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Dealing with Household Problems

A CLB 3-4 Module with
Teaching Materials

Classroom-ready resources that include:

- ✓ Module plan adjusted for two levels
- ✓ Assessment tasks at two levels
- ✓ Skill-building activities
- ✓ Skill-using tasks
- ✓ Goal setting and learner reflection tools
- ✓ Reference list of additional resources

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How to Use the Module Package

This module includes activities for a unit on dealing with housing problems for CLB levels 3 and 4. There are suggestions for introducing the topic as well as handouts for goal setting and end-of-module learner reflections. In addition, the package includes a series of skill-building activities and skill-using tasks for Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing as well as two-level assessment tasks for each of the four skills. Audio files supporting this module are included and posted separately.

Some Notes about this Module Package:

1. Each learner activity/task is identified in the upper right-hand corner as a skill-building activity, a skill-using task, or an assessment task.



Skill Building Activity



Skill-using Task



Assessment Task

2. The activities are listed by skill, but are not sequenced. The intent is that you select and sequence activities based on the needs of learners and the amount of class time you have to do the module. When planning, also consider skills that have been addressed in previous modules, and how they could be recycled in the current module to “allow learners to transfer their learning to new situations and to demonstrate some of the key competencies in new contexts”. (ICLBA, 2017).
3. Modules can include interrelated real world task goals where the skill-building activities in one skill area (e.g., Listening) support the development of language skills in another (e.g., Speaking).
4. This module includes a variety of tasks and activities; however, you will likely need to supplement them depending on the specific needs of the learners in your class. The *Additional Teacher Resources* section includes references to a sample of published resources with activities to support this module.
5. The skill-building activities and skill-using tasks are not differentiated by level unless specifically noted. They can be used by learners at both CLB 3 and CLB 4 by making accommodations within the class. For example, you might provide more scaffolding for learners at CLB 3 (e.g., giving examples, helping learners complete the first question), than for learners at CLB 4. You might adjust the expectations and expect learners at CLB 4 to demonstrate greater mastery than learners at CLB 3 on the same activity.

How to Use the Module Package, *continued*

6. The skill-using tasks provide opportunities for learners to practise a task in its entirety and get informal feedback. You can use these tasks after you have introduced a new skill or reviewed skills previously taught. Any of the skill-using tasks that learners complete independently may be included in learner portfolios as evidence of growth and progress. Any scaffolding or support provided (e.g., the first question completed as a class) should be indicated on the activity. Note that if the skill-using and assessment tasks in a module are exactly the same for a skill, either one or the other can be included in learners' portfolios, but not both tasks.

Some Notes about Assessment within a PBLA Context:

With PBLA, assessment incorporates a range of assessment and feedback strategies, including:

- **In-the-moment feedback:** informal and on the spot feedback given to learners while they are doing a task to help them move forward.
- **Planned feedback on skill-using tasks:** descriptive and non-evaluative feedback on skill-using tasks focusing on what learners are doing well (in relation to CLB-based criteria) and concrete strategies they can use to improve their language skills.
- **Formal assessment:** feedback that indicates whether learners have met task expectations in relation to specific benchmark expectations. Learners complete these tasks independently.

For a fuller discussion of assessment strategies see the current *PBLA Practice Guidelines: Portfolios: Feedback and Assessment* and *Integrating CLB Assessment*, Chapter 2, Planning for Assessment.

