

EPISODE 26

LEVEL B2

READING COMPREHENSION



DECORATING A HOUSE



"And now the section on how to **redecorate**... Julia, I'll just read to you what it says here, and you'll tell me in plain English what it means, OK?" asks Eve, rather daunted by the task ahead of her.

"Shoot", agrees Julia.

"For every kind of paint, use proper **solvent**".

"That means you have to use water to remove **water-based paint**, and something like **turpentine** for **oil-based paints**."

"Now about putting **wallpaper** on, rather than painting. They say: remove the old **adhesive**, fill **cracks** with **patching paste**, then **sand** smooth."

"Right. So must make sure the old glue is all gone, then use a special filling paste to fill in the small holes in the wall, and then use **sandpaper** - this is very thick, very rough paper - to make the wall smooth."

"OK. Now about **tiles** - and I want square white tiles in my kitchen on the floors and one wall, and all over in the bathroom. It says here: when **tiling** a surface, use a pre-mixed adhesive or a **mortar**."

"You know what mortar is! It is a mixture of sand, water and **cement**..."

"... you mean, what they use to fix **bricks** (= rectangular blocks of hard material, often red) or stones to each other when building walls?"

"That's it."

"Thanks, Julia. I don't know how I am going to survive this renovation. I'd rather not renovate at all!"

More contexts for the new words:

- Martha used a **nicotine patch** to help her quit smoking - I'm sorry to say that it didn't really work. (= a small piece of adhesive material with nicotine on it which a person can stick onto their skin)
- The company's student internship scheme has **cemented** its links with the student community. (= has made it stronger)
- I keep asking Lindsay not to call me so late but it's like **banging your head against a brick wall**. (= an idiom describing a situation where a goal that is very difficult or impossible to achieve and therefore causes you to feel annoyed)



EXERCISE 1

Decide if these sentences are true or false. Correct the false ones.

1. You can use turpentine to remove oil-based paints.
2. People often use tiles in the bedroom.
3. Many houses are made of bricks.
4. You use sandpaper to make a surface smooth.
5. You use a solvent to put on wallpaper.
6. Redecorating means mainly hanging new pictures and curtains.



EXERCISE 2

Complete the questions and then answer them.

1. Are the walls in your house painted with w.....-b..... paint or with o.....-b..... one?
2. What colour are the t..... in your kitchen and bathroom?
3. Would you prefer to live in a house made of wood or b.....? Why?

ENGLISH IN USE



"I'd rather not renovate at all", says Eve in the text above. How do we use this structure?

First of all, "I'd rather" here is short for "I would rather" (not to be confused with "had" in the "I'd better" structure). This structure expresses preference - it allows us to say what we would like to happen, or what we would like someone to do.

When the sentence only has one subject we simply use a verb in bare infinitive form:

I'd rather stay in tonight. (= I prefer staying at home to going out tonight)

He'd rather not talk to Dennis now. (= He doesn't really want to talk to Dennis now)

However, when the preference is in regard to someone else and not the person who is the subject of the main clause, another subject needs to be introduced into the sentence. Then the structure changes - we need to use a past tense:

I'd rather you stayed in tonight. (= I prefer you staying at home rather than going out tonight)

I'd rather John didn't talk to Mary now. (= I don't really want John to talk to Mary now)

IDIOM CLOSE-UP



A/ Why do you hate Henry so much?

B/ He **DRIVES ME UP THE WALL** with all of his comments on politics and his general stupid behaviour.

If someone **drives you up the wall**, they make you extremely angry.

PHRASAL VERBS CLOSE-UP



1. When you **TEAR** something **DOWN**, you destroy or remove a structure or part of a structure because it is not being used or it is not wanted any more.

*That old house should have been **torn down** years ago.*

*They're going to **tear down** the old hospital and build a new one.*

2. When you **PUT** something **UP**, you to fix an object to a vertical surface, such as a wall.

*I **put** a few posters **up** to make the room look less bare.*

*We've **put up** some new curtains in the living room.*



EXERCISE 3

Complete the sentences with the missing prepositions. Use the idiom and the phrasal verb you have learned.

1. Posters advertising the show have been put all over the town.
2. Jill is driving me the wall with her childish comments.
3. They are going to tear that old bridge and build a new one.

NEWS



WALL TRENDS

Have you ever wondered how to make the walls in your house more original and interesting? The possibilities are **infinite**, and there even exists a whole area of **interior design** dedicated to following wall trends. You are certainly aware of the possibility of putting up a wallpaper, but it doesn't have to be as **mundane** as in your grandparents' house. The simplest thing to do is to paper only one wall in the room, ensuring that the pattern really **makes a statement**. Another trick is to use wall stickers – a cheap and fast way of transforming your interior into something completely new. You can choose from floral designs, written words, or abstract patterns, and many, many more. And if you're really willing to experiment, you might try some original materials on your walls, such as glass or blackboard. Imagine the surprise of your guests when they realize that they can write directly on your walls with a piece of chalk!

GLOSSARY

- **infinite** – endless
- **interior design** – designing the inside of a flat or house
- **mundane** – boring
- **make a statement** – be brave and original

KEY TO EXERCISES

Ex.1

1. True
2. False – tiles are usually used in the kitchen and in the bathroom.
3. True
4. True
5. False – you use it to remove paint.
6. False – it is lots of more serious work, like painting the walls.

Ex.2

1. water-based, oil-based
2. tiles
3. bricks

Ex.3

1. up
2. up
3. down