

Describing Houses and Buildings

Warm up

- What does your house or apartment look like? If you could change one thing about it, what would it be?
- When was the last time you moved? Was it stressful?
- What would your dream house be?
- Are there any buildings in your city that you think are particularly ugly or beautiful?
- Do you like skyscrapers? Or do you think they're ugly?
- What was the house or apartment you grew up in like? Try to describe it in detail.



1. You are going to listen to a conversation that contains the following vocabulary. Match the vocabulary to the pictures.

mould

tiles

ceiling

carpet

roof

curtains



roof



carpet



curtains



Ceiling



mould



tiles



2. Michael is moving out, and his real estate agent is inspecting his apartment to see if he can get his deposit back. Listen to the audio and answer the questions.

- Why is Janet in a rush? *She has another appointment to go to*
- Why does Michael think he is not responsible for the stains on the carpet? *Because they were there when he moved in.*
- What is Janet's email address? *janetcromely@realestate.com*
- Why did Michael get new curtains? *The old ones had stains on them*
- What are the two things wrong with the bathroom? *There is mould on the ceiling and a damaged tile*
- Why does Janet think the oven and stove will need to be replaced? *Because Michael tried and failed to clean them, so if they can't be cleaned they should be replaced.*
- How did Michael get marks on his ceiling in the kitchen? *He was cooking pasta and the pot exploded*
- Do you think Michael will get his deposit back?



3. Read the ads for apartments and match the underlined terms to their definitions on the next page.

Cozy 2 bedroom flat for rent on the lower east side, 80 square meters. Apartment comes fully furnished except for cutlery and dishes. Apartment has a beautiful balcony overlooking the city and comes with a personal basement. Carpet may need to be replaced. \$580 per month warm.

Perfect for young professionals!

Stylish, modern apartment on the 12th floor right in the heart of the city, perfect accommodation for young professionals. This apartment is 50 square meters, has beautiful wooden floorboards, elevator access, a dishwasher, and a gas stove. \$700 per month cold. No pets allowed.

Do you like to party??

Large, fun, slightly run-down share house looking for an easy-going, clean, sociable tenant. Single furnished room with ensuite bathroom. Communal kitchen and bathroom, 7 other housemates. Must be ok with parties. \$250 per month.



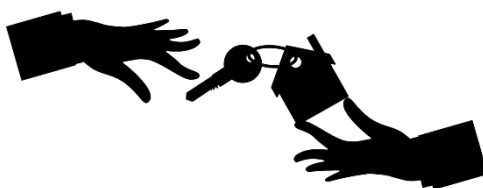
Which of these would suit you best, and why?

- | | |
|---------------------------|---|
| a) accommodation 4 | 1. Something that is shared. |
| b) share house 10 | 2. Comes with furniture. |
| c) tenant 7 | 3. Electricity, water, and heating are included in the price. |
| d) warm 3 | 4. A place to live or stay. |
| e) basement 9 | 5. A warm and comfortable place. |
| f) furnished 2 | 6. People that live together |
| g) dishwasher 8 | 7. A person who rents the place they live. |
| h) housemates 6 | 8. A machine for cleaning dishes and cutlery |
| i) communal 1 | 9. A room under a house or building, below ground. |
| j) cozy 5 | 10. A house that a group of people rent together. |



4. Ask and answer the following questions with a partner.

- Would describe your house or apartment as cozy? Why or why not?
- Do you have a dishwasher?
- Did your house come fully furnished, or did you furnish it yourself?
- Have you ever had a housemate? What were they like?
- If you work in an office, do you think your office has nice communal spaces? Can you describe them?
- What type of accommodation do you prefer when you go on holiday?





5. Write an ad for a house or apartment for rent. It could be your own house, a house you used to live in, or an imaginary house. Try to go into as much detail as possible.

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6. Pairwork: Good news! You have won a million dollars to design your dream house... bad news, you have to design it with your partner. Read through the options below and decide which you would like to take and why. Feel free to suggest other options.

Location

Either a large apartment in the middle of a city of your choice...

Or a large house in the middle of nowhere on the edge of a cliff with a beautiful view of the ocean.

Style

Either clean, modern, and minimalist. No clutter, cutting edge home appliances, lots of neutral colours...

Or cozy and a little bit quirky. Lots of interesting decorations, lots of vintage furniture, and lots of warm colours.

Outdoors

Either a cute vegetable and herb garden which requires a lot of maintenance...

Or a tiled swimming pool with a fence around it and a sauna.

Flooring

Either nice thick white carpet in most rooms, but tiles in the kitchen and bathroom...

Or polished wooden floorboards in most rooms, but tiles in the bathroom.



 7. After a few days Michael calls Janet to discuss his deposit. Listen to the conversation and answer the questions.

- a) How much of his deposit did Michael lose? *1800 dollars (from the original 2000)*
- b) According to Janet, why is mould removal so expensive? *Because mould can be dangerous and needs an expert*
- c) Why can't Michael prove that his dishwasher was clean? *Because he didn't take pictures of it*
- d) Why did the real estate have to repaint the whole ceiling? *Because the new tenant said he could see the difference between the new and the old paint.*
- e) Who is Mr Jones going to contact? *His lawyer.*
- f) Who do you agree with in this situation?

 8. You are going to play a game where you must describe a word to your class (without using the word). Your teacher will give you the words. The first person to guess the word wins a point, and the person describing the word gets a point if someone guesses the word within 20 seconds.

Taboo cards on the next page.