Your feedback

CCLB values your feedback to help guide the future development of these multi-level modules. You can help by:

- Piloting all or some of the activities in this module in your classroom, and
- Providing your feedback via an online survey at: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/modulefeedback1>

Module Plan

Theme: Housing

Topic: Dealing with Household Problems

CLB Level:3-4	Listening	Speaking	Reading	Writing
Real-World Task Goal(s)	Understand information about housing problems and how to deal with them.	Describe a problem to the landlord and request a solution.	Read a short notice from the landlord.	Write a message to a landlord making a request or a complaint.
Context/Background Information	Landlord/tenant roles and responsibilities regarding care and maintenance of a rental unit; rules and regulations in apartment buildings; documenting housing problems (including dates of contact with the landlord, actions taken, etc.); common household problems and how to solve them; strategies for avoiding problems (e.g., pest control)			
CLB Competency Area(s) and Statements	<p>Comprehending Information Understand communication about a person, object, situation, scene, personal experience or daily routine.</p> <p>CLB 3: Communication is short, simple</p> <p>CLB 4: Communication is short</p> <p>Comprehending Instructions Understand instructions and directions related to familiar, everyday situations of immediate personal relevance.</p> <p>CLB 3: Instructions are about 2 to 4 steps.</p> <p>CLB 4: Instructions are about 4 to 5 steps.</p>	<p>Getting Things Done CLB 3: Make and respond to an expanding range of simple requests related to everyday activities.</p> <p>CLB 4: Make and respond to a range of requests.</p>	<p>Getting Things Done Get information from short business or service texts (such as brochures, notices, form letters and flyers).</p> <p>CLB 3: Formatted text is short and simple</p> <p>CLB 4: Formatted text is simple</p>	<p>Getting Things Done Write simple business or service messages.</p> <p>CLB 3: Messages are up to 5 sentences</p> <p>CLB 4: Messages are about 7 sentences.</p>

CLB Level:3-4	Listening	Speaking	Reading	Writing
Language Focus	Vocabulary for parts of the house, appliances, basic tools for repairs (e.g., plunger) Adjectives to describe common housing problems (leaky, dirty, broken, cracked, plugged, etc.) Present participles to describe common housing problems (peeling, leaking, [not] working, cracking, etc.) Modals (e.g. <i>can, could, would</i>)/expressions for polite requests			
	Imperatives with instructions Using sequence markers to identify the order of steps Identifying tone, mood and attitude, (sense of urgency) in communication about a housing problem	Structuring a request to a landlord: stating the purpose at the beginning, making a request; including all necessary information Question formation using modals Tone and intonation to sound polite when making a request; rise/fall intonation on question endings	Identifying tone, mood and attitude, (sense of urgency) in communication about a housing problem Interpreting simple graphics Imperatives	Structuring a request to a landlord: stating the purpose at the beginning, making a request; including all necessary information Courtesy formulas for polite openings/closings Word order and sentence structure Mechanics: spelling, punctuation, capitalization
Language and Learning Strategies	Requesting repetition; asking the speaker to slow down	Expressions to check for understanding	Skimming for general idea Scanning for details Strategies to promote active reading Inferring the meanings of unfamiliar words Using layout or formatting features (e.g., bolding) to assist comprehension or identify key information	Using a checklist (that includes items above for structuring a request) to ensure message is complete Using a dictionary/spell check to check spelling
Assessment Tasks	Listen to part of a telephone conversation between two friends about a housing problem and answer comprehension questions.	Role-play reporting a problem to a landlord and making a polite request to solve the problem.	Read a notice from a landlord and answer comprehension questions.	Write a message to a landlord about a problem (broken elevator) and ask him to fix it.

ESL Learners with Literacy Needs

General Accommodations/ Considerations for ESL Learners with Literacy Needs

The following are some suggestions for supporting ESL Literacy learners:

- Elicit and record 'experience' stories from learners about housing problems they have had and their interactions with a landlord (Language Experience Approach).
- Emphasize oral practice as a way of developing vocabulary and reinforcing learning.
- Create a sight word wall with housing vocabulary.
- Use picture/picture, picture/word or word/word matching to practise identifying housing vocabulary.
- Provide additional time to complete tasks and activities.
- Present the listening texts in segments with multiple repetitions.
- Encourage the use of additional supports such as dictionaries, word banks or phones during activities.
- Allow for oral responses (instead of written) on comprehension questions for the receptive tasks. .
- Adjust the complexity of tasks or texts for skill building and skill using tasks so that they are easier for literacy learners. For example, Reading texts could include less information and Reading tasks questions.
- Break each skill using task down into small, manageable parts. Introduce each new part of the task slowly and gradually to ensure overall success. Have learners focus on particular aspects of a task instead of the task as a whole.

