LESSON 5

Salary Negotiation

For ESL / ELT roles, demo rounds and teaching contracts

Know the number.
Ask professionally.
Confirm in writing.



By the end of this lesson

You will have one practical negotiation system — not a memorised speech.

1

Check before you apply

Find the likely range before investing time.

2

Know your numbers

Minimum, target and stretch request.

3

Ask with evidence

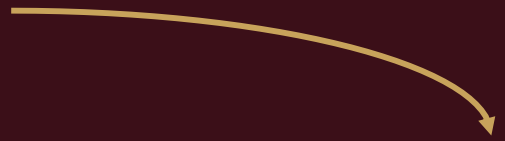
Use a short, calm, professional script.

Concrete takeaway: prepare one salary range and one 4-line negotiation message before your next interview.

The golden rule

Never negotiate from excitement.

Negotiate from evidence.



check → decide → ask → confirm

Before you say “Yes”, ask yourself:

- Is this rate clear?
- Does it include preparation time?
- Is this competitive for this role and country?
- Can I ask one professional question before confirming?

“Salary” is not one number

In ELT, you may be paid in different ways. Always compare the full package.

Monthly salary
A fixed amount each month.

Hourly / per-class rate
May or may not include planning, reports and admin.

Contract package
Leave, paid training, observations, accommodation, travel.

Growth plan
Review date, promotion path, CPD, reference letter.

First identify the type of offer

Different jobs give you different negotiation space.

Fixed rate roles

Common in language schools, online platforms and hourly teaching. The rate may be set by policy.

Negotiate: schedule, number of hours, paid preparation, training, review date.

Flexible range roles

Common in corporate training, private institutes, academic English, senior trainer and coordinator roles.

Negotiate: salary/rate, title, benefits, CPD budget, renewal terms.

Check salary before you apply

A 3-minute check saves you from the wrong interview.

1. **Advert** — Is the range written? Is it monthly, hourly or per class?
2. **Platform search** — Compare similar ESL / ELT roles in the same country or city.
3. **Role scope** — Teaching only? Demo lessons? Admin? Reports? Parent contact?
4. **Time cost** — Does the rate include planning, marking and unpaid gaps?

Prepare three numbers

This stops you accepting too quickly or asking randomly.

Minimum

The lowest acceptable rate after all costs.

Do not go below this.

Target

The number you would be happy to accept.

This is your realistic goal.

Stretch ask

A professional first ask above the first offer.

Use only when evidence supports it.

Tip: A 10% higher counter-offer can be reasonable in some roles — but only when the job range, market and your experience support it.

When should you discuss salary?

Timing matters. Ask too early and it feels transactional; ask too late and you lose leverage.

Before applying
Check the range

Screening call
Clarify if missing

Offer stage
Negotiate professionally

Before signing
Confirm everything

Best moment: after the employer has shown clear interest, and before you accept or sign.

Use the 4-line negotiation structure

Short, warm, evidence-based and clear.

1	**Appreciate**	“Thank you for the offer. I’m excited about the role.”
2	**Evidence**	“Based on the responsibilities and similar ELT roles…”
3	**Ask**	“Would you be able to consider ___?”
4	**Pause**	Stop talking. Let them respond.

Three professional scripts

Adapt the wording. Keep your tone calm and respectful.

When salary is missing
“Before I proceed, may I kindly confirm the salary range or hourly rate for this role?”

When the first offer is close
“Thank you for the offer. Given the responsibilities and my teaching background, would you be able to consider ___?”

When the rate is fixed
“I understand the rate is fixed. Could we discuss paid preparation, schedule stability or a review after three months?”

Strong sentence pattern: **Thank you + Evidence + Specific ask + Flexibility**

Do not accept just because it is “more”

A 10% increase can still be weak if the workload is much heavier.

Hours → teaching hours + admin + unpaid gaps

Prep → new materials, reports, demos, parent communication

Risk → probation, cancellation policy, payment delay

Growth → review date, title, training, recommendation letter

Ask yourself: “Is this offer better per hour of real work?”

When the rate is fixed, negotiate the conditions

A better contract is not always a higher number.

- Stable weekly hours
- Paid preparation time
- Paid training / CPD
- Observation feedback
- Fewer unpaid demos
- Review after 3 months
- Recommendation letter
- Clear cancellation policy

Professional wording: “I understand the rate is fixed. Could we improve the package in one of these areas?”

Before you say yes: confirm in writing

This protects both you and the employer.

Rate
monthly / hourly / per class

Hours
minimum, maximum, timetable

Payment
cycle, method, deductions

Prep & admin
included or paid separately

Cancellation
student no-show, late cancellation

Review
when salary/rate can be reviewed

Red flags to handle carefully

You do not need to panic. You do need clarity.

“We will discuss salary later.”	Ask for a range before final rounds.
“Demo first, then we decide.”	Clarify if the demo is paid or unpaid.
“Rate depends on students.”	Ask about minimum guaranteed hours.
“Payment after completion.”	Ask about payment dates and written terms.

Your tone: respectful, calm, factual. Your goal: clarity before commitment.

Practice: write your message

Use this template before your next interview or offer call.

Dear ___,

Thank you for offering me the role of ___. I'm excited about the opportunity.

Based on the responsibilities, my ___ background and the market range, would you be able to consider ___?

I would be happy to discuss this and find a fair arrangement.

Do not over-explain. Ask once. Then pause.

Your final takeaway

Use the 4R checklist before accepting any ELT offer.



Range

Do I know the market and offer range?



Role

Do I understand the real workload?



Rate

Is the number fair for the role?



Review

Is there a future review point?

Exit ticket: Write your minimum, target and one polite negotiation sentence today.