, and funnel step drop-off need analysis., I recommend we document the risk and agree on the next step.
Marketplace and Vendor Management	Before we commit, I want to confirm marketplace, vendor scorecard, the owner, and the evidence behind the decision. If scorecards, sla, customer impact, inventory, and remediation plan need review., I recommend we document the risk and agree on the next step.
Customer Service and Escalations	Before we commit, I want to confirm return policy, goodwill credit, the owner, and the evidence behind the decision. If policy, goodwill, fraud risk, and customer lifetime value need balanced judgment., I recommend we document the risk and agree on the next step.
Store Operations and Omnichannel Execution	Before we commit, I want to confirm BOPIS, inventory accuracy, the owner, and the evidence behind the decision. If labor, inventory accuracy, queue management, and customer expectations all matter., I recommend we document the risk and agree on the next step.

High-pressure pushback frames

- I understand the urgency. The risk is that we move faster than the evidence or process supports.
- I am not blocking the goal. I am naming the condition we need before the decision is safe and credible.
- If we accept this risk, we should name the owner, document the assumption, and define the trigger for escalation.
- That may be possible, but not under the current scope, timeline, or approval path.
- Let's separate what we know, what we assume, and what still needs confirmation.

Contrast Pairs

Do not confuse	Useful distinction
assortment vs gross margin	In merchandising and assortment planning, define whether the discussion is about the current fact pattern, the controlling process, the stakeholder pressure, or the final decision.

Do not confuse	Useful distinction
markdown vs cannibalization	In pricing, promotions, and margin, define whether the discussion is about the current fact pattern, the controlling process, the stakeholder pressure, or the final decision.
allocation vs inventory turn	In inventory, allocation, and replenishment, define whether the discussion is about the current fact pattern, the controlling process, the stakeholder pressure, or the final decision.
fulfillment vs carrier	In fulfillment, shipping, and returns, define whether the discussion is about the current fact pattern, the controlling process, the stakeholder pressure, or the final decision.
conversion rate vs A/B test	In conversion, ux, and digital analytics, define whether the discussion is about the current fact pattern, the controlling process, the stakeholder pressure, or the final decision.
marketplace vs defect rate	In marketplace and vendor management, define whether the discussion is about the current fact pattern, the controlling process, the stakeholder pressure, or the final decision.
return policy vs customer lifetime value	In customer service and escalations, define whether the discussion is about the current fact pattern, the controlling process, the stakeholder pressure, or the final decision.
BOPIS vs labor model	In store operations and omnichannel execution, define whether the discussion is about the current fact pattern, the controlling process, the stakeholder pressure, or the final decision.