See the *CLB: ESL for ALL* document for additional strategies to help literacy learners complete Reading and Writing skill building activities and skill using tasks.

Additional Teacher

The Language Companion Stage 1:

Helpful English: p. 33 *Expressing Problems*



LINC Classroom Activities (LINC 3), Algonquin College: Kathleen Johnson, Sheila Morrison

pp. 35-39, *E-mail to the Landlord*

Basic Oxford Picture Dictionary 2nd ed., Oxford University Press: Margot Gramer

p. 52, *Household Problems*

Oxford Picture Dictionary Classic Classroom Activities 2PndP ed., Oxford University Press: Jayme Adelson-Goldstein, Renee Weiss, and Norma Shapiro

p. 52, *Household Problems/Repair People*

Oxford Picture Dictionary 3PrdP (Canadian ed.), Oxford University Press: Jayme Adelson-Goldstein and Norma Shapiro

pp. 62-63, *Household Problems and Repairs*

Introducing the Module to the Class

This module can be introduced to learners in different ways. Two possibilities are:

1. Make a connection to learners' experience by engaging them in a class discussion using the following prompts:
 - Have you ever rented a house or apartment?
 - Have you ever had a problem in a rental apartment or home?
 - What was the problem?
 - What did you do about it? Did you try to fix it yourself or call the landlord?
 - If you have rented in a country other than Canada, are landlord and tenant responsibilities for maintaining the unit similar to Canada or different?

This can lead to a discussion about landlord and tenant responsibilities.

2. Brainstorm a list of possible problems in a rental unit. Record answers. Have learners work in small groups and sort ideas under two headings: *Landlord Fixes* and *Renter Fixes*. For example, you would contact the landlord about a leaky faucet, water coming from the ceiling, or a door that doesn't lock properly. However, as a tenant, you would replace the batteries in smoke detectors and change light bulbs yourself without contacting the landlord. Review answers as a group.

Goal Setting: Dealing with Household Problems

Teaching Notes: Complete the goal setting activity after introducing the module to the class.

Set up:

1. Post a list of language skills that learners can develop in this module:
 - Building vocabulary to describe housing problems
 - Listening to instructions for solving a housing problem
 - Making polite requests
 - Explaining a problem to the landlord (speaking)
 - Reading Strategies:
 - Practising how to guess the meaning of unfamiliar words from the context
 - Reading actively
 - Identifying tone and attitude
 - Writing a message (email or a note) to a landlord
2. Ask learners to think about which skills they want to focus on. Have them complete their goal-setting sheets.
3. Have learners review their goals at the end of the module and think about the strategies they used to achieve their goals.

Dealing with Household Problems: My Goals

Name: _____ Date: _____

Look at the language skills covered in this module.

Beginning of module goal setting:

In this module, I would like to improve the following skills:	What can I do to achieve this goal?

End of module review:

Date: _____

My goal:	Did I achieve my goal?	Were my strategies successful?



There are a number of new vocabulary items that learners may encounter in this module. Below are a variety of vocabulary-building activities that can be used to help learners remember and be able to use these words. The vocabulary cards that are also included are based on the words found in the module. You will probably want to add more words as a result of learner input so blank vocabulary cards have been added as well.