Play a game of taboo with the following words. The student explaining the word can google it if they don't know it.



<u>Fireplace</u>	<u>Hallway/Corridor</u>	<u>Carpet</u>
<u>Blinds</u>	<u>Balcony</u>	<u>Stove</u>
<u>Elevator</u>	<u>Roof</u>	<u>Cupboard</u>
<u>Sink</u>	<u>Wallpaper</u>	<u>Unfurnished</u>
<u>Heater</u>	<u>Mansion</u>	<u>Garage</u>
<u>Air conditioner</u>	<u>Bathtub</u>	<u>Floorboards</u>
<u>Fence</u>	<u>Driveway</u>	<u>Lawn</u>
<u>Drawers</u>	<u>Dishwasher</u>	<u>Tap</u>

Audio 1

Michael: Hi Janet, nice to meet you, would you like a coffee or tea

Janet: Hi Mr Jones, no I'm fine thank you, unfortunately I have to go to another inspection soon so I don't have much time.

Michael: No problem at all, come in. I've done my best to clean the place up, I think it looks pretty good.

Janet: Ok, but I can see some stains here on the carpet, did somebody spill some red wine?

Michael: I have no idea, that was there when I moved in

Janet: Are you sure about that? I don't have anything in my notes about a stain on the carpet in the hallway.

Michael: I'm sure, I have some photos I took when I first moved in. Would you like to see them?

Janet: Could you email them to me? My email address is janetcromely@realestate.com

Michael: No problem, I'll send that over.

Janet: Now, could you show me the living room?

Michael: Sure, it's right this way.

Janet: Are those curtains original? Or did you replace them?

Michael: I replaced them. The original curtains were old and had stains on them. I don't mind leaving these ones here because they don't fit in my new apartment.

Janet: And did you ask permission to change the curtains?

Michael: Well... no, but really the old ones were horrible, I think they'd been there since the 80's.

Janet: I see... Ok Mr Jones, could you show me the bathroom.

Michael: Sure, it's over here.

Janet: Mmm, Ok, I can see some mould on the ceiling there.

Michael: Yeah, unfortunately there's no window or fan in this room, so it was hard to keep the mould out.

Janet: Ok... that will need to be professionally cleaned.

Michael: Oh no that's fine, I can do it myself.

Janet: I'm afraid it's too late for that Mr. Jones.

Michael: Ok... and will the cleaning cost come out of my deposit?

Janet: I'm afraid so. And it seems that one of these tiles is damaged, that will need to be replaced...now, where is the kitchen.

Michael: It's just over here...

Janet: Hmm the stove and oven look quite dirty to me.

Michael: Again, they were like that when I moved in. I tried everything but I could never get them fully cleaned.

Janet: Mmm. Do you have photos of that?

Michael: Ummm... no, I don't think I do actually.

Janet: Well that could be very expensive to replace Mr. Jones.

Michael: Replace? Surely you don't have to replace a whole oven just because it's a little dirty??

Janet: Well if it can't be cleaned I don't see another option.

Michael: Wow that's... Ok. Do you need to see anything else?

Janet: No, but I have just noticed one more thing. There are some marks on your ceiling here, do you know where they came from?

Michael: Well... It's embarrassing but I was cooking a pot of pasta and it exploded... pasta sauce everywhere. I tried to clean it as well as I could.

Janet: And it didn't occur to you to repaint the ceiling?

Michael: No... no it didn't..

Janet: I see....

Audio 2

Janet: Hello, Ms Cromley speaking, how can I help you?

Michael: Hi Janet, it's Michael from the property on Watson st, do you have a few seconds to talk?

Janet: Ah... 33 Watson street, is that right?

Michael: That's the one.

Janet: Hello again mr Jones, how can I help you?

Michael: Well, I just got a letter in the mail and it seems that I've lost basically my entire deposit... the original deposit was 2000 dollars and it seems I'm only getting 200 back. Frankly I'm shocked.

Janet: Well I'm sorry to hear that Mr Jones, but we did discuss the damage at the meeting a few weeks ago.

Michael: I know but... seriously? It says here that you paid \$500 dollars for mould removal? How is that possible? I could have cleaned that mould in about 15 minutes?

Janet: I'm sorry you feel that way Mr Jones, but mould removal can be very expensive, because some types of mould are quite dangerous and require specialists to deal with.

Michael: I mean maybe but \$500? That is crazy. And it says here that is cost \$300 to clean the dishwasher, the over and the stove? There is no way it should cost that much... and the dishwasher was clean when I moved out!

Janet: Did you take pictures of it Mr. Jones?

Michael: What? No... why would I take pictures of a clean dishwasher?

Janet: Well I'm afraid if you don't have proof there is nothing I can do. According to our notes, the dishwasher was dirty.

Michael: This is ridiculous. 300 dollars to clean a stove and a dishwasher?

Janet: I'm afraid so mr Jones.

Michael: and \$400 just to paint the ceiling in the kitchen?? I'm sorry but this is insane.

Janet: Well we didn't just repaint the kitchen ceiling, we repainted the ceilings in the whole apartment.

Michael: ... and you charged me for the whole thing? If you had just repainted the kitchen ceiling I would understand but... the whole apartment?

Janet: I'm afraid so Mr Jones. The new tenant said he could see the difference between the new and the old paint, so we decided to repaint the whole ceiling.

Michael: This is crazy.. I left that apartment in good condition. I'll be speaking to my lawyer about this.

Janet: Feel free to mr Jones. Have a nice day.