

UNIT 2 MY HUMBLE ABODE

UNIT OVERVIEW: In this unit students will talk about unusual living situations.

Conversation Starters: *Living Situations*

Friends talk about their unusual living situations.

Building Fluency

Agreeing and disagreeing; preposition phrases — living situations

Conversation Model

Is it too expensive? — Cut and blend sounds

Let's Talk About It: *Could you live here?*

Discuss your opinions about different housing scenarios.

Conversation Idioms:

cost a fortune

fit my budget

look for a new place to live

be good timing

in a rough neighborhood

made of wood

am with you on that

find out that...

get desperate

be too good to be true

in an earthquake zone

be known for...

Additional Links for this unit: Jonathan from Canada talks about living out of a suitcase.

<http://www.elllo.org/english/0851/T896-JN-Case.htm>

STEP 1 BUILDING THE ATMOSPHERE

Ask your students to look at the title of the unit and to guess or check in their dictionaries the meaning of “abode” (home). First, ask your students to discuss what’s important for them when choosing a place to live. Next, have them brainstorm types of living situations that they definitely don’t want to experience. Encourage them to be as creative as possible. After briefly going over their ideas, tell them that Erik has got a problem with his apartment. Play them **Amy and Erik’s introduction** and have them listen for the answer (it’s noisy). When they’ve got the answer, ask them if they think it’s a big problem or not. Tie into the **Conversation Starters** listening comprehension activity.

Script [Track 10]

Amy: Hi everyone. This is Amy and Erik, again.

Erik: And thanks for joining us for Unit 2, “My Humble Abode.”

Amy: So, Erik... could you live in a house that has some problems?

Erik: Hey, my place does have a lot of problems...First, there’s this noise, then there’s this other...

Amy: OK, Erik, that’s enough for now... some of our friends are talking about their living situations. Let’s listen.

STEP 2 CONVERSATION STARTERS: LIVING SITUATIONS

Students will listen to people talk about their unusual living situations.

1. First Listening

- Books open. Have students preview the questions. It is important to mention that Questions #1 and #2 are for the first discussion (Track 11) and #3 and #4 are for the second discussion (Track 12). Play the audio as needed. Have students compare answers in pair and then check as a class.
- Note: Before playing the audio, explain that in the first conversation (Track 11), Pia is the person looking for someone to move in and Miki is the person looking for a room. In the second conversation (Track 12), Soon is the female character and Simon is the male character.

2. Second Listening

Play the audio for the second listening. If necessary, you can pause the audio at key moments to give students a chance to write down the necessary information. Allow students to compare answers in pairs before checking as a class.

Answer Key

First listening:

1 – c, 2 – d, 3 – a, 4 – b

Second listening:

1 – \$90 a week / \$360 a month, 2 – 13-13, 3 – Yes, 4 – because Soon's apartment looks gorgeous / brand new / expensive / etc, 5 - \$300 a month, 6 – she's very happy with it

VOCAB TROUBLESHOOTING

Cost a fortune – to cost a lot of money / to be expensive

BONUS

- Before doing the bonus questions, have students read the script on page 82 to reinforce the language and information in the audio. Have students read the dialogues in pairs to make the reading interactive. As they read, encourage students to mark any language they are unsure about and allow time for them to ask questions about unknown words.
- Have students discuss the bonus questions. For Question #2, you can write simple sentence patterns with relevant adjectives to be used as prompts for discussion. See sample below:
My house is... old, dirty, cold, inconvenient, modern, noisy, damaged, small, big, etc.

Script [Tracks 11-12]

- Pia:** Hey Miki, I heard you're looking for a new place to live.

Miki: Yeah, um, it's beyond looking. Actually, I'm getting a bit desperate!

Pia: Well, you know, maybe this is good timing because I've got a spare room at my place and I'm looking for someone who can move in A-S-A-P.

Miki: You serious? That's great. Where is it?

Pia: It's one of those new student-housing complexes, on Landfair Avenue...

Miki: Ah, those. How much is it?

Pia: Well, it's \$90 a week, 360 a month. It's close to campus and you'd have your own room and bathroom.

Miki: Wow! That's way better than where I'm living right now. But it sounds a bit too good to be true.

Pia: Hmmm...

Miki: So, what's the catch?

Pia: Well, it's on the 13th floor. And it's actually apartment number 13-13.