Possible Vocabulary Skill-Building Activities:

1. Give learners 30 seconds to come up with as many words as they can think of related to items in a home (e.g., names of fixtures, appliances) and what could go wrong with them (e.g., *The stove doesn't work.*). When the time is up, ask learners to compare their vocabulary lists with another learner or in small groups. Create a class list of vocabulary items and post somewhere in the classroom.
2. Copy and cut out sets of the vocabulary cards for housing problems as well as the headings: *Nouns*, *Adjectives*, *Verbs* on the pages that follows. Arrange learners into small groups of 3-4 learners per group and have them sort the words under the correct heading. When they are done, ask them to rearrange the cards in alphabetical order and compare their lists with another group. Encourage learners to ask their classmates for the meanings of any unfamiliar words in the lists.
3. Copy and cut out the vocabulary cards for *Household Items* as well as the cards in the *Verbs* and *Adjectives* lists. In small groups, have learners sort and match housing items with potential problems. Follow this activity with a grammar teaching point on how to describe housing problems using adjectives (e.g., *The window screen is ripped.*) or the progressive (*The faucet is leaking.*). Have learners create sentences orally or in writing.

Alternatively, give half of the class 2 or 3 vocabulary cards for *Household Items*. Give the other half of the class, 2 or 3 words from the *Adjectives* and *Verbs* categories. Have learners circulate around the room to find a match (e.g., *The paint is peeling.*). When they find a match, learners practise saying the sentence. Circulate and provide feedback on pronunciation as needed.

Vocabulary Cards: Household Problems



Nouns	Adjectives	Verbs
ants	broken	peel
mold	ripped	work
mice	noisy	lock
cockroaches	cracked	drip
hole	plugged	leak
garbage	dirty	make noise

Vocabulary Cards: Household Problems



ice	slippery	freeze (food)

Vocabulary Cards: Household Items



sink	faucet	toilet
neighbours	stove	paint
tiles	window screen	door lock
window	heating	elevator
security lights	ceiling fan	air conditioner
refrigerator	dishwasher	drain
smoke detector	oven	freezer
plunger	thermostat	

Learning Reflection: End of Module

Name: _____

Date: _____

Part One: Self-Assessment

Think about the skills you practised in this module. Put a check in the column that describes your ability.

	Yes!	I need some more practice.	This is hard!
I can understand simple instructions for solving a problem in my home.			
I can explain a problem to the landlord.			
I can make a polite request to have the problem fixed.			
I can use the topic vocabulary.			
I try to be an active reader (by asking questions before I start reading).			
I try to use strategies to figure out unfamiliar words.			
I can write a message to the landlord describing a problem and asking for a repair.			

Part Two: Learning Reflection

1. What is the most useful thing you learned in this unit?

2. Which activity was the most difficult? Why?

3. In the next unit, what could you do to help your learning?

Listening: Skill-Building and Skill-Using Activities

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Teaching Notes: Prior to this activity, learners may need to review sequence markers (*first, next, then*, etc.) and imperatives. They may also need practice recognizing and making inferences about the sequence of steps in instructions from other contextual clues.

Set Up:

1. Inform learners that they will be listening to a commercial about using a household product. To promote active listening, ask what type of information they would expect to hear before playing the commercial (e.g., what the product is and how to use it).
2. Play the commercial and ask learners to listen for the product and the instructions on how to use it. After listening, have them identify the number of steps (4 steps) and to repeat back the instructions they heard. Write each step mentioned on the board using the imperative. Point out the common use of imperatives with instructions.
 - Run a bit of water down the drain.
 - Add a cupful of Plugaway.
 - Leave it for one minute.
 - Run the water again.
3. With a partner, have learners practise saying the instructions using sequence markers at the beginning of each instruction. (e.g.; *First, run a bit of water down the drain; second or next ...; then ...; and finally...*). Circulate and complete in-the-moment feedback.
4. Listen to the commercial again. Discuss ways of recognizing and making inferences about the sequence of steps from other contextual clues.

Additional Practice Suggestions

Consider engaging learners in a class or small group discussion about ways to solve common housing problems such as removing a stain, removing calcium deposits from a tea kettle or iron, etc. Learners can then practise giving simple (3-5 step) instructions for solving the problem.

Transcript

Are you tired of plugged sinks all the time? Maybe it's time you tried Plugaway Drain Cleaner; the fast and easy way to unclog drains in seconds.

