



Unit 6 - Housing

Home Maintenance

Letters to a Friend / Housing

Objectives

By the end of this lesson, participants will be able to:

- Recognize the importance of housing upkeep and develop a positive attitude toward cleaning.
- Describe how to maintain a clean and safe home environment.

Time

20 – 30 minutes

Materials

Housing Letters to a Friend (included) in appropriate language¹

Procedure

- Divide the class into four groups and distribute a copy of the letters to each group.
- After they've had a chance to read the letters, ask participants if they would want to be in the same situation described in the letter. Why or why not?
- Ask them to list the housing problems described in the letter as a large group.
- Go through each problem, asking participants to describe how they would go about solving each one. Encourage participants to reference the Mercy Housing excerpt.

Variation

This lesson could be facilitated with the entire class as one large group. Where available, refer to mock kitchen and bathroom facilities when discussing those appliances or fixtures.

Assessment

Ask summarizing questions to reinforce teaching points.

¹ Page 35 of the 2006 Mercy Housing publication, *Welcome to Your New Home*. Available as the second resource found at <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/orr/resources/publications.htm> (in multiple languages).

Housing Letters to a Friend

1 March 10

Dear Day Paw,

I'm writing to let you know about my apartment, it looks very nice and it suits my family well. The apartment is quite different from our house in the camp. It is like a big room with small rooms inside it. My apartment is on the fourth floor, but we don't have to walk up and down the stairs because we have elevator in our apartment so when Baw Poe buys a big bag of rice, he does not need to carry the big bag up the stairs. We have two bedrooms in our apartment, one for me and Baw Poe and another one for our two sons. The apartment owner put carpet in both our bedrooms and living room so the floor is very soft to walk and we don't have to be afraid that the floor will squeak when we walk at night.

The kitchen and bathroom is also inside our apartment, not attached to our house like in the camp. In the kitchen, I don't have to use charcoal anymore as they have the electrical stove and oven. Our RA staff taught us how to use the stove and oven, but I only use the stove. We also can't cause too much smoke when cooking because there is a smoke detector on the ceiling of our apartment. If there is too much smoke in our apartment, the smoke detector will be activated and it sprinkles water all over the room.

Before the RA staff left, she also told me that there is a washing facility in the apartment building and we have to check our mailbox for letters and bills. Oh, a lot to learn about our new house in America. I have attached you the picture of our new house here.

Miss you,

Mu Mu

1 October 10

Dear Day Paw,

I have bad news. The apartment owner told us today that he would terminate our lease and we will have to find a new place to live at the end of this month. Our son said that it was because we broke the lease agreement but I still don't understand what he was talking about. He also said that we could not get our deposit back because it will be used to pay for the damages we made. Then he pointed at the floor. Do you remember when I told you about the washing facility? I didn't want to go there because I have to pay three dollars to the machines to wash and dry our clothes, so I ended up washing them in our bathroom and hang them to dry in the bathroom and living room. The weather here is very cold and it takes a few days for our clothes to dry and hanging the clothes makes our carpet wet most of the time. It turned out that it mold all over the apartment floor underneath the carpet! Moreover, I let my boys taking care of their own room as I have been busy working and going to English class. It turns out that they never tidied up once since we moved in and the room looks and smells horrendous! We are going to ask the RA staff for advice tomorrow but I'm so anxious and worried.



Your friend, Mu Mu