

## UNIT 9 THE REMOTE

**UNIT OVERVIEW:** In this unit students will talk about their complaints.

**Conversation Starters: Family Stories**

Friends talk about annoying family members.

**Building Fluency**

Complaining and expressing annoyance; verb phrases — annoying behaviors

**Conversation Model**

He's driving me crazy! — Cut and blend sounds

**Let's Talk About It: What gets on your nerves?**

Talk about things that drive you crazy.

**Conversation Idioms:**

am upset with my brother

drives me crazy

leave the lights on

put up with it

turn it down

can't take it

lose it

throw away the batteries

gets on my nerves

hog the bathroom

flip through the channels

get off the phone

clean it up

channel surf

find out

change the channel

can't stand it

make a lot of noise

hand it over

turn it off

bugs me

give up

leave a mess

change the channel back

Additional Links for this unit: Jeff from Canada talks about his roommate. <http://www.elllo.org/english/0551/564-Jeff-Roommate.html>

### STEP 1 BUILDING THE ATMOSPHERE

Play the **Amy and Erik introduction** and ask your students what Amy and Erik are doing. Provide hints if necessary – a) telling jokes b) fighting c) chatting (the answer is fighting). Ask your class if they ever have fights with their family, friends or boy/girlfriend. What do they commonly fight about?

**Script [Track 48]**

Amy: Hi, everyone. This is Amy and Erik again. And Unit 9 is called “The Remote.”

Erik: “The remote?” What does that mean? What’s this unit about?

Amy: Well, Erik, this time, you’ll just have to listen and find out.

Erik: Oh, so you’re trying to tell me that I never listen.

Amy: Well, you sometimes don’t listen...

Erik: No, no, no, no, no. I always listen!

Amy: No, no no, no, no. You always talk, talk, talk.

Erik: I do not.

Amy: Do too...

Erik: Not true. Do not...

Amy: Do too...

Erik: Do not...

Amy: OK. Come on, Erik. Let’s listen to the story of “The Remote.”

### STEP 2 CONVERSATION STARTERS: FAMILY STORIES

*Students will listen to a conversation about a family problem.*

#### 1. First Listening

Play the audio. Have students circle the words they hear. Once finished, have students compare their answers and then check as a class.

## 2. Second Listening

Have students preview the questions. Ask them to try to answer the questions based on what they heard in the first listening. Then, play the audio again and have them confirm or change their answers. Finally, check the answers as a class.

### Answer Key

First Listening: brother, dad, channel changing, mom, throw away remote

Second Listening:

1. Her brother, Brady
2. She couldn't see the movie she wanted to watch because her brother kept changing the channel.
3. She didn't solve the problem. She tried yelling but it didn't work.
4. To throw away her remote control.
5. Throw away the remote control.

### BONUS

Have students discuss what they think of Scott's advice and then get them to offer suggestions.

### BONUS ACTIVITY

Set up a role play in which Pia confronts Brady about his problem. You could have other people in the role play such as the mother or father.

### Script [Track 49]

**Scott:** So, did you see *Out of Time* last night? It was so good.

**Pia:** No, I missed it.

**Scott:** You missed it?! It was such a good movie. Why did you miss it?

**Pia:** Because of my brother Brady. I was trying to watch it. He just kept flicking through the channels. Finally, I just gave up.

**Scott:** Why didn't you just change the channel back?

**Pia:** I couldn't. You know Brady. When he's in the family room, he always hogs the remote control.

**Scott:** Couldn't you ask him to let you watch the movie?

**Pia:** Of course I asked. I was like, "Brady, could you please stop changing the channel? I'm watching a movie."

**Scott:** And what did he say?

**Pia:** Pretty much what he's done my whole life. He completely ignored me. Kept switching to sitcoms and sports, and maybe a minute or two of the movie. Finally, I kind of lost it, and yelled at him. Then my mother came in and turned off the TV.

**Scott:** Sounds pretty comical.

**Pia:** Uh huh. Do you ever have fights over the remote control in your family?

**Scott:** We used to have arguments all the time. My dad always switched from channel to channel when my mom or I were watching our favorite TV shows. It drove us crazy because we could never see the full show.