Plugaway is so easy to use! Just run a bit of water down the drain. Add a cupful of Plugaway. Leave it for one minute. Then run the water again. And presto; no more clogged drain!

If you're ready to throw your plunger away, try Plugaway today!

Instructions for Solving a Household Problem



Competency Area: Comprehending Instructions

Indicators of Ability: Identifies main idea, specific factual details and sequence

Teaching Notes: Incorporate practice of active listening strategies.

Set Up:

1. Explain what an infomercial is before the class listens to the audio text. Before playing the recording, promote active listening by asking learners to think about what information they expect to hear. Play the recording once and have learners answer the comprehension questions.
2. Play it a second time if needed so that learners can check their answers.

Assessment: Decide how answers will be given - discussed in a small group or taken up as a class. Consider having learners mark their own work and look for any patterns in error types when the answers are taken up. Based on the needs of learners, decide how to give feedback (individually, small group, or to the whole class), and what strategies to focus on to get the right answers in the future.

Answer key:

1. c 2. a 3. c 4. b 5. b 6. a 7. c

Transcript

There is probably nothing worse than having mice in your home! These cute little creatures can get into your food, cause damage to household wiring and spread diseases. So, here are some simple things you can do to get rid of mice.

First, try to figure out how the mice are getting into your home and then close up any holes.

Put all food away in closed containers until the mice problem is gone.

And finally buy some mouse traps, put a little bit of food into them and put them wherever the mice are most active like inside cupboards, in corners or along walls. So just follow these simple steps, and your mouse problems will be gone!

Instructions for Solving a Household Problem



Name: _____ Date: _____

Instructions: Listen to the infomercial and answer the questions.

1. The infomercial is mainly about ____.
 - a. How professionals get rid of mice
 - b. How mice can damage your home
 - c. How you can get rid of mice
2. The speaker describes mice as _____.
 - a. cute animals
 - b. kind animals
 - c. terrible creatures
3. Why are mice a problem?
 - a. They can bite you.
 - b. They are difficult to catch.
 - c. They can make you sick.
4. What is the first thing you should do if you find mice in your home?
 - a. get a cat
 - b. close all holes where they can get into your house
 - c. put food out for them
5. What is the next thing you should do?
 - a. Put all food into the cupboard.
 - b. Put all food into containers that mice can't get into.
 - c. Put all food in plastic bags.
6. What is a mouse trap used for?
 - a. To catch mice
 - b. To give mice some food
 - c. To keep mice active
7. What are the best places to put mouse traps?
 - a. In the living room
 - b. In front of doorways
 - c. In corners and cupboards



Teaching Notes: This activity focuses on the strategy of making predictions about a listening text to facilitate comprehension.

Set Up:

Part 1: Making predictions based on the structure of the conversation:

1. Inform learners that they will be listening to a telephone conversation between a landlord and a tenant reporting a problem. The recording will be stopped at regular intervals so that they can predict what type of information will come next.
2. Discuss the basic structure of the conversation (as noted by each of the pauses):
 - a. Identifying yourself
 - b. Stating the problem
 - c. Listening for possible suggestions
 - d. Making a polite request
 - e. Listening for the response

Part 2: Answering comprehension questions

1. After learners have identified each part of the conversation, play the full recording and have them complete the comprehension questions.
2. Take up the answers as a class. Discuss how using active listening may have helped their comprehension (e.g. knowing the number of speakers and their roles, making predictions based on the structure of the conversation, etc.)

Answer key:

1. c 2. b 3. a 4. a 5. c 6. b 7. a

Transcript

Mr. Jaffna: BDC Property Management. Mr. Jaffna speaking. [PAUSE]

Mrs. Lee: Hi. This is Mrs. Lee from apartment 1103.

Mr. Jaffna: Oh hi, Mrs. Lee. How can I help you? [PAUSE]

Mrs. Lee: I have a bit of an emergency. My toilet is plugged and I can't use it. I'm afraid the water will overflow if I flush it again. [PAUSE]

Mr. Jaffna: Oh wow. That's not good. Have you tried using a plunger?

