

EPISODE 25
LEVEL B2

READING COMPREHENSION



RENOVATING A HOUSE



"I never knew renovating a house could be so difficult. I am reading this article and there are words here that I simply don't understand!" complains to Julia her young cousin Eve.

"Such as?"

"Well, for example, I am reading about the basement of the house, and they ask me if there are any **damp spots** or **blistered paint**."

"Damp spots are just the spots where the surface is constantly wet, and paint **blisters** are if it has hollow rounded swellings on the surface."

"OK. Next: is there any visible **mould**. Now do they mean this soft green or grey growth which develops on old food?"

"I suppose so. It can also appear on walls."

"Disgusting! Nothing in my house is **mouldy**, I'm sure. Now what are **beams** and what does it mean if they are **twisted**?"

"Oh you know - these long thick pieces of wood which are used to support weight in a building. And if they have lost their original shape..."

"OK, I get it. I'd better check that. Now **wiring** is the system of wires that carry electricity in a building, right? What problems might I have here?"

"Well, in our house, for example, the **fuses** keep **blowing** (= fuses are small safety parts in electrical devices which cause them to stop working if the electric current is too high, and so prevent fires or other dangers; if a fuse blows, it shuts off the device)."

"Oh right. At my place, the lights **fuse** often in winter (= get shut off). And then: and are there **leaks** from **pipes**... So they mean, does water escape from the tube inside which water flows?"

"That's right."

(...to be continued)

More contexts for the new words:

- New shoes always give me **blisters**, except for sports shoes which are usually comfortable right from the start. (= a painful red swelling on the skin that contains liquid, caused usually by continuous rubbing, especially on your heel, or by burning)
- He doesn't smoke cigarettes but he loves his **pipe**. (= a short narrow tube with a small container at one end, used especially for smoking tobacco)



EXERCISE 1

Complete the sentences with the words from the text. The first letter is given.

1. The wood won't burn if it's d.....
2. If the boiler is broken, it may be l..... dangerous gas.
3. My hairdryer's stopped working - I think the fuse has b.....
4. There was m..... on the cheese, so I had to throw it away.
5. Mind your head – our cottage has low b.....
6. The water p..... had frozen during the severe weather.



EXERCISE 2

Answer the questions.

1. Which of the problems mentioned in the text have you had in your house?
2. What did you do to solve them?

ENGLISH IN USE



"I'd better check that," says Eve in the above text. What does that mean?

"I'd better" is short for "I had better." The structure is followed by a verb in the bare infinitive - we don't use "to." The meaning is similar to "I should"; it suggests that we are supposed to do something or that we believe it will be good for us if we do so. Have a look at the following examples:

***You'd better go** now. I'm sure your mother is getting worried. (= I think is a good idea for you to go now)*

***He'd better start** studying if he wants to pass this exam. (= he should start studying)*

***We'd better hurry** or else we'll miss the train. (= I think we need to hurry)*

IDIOM CLOSE-UP



A/ Why do they say I should be careful when speaking with Johnny?

B/ He is difficult to be around - he **HAS A SHORT FUSE** and you never know what might upset him.

If someone **has a short fuse**, they get very angry very easily.

PHRASAL VERBS CLOSE-UP



1. If you **DO UP** a building, you repair or decorate it so that it looks attractive

*I'd like to buy a run-down cottage that I can **do up**.*

*We spent our weekends **doing up** an old Rolls Royce.*

2. If something **SETS** someone/ something **APART**, it makes them different and special.

*I'll paint the exterior of my house pink, to **set it apart** from all the other houses.*

*Jill's natural athleticism **set her apart** from other tennis players.*



EXERCISE 3

Match the sentence halves.

1. He's an aggressive player

2. What set her apart from the other candidates

3. It's a lovely cottage, but it needs

a. doing up a bit.

b. was her creativity.

c. with a very short fuse.

NEWS



HUSBAND FOR HIRE

There are more and more companies offering the services of ‘a husband for hire.’ They are aimed at single women in large cities, who have very good earnings, but are often unable to cope on their own with a blown fuse or blistered paint. Such ‘husbands’ are skilled **handymen** who will come to your apartment, fix your leaking pipes and repair the faulty wiring. In addition to renovation services, they can also perform numerous other tasks, such as picking up the kids from school, collecting the laundry, or delivering medicines to your ill mother. To put it briefly, they will do anything a husband would do. **What’s the catch?** Well, their services are really expensive. Fixing a leaking tap or taking your dog for a walk might cost you two hundred zlotys. So you’ll be much better off if you use such ‘husbands for hire’ only if you’re **in dire straits**.

GLOSSARY

- a **handyman** – a man who is skilled at repairing almost everything at home
- **What’s the catch?** – how is this not as attractive as it might seem?
- **in dire straits** – in a very difficult situation

KEY TO EXERCISES

Ex.1

- | | |
|------------|----------|
| 1. damp | 4. mould |
| 2. leaking | 5. beams |
| 3. blown | 6. pipes |

Ex.2

1. b
2. c
3. a

Ex.3

1. c
2. b
3. a