

1. A domestic disagreement

This week's lesson is based on a couple's conversation about housework.

Level

Pre-intermediate and above (equivalent to CEF level A2-B1 and above)

How to use the lesson

1. Introduce the expression 'chores' and brainstorm as many domestic chores (i.e. kinds of housework) as possible. How many of those chores do your students do? If they don't do them, who does? Which are their least favourite chores, and why? Which do they least mind doing, and why? What kinds of chores/housework are usually done in their home before friends or family come round for a meal?
2. Give your students five to ten minutes to read through Worksheet A, encouraging them to look up new vocabulary. Tell them they are going to answer a series of questions on the text, but that they shouldn't write anything down at this stage.
3. Divide the students into pairs and hand out Worksheet B. Ask them to work together to complete the comprehension questions in Exercise 1 and the true/false/doesn't say questions in Exercise 2.
4. Check answers in open class.
5. Keeping the students in their pairs, ask them to turn over their copies of Worksheet A or to hand them back to you temporarily. Then ask them to attempt Exercise 3 on Worksheet C, which contains the text from Worksheet A with twenty-five incorrect words that they have to identify and correct. The words containing the mistakes are all in bold, as are five other words that are correct. Point out that the mistakes are all grammatical or lexical, and that no correction requires them to write more than one additional word.
6. Check answers in open class.

Answers:

Exercise 1

1. In Paul and Ella's home, which is a flat. (The references to all the domestic chores, and to watching TV and eating biscuits, make this fairly clear. Also, Ella refers to 'this flat', and Paul to 'these shelves'.)
2. She had agreed to do the shopping.
3. Because the bathroom is not clean (Paul said apparently about three days previously that he would clean it, but has not yet done so) and there are guests coming round for dinner (who obviously might use it).
4. He says he does all the DIY.
5. He said he made the bed.
6. The washing up, the dusting and the Hoovering®, and also cleaning the bathroom.
7. He says the guests won't notice if the bathroom is not clean because it is quite dark inside – because he hasn't yet changed the light bulb. (No, it appears he isn't being serious, because Ella then says 'It's not funny'.)
8. In about three hours.
9. Because if he doesn't do the washing up she won't be able to start cooking – because all the pans she needs are dirty.
10. Because Paul has been eating biscuits.

Exercise 2

1. T 2. D 3. T 4. F 5. T 6. T 7. F 8. T 9. T 10. T

Exercise 3

1. come 2. in 3. crumbs 5. Hoover® 6. turn 7. chores 8. do 9. dusting
10. about 12. notice 13. bulb 15. behaviour 16. awful 17. exhausted
18. made 19. deal 20. share 21. DIY 22. shelves 24. on 25. tea 26. rush
27. course 28. cleaning 29. run out of 30. new bottle
Words in bold that are correct: 4. biscuits 11. round 14. fair 15. queues 23. pigsty

2. Related Websites

Send your students to these websites, or just take a look yourself.

http://news.bbc.co.uk/cbbcnews/hi/newsid_8190000/newsid_8193100/8193104.stm

A BBC *Newsround* forum asks 'What are you too lazy to do?' The answers, mainly referring to simple domestic tasks, come from children and younger teenagers. Accessible to pre-intermediate level.

http://www.bbc.co.uk/relationships/couples/grumbles_housework.shtml

Advice from the BBC website about how couples can avoid arguing over 'housework hassles'. Intermediate level and above.

<http://www.natives.co.uk/news/2002/0502/08iron.htm>

A short article on the way in which a mundane domestic chore has been turned into a bizarre but fiercely competitive sport in the form of 'extreme ironing'. Intermediate level and above.