Mrs. Lee: Yes, I tried that, but it's still plugged. [PAUSE] Could you please send someone to fix it? [PAUSE]

Mr. Jaffna: Yes, of course. I'll send someone right away.

Mrs. Lee: Thank you very much.

Mr. Jaffna: You're welcome.

Listening Strategies



Name: _____ Date: _____

Instructions: Listen to the conversation again and answer the questions.

1. Where is the problem?
 - a. In the kitchen
 - b. In the living room
 - c. In the bathroom
2. Mrs. Lee lives in apartment _____.
 - a. 1113
 - b. 1103
 - c. 1130
3. What is the problem?
 - a. Mrs. Lee's toilet isn't working.
 - b. Mrs. Lee doesn't have a plunger.
 - c. Mrs. Lee's sink is plugged.
4. Has Mrs. Lee tried to fix the problem herself?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
5. From Mrs. Lee's voice we can hear that she is _____.
 - a. Angry
 - b. Calm
 - c. Worried
6. When Mrs. Lee says, 'she has a bit of an emergency,' she means _____.
 - a. She has a serious problem and needs to call 911.
 - b. She has a problem that needs to be fixed right away.
 - c. She has a small problem that can be fixed later.
7. Mr. Jaffna says he will fix the problem _____.
 - a. Immediately
 - b. Tomorrow
 - c. On another day

Speaking: Skill-Building and Skill-Using Activities

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Reporting a Problem with Neighbours



Teaching Notes: For the dialogue practice, learners practise intonation for being polite, clear and firm.

Set Up:

1. Distribute the sentence strips (see next page) and in pairs, have learners organize the dialogue into a logical order. Take up as a class.
2. Discuss the tenant's intonation so that the request is polite and firm rather than rude or abrupt. Identifying the words or phrase that create a respectful tone.
3. Have learners practise the dialogue, taking turns playing each role.
4. Circulate and provide in-the-moment feedback on intonation and pronunciation as needed.

Reporting a Problem with Neighbours



Mr. Aziz:	Hi. I'm sorry to bother you. I'm Mr. Aziz from apartment 403.
Superintendent:	Hi Mr. Aziz. How can I help you?
Mr. Aziz:	I've been having a lot of problems with the people living in the apartment above me.
Superintendent:	What seems to be the problem?
Mr. Aziz:	Well, they play their music late into the night, their dog is always barking and yesterday I saw them throw garbage off the balcony. I wonder if you could talk to them?
Superintendent:	Oh, my goodness! I'm sorry to hear that. Of course. I'll speak to them right away.
Mr. Aziz:	Thank you. I appreciate that.
Superintendent:	You're very welcome.

Describing Problems and Making Requests



Teaching Notes: This activity consists of two parts: making requests and answering questions to describe problems.

Set Up:

Part 1: Making Requests

1. Brainstorm some possible expressions for making requests including: *Could you ...; Would you mind ... (+ gerund); Can you....* Point out that using *can* makes the request more direct and, while appropriate, may be less suitable than using *could* or *would you mind...?*
2. Discuss ways of expressing urgency (e.g., using words/phrases like (fix) *right away*; using descriptive adjectives as in *serious* (problem); also using tone of voice to convey urgency.
3. Inform learners that they will be practising giving descriptions of various problems and making requests of the landlord in small groups. Distribute sets of the problem cards (see next page) to each group of 3-4 learners. Place the cards upside down in the center of the table. Each learner draws a card when it is their turn, describes the problem on their card and makes a polite request to another learner in the group. The group then decides if the information was clear and the request was polite. Learners can also practise making some of the requests sound more urgent.

Part 2: Answering Questions to Describe Problems

1. Post the following landlord questions on the board: *When did it start? How long have you had the problem? or How did it happen?*
2. Have learners work in pairs (one person can be the landlord and the other, the tenant). Using the same problem cards, have learners/tenants practise asking and answering questions about the problem
3. Circulate and provide in-the-moment feedback on politeness/urgency and sufficient content.