**Pia:** So how did you make him stop?

**Scott:** We threw away the remote control!

**Pia:** You what?!

**Scott:** We just threw it away. I mean, Mom and I don't mind getting up to change the channel.

**Pia:** And did it work?

**Scott:** Like a charm! My dad's too lazy to get a new remote, so he never tries to change the channel anymore.

**Pia:** Wow! I'll have to try that out tonight.

## STEP 3 BUILDING FLUENCY: COMPLAINING AND EXPRESSING ANNOYANCE

*Students will practice complaining and expressing annoyance as well as learn some verb phrases for describing annoying behaviors.*

### 1. Expressions

Have students decide which phrases mean you are "annoyed" and which mean you "aren't annoyed." Allow students to go over the answers in pairs and then confirm as a class.

**Answer Key**

I'm annoyed = 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8

I'm not annoyed = 1, 7

**2. Vocabulary**

Have students match the phrases with the best pictures. Have them check their answers in pairs before confirming as a class. Next, have students think of a phrase that means the opposite of the phrases in the box. Tell them to imagine they live in an apartment with two people, a good roommate and a bad roommate. They need to write the actions that make the roommates good or bad. See the samples below.

*The good roommate doesn't spend a lot time in the bathroom.*

*The bad roommate hogs the bathroom.*

*The bad roommate leaves a mess.*

*The good roommate cleans up after herself.*

*The bad roommate flips through channels.*

*The good roommate asks before changing the channel.*

**Answer Key**

1 - f, 2 - h, 3 - d, 4 - b, 5 - g, 6 - a, 7 - c, 8 - e

**VOCAB TROUBLESHOOTING**

It gets on my nerves – it irritates / annoys me

I can't take it – I can't put up with it

I can't stand it – I can't put up with it

It drives me crazy – it really annoys me

**HOW THE GRAMMAR WORKS**

● Go over the structures as a class. Also explain that the expressions can be used without “when.” For example:

*My mom leaves the lights on, **but** I don't mind.*

*The train is (always) crowded, **and** I hate it!*

● Have your students rewrite the vocabulary phrases on page 46 to use with this structure. Ask for volunteers to share their sentences with the class.

**3. Let's Practice**

Before students begin practicing, go over the example dialogue as a class. Encourage them to add details and to ask their partners follow-up questions.

Remind students in authentic speech that we use “that” instead of repeating a whole phrase. In the example, point out the use of “**That** doesn't really bother me.” instead of “It doesn't bother me when people leave a mess.” or “People leaving a mess doesn't really bother me.”

**STEP 4 CONVERSATION MODEL: HE'S DRIVING ME CRAZY!**

*Students will look at cutting and blending sounds.*

**Optional Warm-up:**

Write the following questions on the board.

1) *Who is the person mad at?*

2) *What does he do to make him upset?*

3) *What does the woman suggest?*

Books closed. Direct the students to the questions on the board. Next, have the students listen to the audio and try to answer the questions above. After listening as needed, students compare answers in pairs and then as a class.

**1. Situation**

● Have your students check the conversation for unknown words, and explain any difficult phrases.

## VOCAB TROUBLESHOOTING

Hog the remote – he uses the remote too much and doesn't let others use it

Put up with it – persevere with the situation

## HOW THE PRONUNCIATION WORKS: CUT AND BLEND SOUNDS

Explain the unit pronunciation point. In previous units we have looked at how /t/ and /d/ sounds are often cut and blended when they follow other consonant sounds. Another sound which is commonly cut and blended is the /h/ sound in the pronouns *he, him, his* and *her*. This often occurs when it follows a consonant sound. In the case of “did he” from his unit, the “h” from “he” disappears and the remaining “e” sound blends with “did” to become “didi:.” In the same way “tell him” becomes “tellim.” Students don't have to pronounce the phrases in this way, but it's useful for them to know about this at least for listening comprehension purposes.

- Next, play the conversation model [Track 50] and encourage students to listen out for the “disappearing h sounds.”
- As a class do a choral practice of this conversation, focusing particularly on the pronunciation point. Say each line or chunk, and have your students repeat.

## EXTRA PRONUNCIATION POINTS: JUMP THE /T/ AND /D/ SOUNDS, BLEND SOUNDS

What did he do – wha *didi:* do

Tell him to hand it over – *tellim to han di dover*

I can't stand it – I can(t) *stan dit*

I guess you're just going to have to put up with it – I guess you're jus(t) *gonna havta putup withit*

## 2. Substitution

Have students work individually to unscramble the phrases in the columns to make a coherent conversation. Then, have students compare answers in pairs.