Miki: So?

Pia: You don't care? Lots of people think that's bad luck or something.

Miki: Nah, I don't believe in that superstitious stuff.

Pia: You know, I've been looking for a new roommate for 3 months and you're the first person who's not afraid of the 13th floor.
- Soon:** Ta-dah! Welcome to my humble abode.

Simon: Wow! Your new place is gorgeous!

Soon: Didn't I tell you so?

Simon: Yeah, but to be honest, I wasn't expecting anything like this. I mean, it looks brand new. Seriously, how can you afford it? The rent must be costing you a fortune.

Soon: Well, actually, it's only \$300 a month.

Simon: \$300 a month, are you serious? That's less than what I pay and I'm living in a shoebox. How did you get it for so cheap?

Soon: Well, actually, some people think there's like a ghost or something mysterious about the place.

Simon: What? Well, why?

Soon: Well, it's the last tenant...died here — some kind of mysterious circumstances. It was about 3 years ago, and no one has wanted to move in since then. So the owner got really desperate and offered it to me for one-third the original rent price.

Simon: What? Are you serious? Someone died, like murdered or suicide or something?

Soon: Yeah, but I don't see what the big deal is. I mean, it's a bargain.

Simon: I'm not sure. I don't think I'd be comfortable living in a place like this.

STEP 3 BUILDING FLUENCY: AGREEING AND DISAGREEING

Students will practice agreeing and disagreeing and will learn several preposition phrases used for describing living situations.

1. Expressions

- Have students decide which expressions mean "I agree," "I disagree," or "I don't know." Check the answers as a class.
- Next, model the intonation of the sentences. Have students underline the words that are stressed (elongated). There is some variance as to how you can say the sentences but below is one way to do it:

- 1) *I'll have to think about that.*
- 2) *That's crazy.*
- 3) *No way!*
- 4) *I'm with you on that one.*
- 5) *I'm not so sure about that.*
- 6) *Yeah, I guess you're right.*

Answer Key

I agree with you = 4, 6

I disagree with you = 2, 3

I don't know = 1, 5

2. Vocabulary

In pairs, have students match the phrases to the best pictures. Then, go over as a class. Next, reinforce the vocabulary by having students cover the words above the images with a piece of paper or a card. Then, have students quiz each other using only the images as prompts:

A: *What is image "h"?*

B: *"With a messy roommate." What is image "f"?*

A: *"In a rough neighborhood."*

Answer Key

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

VOCAB TROUBLESHOOTING

A rough neighborhood – a neighborhood where there is a lot of crime and violence

Earthquake zone – an area where earthquakes are likely to occur

HOW THE GRAMMAR WORKS

Before moving on to the **Let's Practice** activity, review the different degrees of agreement in the grammar box. You could demonstrate the different ways to show how you feel by using your voice. Say a statement to the class and call on individual students to reply using the phrases.

3. Let's Practice

Have the students discuss the pictures. Encourage them to use the sample dialogue. Students can keep track of their partner's opinions by marking a (√) for agreement and an (X) for disagreement next to each image.

STEP 4 CONVERSATION MODEL: IS IT TOO EXPENSIVE?

Students will look at how sounds are cut and blended.

Optional Warm-up:

Write the following questions on the board.

- 1) *What is the woman looking for?*
- 2) *What does she think about it?*
- 3) *What does her husband think?*

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

That is a bit creepy – That is a bit strange and scary

I don't see what the big deal is – I don't think it's a problem

HOW THE PRONUNCIATION WORKS: CUT AND BLEND SOUNDS

Explain the unit pronunciation point to your students. In this unit we look at cutting and blending sounds, in particular at how “t” and “d” sounds often disappear, or are cut, when they appear before other consonant sounds. This happens when a word ends in a “t” or “d” sound and is followed by a word that starts with a consonant sound, such as husban(d) found, perfec(t) place and don(‘t) see. It can also happen within a word, for example apar(t)ment. As you can imagine, this can cause trouble for students when listening to English as the sounds that indicate that a word is in the past tense or is in a negative form can completely disappear in natural speech. While students do not have to pronounce phrases in this way, it is important for them to be aware of these pronunciation points, in particular for listening comprehension purposes.

