

# Talking to a Landlord

*In this lesson, you will learn useful words and expressions to use when talking to a landlord. It is helpful to practice asking and answering questions politely before you make a complaint or share a concern in real life. Let's start by having a discussion in small groups.*

## Pre-Reading

### A. Warm-Up Questions

1. What jobs do landlords do?
2. What reasons could tenants have for contacting landlords?
3. Why is it important to have a good relationship with a landlord?



### B. Vocabulary Preview

Match the words on the left to the correct meanings on the right.

- |                                    |   |
|------------------------------------|---|
| _____ 1. landlord                  | a) heat, electricity, and water                               |
| _____ 2. tenant                    | b) an appliance that heats a space                            |
| _____ 3. furnace                   | c) a person who rents an apartment                            |
| _____ 4. keep meaning to           | d) acceptable, fair   |
| _____ 5. clogged                   | e) blocked  |
| _____ 6. plumber                   | f) a person who fixes and installs pipes and drainage         |
| _____ 7. rent                      | g) the fee for borrowing (e.g., borrowing a space to live in) |
| _____ 8. reasonable                | h) an apartment manager or owner                              |
| _____ 9. utilities                 | i) to make someone aware, to provide new information          |
| _____ 10. bring to one's attention | j) to continue to forget or postpone taking an action         |

## Dialogue Reading

Read the dialogue with your partner a few times. Take turns being each character. Practice your intonation and pronunciation. Circle any new words or phrases that you need to practice.

Landlord: Hello?

Tenant: Hi. **I'm a tenant in Unit #22.**

Landlord: Which building are you in?

Tenant: Uh, 33 John Street.

Landlord: Yep. Okay. **Is there a problem?**

Tenant: Yes. **The furnace is not working.**

Landlord: Hmm. That's not good. I'll send a technician over there this afternoon.

Tenant: Great! Also, I keep meaning to call about the bathroom toilet. It keeps getting clogged.

Landlord: Oh, really? **How long has this been a problem?**

Tenant: For about a month. We tried a few things, but **nothing is helping.**

Landlord: I can have **a plumber** in on Friday. **Does that work for you?**

Tenant: Friday. Uh, **do I have to be home?**

Landlord: No. I can let him in if you're not there.

Tenant: Thanks. Also, while I have you on the phone, I keep meaning to ask you about **the rent**. Will there be an increase in the new year?

Landlord: Yes. The rent increase this year is 2%. The utilities will stay the same. You'll get an official notice in your mail slot soon.

Tenant: Okay. That's **reasonable**. **Thanks for looking after these problems.**

Landlord: **Thanks for bringing them to my attention.**

## Practice

Work with your partner. Role-play the dialogue on page 2, substituting the different expressions below. Then switch roles.

1. **Hi. I'm a tenant in Unit #22.**

- I'm a renter in Unit #5.
- I rent an apartment here. Unit #3.

2. **Is there a problem?**

- Is there something I can do for you?
- How can I help you?
- Is something wrong?

3. **The furnace is not working.**

- Our dishwasher is broken.
- My window won't close.
- There's a mouse in here.
- We found some bugs in the bedroom.
- The toilet won't flush.
- I have a leaky faucet.
- I locked myself out.
- Our neighbors are really loud.

4. **How long has this been a problem?**

- How long have you been experiencing this?
- Has it been like this for long?
- When did this start?

5. We tried a few things, but **nothing is helping.**

- nothing works
- we can't fix it
- we don't know what else to do

6. I can have **a plumber** in on Friday.

- |                  |               |
|------------------|---------------|
| • an electrician | • a painter   |
| • pest control   | • a locksmith |
| • a mechanic     | • a repairman |

7. **Does that work for you?**

- Will that be okay?
- Can you wait until then?
- Is that too late?
- Is that convenient?

8. **Do I have to be home?**

- Is it okay if I'm at work?
- Do I need to be here?
- Can I leave you a key?

9. I keep meaning to ask you about **the rent.**

- |                        |                         |
|------------------------|-------------------------|
| • the electricity bill | • the flooring          |
| • our water bill       | • the security          |
| • the cable service    | • the recreation center |
| • the Internet         |                         |
| • the parking rules    |                         |

10. That's **reasonable.**

- |              |              |
|--------------|--------------|
| • acceptable | • fine       |
| • okay       | • too much   |
| • fair       | • ridiculous |

11. **Thanks for looking after these problems.**

- Thanks for taking care of this.
- Thanks for sending someone.
- Thanks for taking this call.
- Thanks for doing this.
- I appreciate your help.

12. **Thanks for bringing them to my attention.**

- Thanks for letting me know.
- Thanks for telling me about this.
- Thanks for calling.

## Listening Practice

Listen to two students read the dialogue from page 2. Fill in the missing words as you listen. Listen again. Now look back at page 2 and check your work. Did you fill in the correct words? Did you spell everything correctly?

Landlord: Hello?

Tenant: Hi. I'm a \_\_\_\_\_ in Unit #22.

Landlord: Which building are you in?

Tenant: Uh, 33 John Street.

Landlord: Yep. Okay. Is there a problem?

Tenant: Yes. The \_\_\_\_\_ is not working.

Landlord: Hmm. That's not good. I'll send a technician over there this afternoon.

Tenant: Great! Also, I keep meaning to call about the bathroom toilet. It keeps getting clogged.

Landlord: Oh really? How long has this been a \_\_\_\_\_ ?

Tenant: For about a month. We tried a few things, but nothing is helping.

Landlord: I can have a \_\_\_\_\_ in on Friday. Does that work for you?

Tenant: Friday. Uh, do I have to be home?

Landlord: No. I can let him in if you're not there.

Tenant: Thanks. Also, \_\_\_\_\_ on the phone, I keep meaning to ask you about the \_\_\_\_\_. Will there be an increase in the new year?

Landlord: Yes. The rent increase this year is 2%. The \_\_\_\_\_ will stay the same. You'll get an official notice in your mail slot soon.

Tenant: Okay. That's reasonable. Thanks for looking after these problems.

Landlord: Thanks for bringing them to my attention.

Write a dialogue with a partner using phrases from page 3. Practice and present the dialogue to your class.

[illegible]

## Review

### Task 1

#### LISTEN & ANSWER

Listen to two classmates read the conversation. Then answer the questions.  
Your teacher will tell you if you have to write or say the answers.

1. What is the main reason for the tenant's phone call?

---

---

2. What does the landlord offer to do?

---

---

3. What additional problem does the tenant mention?

---

---

4. What will happen if the tenant is not in the apartment on Friday?

---

---

5. What change will occur in the new year?

---

---

6. How would you describe the landlord's tone?

---

---

## Review cont.

### Task 2

#### QUESTION FORMATION

##### A. Problems & Concerns

Write five problems a tenant might have to talk to a landlord about.

Ex. *My fridge isn't working.*

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

##### B. Questions

Write five possible questions a landlord might ask a tenant over the phone.

Ex. *Which unit are you in?*

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

### Task 3

#### ROLE-PLAY

Find a partner. Imagine that one of you is the landlord and one of you is a tenant. Use your concerns and questions to do a role-play for your teacher about a few problems the tenant is experiencing.