### Answer Key

- (1) talks on the phone all the time / leaves the lights on / plays his music really loud / leaves the kitchen in a mess  
(2) get off the phone / turn them off / turn it down / clean it up

## 3. Practice

- Have students use the **substitution** words to practice the conversation. Remind them to take particular care with the “cut and blended sounds.” Have early finishers create their own conversations.
- Choose a pair to demonstrate the conversation. Comment on their pronunciation of “did he” and “tell him” and offer pronunciation and intonation advice as necessary.

## STEP 5 LET'S TALK ABOUT IT: WHAT GETS ON YOUR NERVES?

*Students will talk about the things that drive them crazy.*

### Optional Warm-up:

Play a quick listening game. Think of one complaint for each topic in the **Get Ready** table. Then, prepare one good reason and two nonsense reasons for each complaint. Say the complaint and give the three reasons aloud to the class. Have students number a piece of paper from 1 to 6. Have students choose the most appropriate reason for being upset by writing a, b or c next to each number. Then go over the answers as a class. See samples below:

1) *I hate it when my brother cooks because*

a) *he makes great pasta.* b) *he never cleans up.* c) *I go to sleep.*

2) *I hate it when my friend calls me at night because*

a) *he talks forever.* b) *he does my homework for me.* c) *he drives too slow.*

3) *I hate it when my teacher gives us extra homework because*

a) *it is really interesting.* b) *I have no time to do it.* c) *it is too easy for me.*

## 1. Get Ready

Now have students make their own complaints and answers. Monitor and offer assistance as needed. Remind students to write only key words and phrases in the reasons column.

## 2. Let's Talk

Put students in small groups and have them discuss their complaints with their friends. Go over the example conversation as a class and offer some easy ways to show sympathy. See samples below:

*Oh, my brother does that too!*

*I hate it when that happens.*

*Really, that bothers you?*

## 3. Follow Up

Elicit the top complaints from each group. You could write them on the board and at the end find out what the biggest complaint in the class is.

### BONUS: Speaking Activity

If time permits, have students try the bonus speaking questions. This could be done as either a pair/group/class discussion or an extemporaneous speaking exercise.

## STEP 6 LANGUAGE AWARENESS

Assign the language awareness activity on page 89 for homework. If necessary, do the first one or two questions together as a class. Leave 5 or 10 minutes at the beginning of the next class to go through the answers.

### Answer Key

1. I missed it.
2. kept flicking through the channels
3. I was like...
4. Yes
5. I kind of lost it.
6. turned off the TV – Yes
7. Do you ever have – No
8. His dad switching from channel to channel
9. What did you do?
10. I mean
11. Like a charm!
12. throwing away the remote control

## STEP 7 AMY'S CONVERSATION TIP

In this unit students practiced complaining to a third-party. In this **Amy Conversation Tip** we look at actually making a complaint in order to stop the behavior you find annoying. Although letting off steam and getting mad may make us feel better temporarily, in most cases it will not solve the problem. Indeed, it is much more effective to politely make your grievance known and request a change in behavior. One common pattern for making a polite complaint is: Excuse me + Request (could you please.../ would you mind.../ etc.) + Reason. Have your students practice making some polite requests using this pattern.

### BONUS ACTIVITY

If you would like to do some extended practice of complaint making, get your students to choose a situation from those they discussed in **Let's Talk About It** and have them create a complaint skit. Have them create a "polite version" and an "impolite version" and practice delivering them with the appropriate voice tone. (Common features of "impolite" complaints are making statements, threats and using the imperative.)

## **STEP 8 UNIT TEST**

Make copies of the Unit Test for each student. Start by playing the audio for the Listening section (download Track 9 from <http://www.elttestcenter.com>). Decide whether you give them one or two listenings. Then, allow the students about 5-10 minutes to complete the rest of the test. Correct the test in class, and record the score.

### **AUDIO Script**

My roommate is driving me crazy. She does so many irritating things that it's hard to choose just one. But the fact that she never... I mean never... cleans up after herself just puts me over the top. I'm not over exaggerating... she leaves a mess wherever she goes. Dirty clothes on the floor... not in the laundry basket. Dirty dishes on the table... not in the sink. Not to mention the food wrappers scattered everywhere. Seriously... I'm no clean freak or anything, but I can't stand this mess any longer!!

### **Answer Key**

#### **Part A.**

1. d
2. b

#### **Part B.**

3. use their cell phones
4. don't mind
5. my dad snores
6. gets on my nerves

#### **Part C.**

7. flips
8. hogs
9. leave
10. use