- Next, play the conversation model [Track 13] and encourage students to listen out for the “cut and blended 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: CUT AND BLEND SOUNDS, JUMP THE /T/ SOUND

you and your – you *an jour* / you an(d) your

But he doesn't like it – *Bude* doesn(t) likit

But it's – *budits*

I don't see what the big deal is – I don(t) see wha(t) the big *dealiz*

2. Substitution

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

Answer Key

Far from work – inconvenient – it's only a 2 hour commute

Next to a cemetery – spooky – it's actually very quiet

Close to the airport – noisy – it's really convenient for traveling

In a rough neighborhood – dangerous – it has bars on the windows

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 the cut and blended sounds and offer pronunciation and intonation advice as necessary.

STEP 5 LET'S TALK ABOUT IT: COULD YOU LIVE HERE?

Students will discuss their opinions about different housing scenarios.

Optional Warm-up:

Read the alternative paragraphs below one at a time to the students. Have them underline the words that you substituted for different words. After each reading each paragraph, give students time to compare their answers and then elicit the answers as a class. Try to elicit the words that you substituted in your reading. The capitalized words represent the substituted words.

1. You can PURCHASE a house that MEETS your INCOME and is close to your JOB, but it is right next to the airport. All HOURS OF THE DAY planes fly right over the house. Do you want to MOVE there?
2. You can rent an AFFORDABLE apartment in a brand new building. There is a lot of crime in the AREA, but

LOTS OF young people are moving THERE. Do you want to live there?

3. You can move into a GORGEOUS apartment that is really INEXPENSIVE and close to your OFFICE. But you FIND OUT that there is a lot of bad Feng Shui. Do you still want to RELOCATE there?
4. Your best friend just SETTLED into a LOVELY two-bedroom apartment. Your friend wants you to move into the UNOCCUPIED bedroom, but you find out that your PREVIOUS boyfriend/girlfriend lives on the same floor. Do you want to live WITH YOUR FRIEND?
5. You can move into a really cheap two-story house that is CONSTRUCTED of wood. The PLACE is really old and the area is FAMOUS for a lot of earthquakes. Do you want to live there?
6. You can buy a beautiful house for your family in the countryside. The house is the IDEAL size and it fits your INCOME. However, there are DEADLY spiders in the area. Do you want to live there?

1. Get Ready

Have students read the paragraphs again and then mark their feeling about each location. Encourage them to jot down their reasons.

2. Let's Talk

Have the students discuss their answers with a partner. You could have them rotate partners every few minutes.

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.

BONUS ACTIVITY: Creative Writing

Have your students pretend that they are real estate agents and have them write advertisements for the living situations introduced in **Let's Talk About It**. They should write advertisements which "play up" the positive points and "play down" the negative points without actually lying.

STEP 6 LANGUAGE AWARENESS

Assign the language awareness activity on page 82 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'm getting a bit desperate! | 2. This is good timing. |
| 3. I've got a spare room. | 4. I'm looking for someone who can move in A-S-A-P. |
| 5. But it sounds a bit too good to be true. | 6. So, what's the catch? |
| 7. my humble abode | 8. It looks brand new. |
| 9. The rent must be costing you a fortune. | 10. I'm living in a shoebox. |
| 11. I don't see what the big deal is. | 12. It's a bargain. |

STEP 7 ERIK'S COMMUNICATION TIP

We think it's important for students to learn phrases like "no way" and "that's crazy" which are strong, emotive phrases they can use with friends. However, it's also important for them to realize that these are strong phrases which may not be appropriate in certain occasions. In this **Erik Communication Tip** we introduce some indirect, and therefore polite, ways for students to disagree. This structure (positive statement + but + negative statement) is extremely useful and is used in many contexts in English communication, including disagreeing and turning down invitations and requests. To do some quick practice, say some extreme opinions and have your students respond using the above structure.

STEP 8 UNIT TEST

Make copies of the Unit Test for each student. Start by playing the audio for the Listening section (download Track 2 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

I once lived in the perfect apartment... a five-minute walk from work, close to a supermarket, a convenience store and in a really quiet neighborhood. There was just one problem—the smell. Seriously, there was always an awful smell coming from the kitchen. I had no idea what it was. I tried everything to get rid of it... but nothing worked. In the end I couldn't put up with it any longer and decided to move.

Answer Key

Part A.

1. d
2. a

Part B.

3. on
4. you're
5. That's crazy
6. I'll have to think about that.

Part C.

7. from
8. on
9. next
10. in