

Cheap, Affordable or Good Value? | Precision English

English learning resource · EN

Full episode script · English

47 lines

Study task: Listen again and notice the expressions you studied.

Julia, I have found the cheapest coat in the shop.

That could be useful, but will it keep you warm?

I had not asked the coat that question yet.

Welcome to Precision English, from Your English Toolbox.

I am Julia, here with Martin and three expressions that are not quite the same.

Cheap, affordable, and good value for money.

They help us separate the price, our budget, and what we get in return.

Let us begin with cheap.

Cheap means costing little money, especially compared with similar things.

These tickets were cheap because we booked early.

There, cheap is a positive thing.

But cheap can also suggest poor quality, depending on the context.

If I say a bag looks cheap, I am probably criticising how it looks or feels.

So cheap does not always mean bad, but it can sound negative.

Exactly, and inexpensive can be a more neutral word when you only mean a low price.

Now, affordable.

Affordable means that something is within the amount a person or group can reasonably pay.

It connects the price to a budget.

A coat may be affordable for one person but too expensive for another.

That means a high price is not automatically unaffordable for everyone.

And a low price might still be more than someone can spend.

Notice the useful pattern: affordable for someone.



We are looking for a flat that is affordable for our family.

Our third expression is good value for money.

Something is good value for money when what you receive is worth the amount you pay.

Think about quality, usefulness or how much is included, not only the number on the label.

This coat costs more, but it is warm, well made and likely to last.

For someone who needs it, it could be good value for money.

That is a judgement about this imagined example, not a promise about an actual product.

And something can be good value without being affordable for me right now.

Precisely.

A worthwhile price and a manageable personal budget are different questions.

Let us test those differences with three situations.

First, a pen costs very little compared with other pens, but you know nothing about its quality.

Which word tells us only about that low price?

Cheap, although inexpensive would sound more neutral.

Second, a course fits comfortably within the amount you planned to spend.

It is affordable for you.

Third, a ticket includes an excellent performance and a useful workshop for a reasonable total price.

You might call it good value for money.

Now, can an item be cheap but poor value if it breaks immediately?

Yes, a low price does not guarantee a worthwhile purchase.

Finish this sentence about your own life: for me, good value means...

Find our comparison activity and vocabulary on the episode page.

The link is in the description.

Three questions: is the price low, can I afford it, and is it worth the money?

And one more question for Martin: are you finally trying the coat on?