The heating in the apartment isn't working.	There is water dripping from the ceiling.
One of the windows is broken.	The balcony door doesn't lock.
The door to the underground parking garage isn't closing.	The window screen in the bedroom is ripped.
There are cockroaches in the apartment.	The front door to the building isn't locking properly.

Reporting a Problem to the Landlord



Competency Area: Getting Things Done

Indicators of Ability: Opens/closes the conversation, uses appropriate vocabulary to describe a housing problem, makes a polite request.

Teaching Notes: Review the steps of a request as well as expressions for polite requests. If not already posted, consider posting the expressions so learners can reference if needed. Consider having learners record the role plays so they can listen back for self-assessment.

Set Up:

1. Organize the class into groups of three. Inform learners that they will alternate playing the role of landlord, tenant and peer observer giving feedback.
2. Explain the instructions for the role-play and expectations using the Indicators of Ability above. Note that these are found on the peer feedback form. Ensure that the peer observer is clear about what to do and how to complete the feedback form.
3. Distribute the role cards on the next page: one card for the landlord, four problem cards (placed face down on the table) and three peer feedback forms.
4. Learners begin by determining who will play each role for the first role play. The learner playing the role of the tenant picks one of the problem cards and then begins the role play. Learners doing the peer feedback will observe and complete the *Peer Feedback Checklist* for the learner playing the role of the tenant.
5. Once the first role play has been completed (with peer feedback), have learners switch roles so that each person has had a chance to play each role.

Assessment:

Choose the approach that best suits the needs of learners, for example:

1. This activity uses peer feedback. Ensure that time is given for peers to share and review feedback.
2. Circulate and make observations during the role plays. Use a simple class checklist to record your observations. Identify any issues that need additional targeted practice. You may want to review the peer feedback.
3. In a class discussion, have learners identify specific issues they feel they need more practice with.



Role play (**LANDLORD**)

1. Hello _____. How can I help you?

Tenant: _____

2. I'm sorry to hear that. When did the problem start?

Tenant: _____

3. Okay, I will call someone to come as soon as possible.

Tenant: _____

4. You're welcome.

Role play (**RENTER**)

Problem: faucet is dripping

Concerns: wastes water,
noisy, annoying

How Long: 1 week

Role play (**RENTER**)

Problem: ants in the kitchen

Concerns: might get into the
food

How Long: a few days

Role play (**RENTER**)

Problem: stove not working

Concerns: can't cook

How Long: since yesterday

Role play (**RENTER**)

Problem: Outside security lights
not working

Concerns: safety at night

How Long: two days

Reporting a Problem to a Landlord - Role play

Peer Feedback: Listen to your classmate describe a problem to a landlord and make a request. Give feedback to your classmate.



Name of speaker: _____

Peer: _____

Peer Feedback Checklist	Yes ✓	No ✓
Your classmate:		
• Greeted the landlord		
• Identified themselves and gave their location		
• Said what the problem is		
• Made a polite request		
• Closed the conversation		

Peer Feedback: Listen to your classmate describe a problem to a landlord and make a request. Give feedback to your classmate.



Name of speaker: _____

Peer: _____

Peer Feedback Checklist	Yes ✓	No ✓
Your classmate:		
• Greeted the landlord		
• Identified themselves and gave their location		
• Said what the problem is		
• Made a polite request		
• Closed the conversation		

Reading: Skill-Building and Skill-Using Activities

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Inferring the Meanings of Unknown Words



Set Up:

1. Discuss the importance of using context clues to help understand the meaning of unknown words. Some options include:
 - **READING BEYOND THE WORD/PHRASE** and using the context for additional information or clues to make a good guess
 - **EXAMPLES and EXPLANATIONS:** looking for examples/explanations that follow the unknown word/phrase. Looking for words that indicate examples (*for example, e.g., such as, like*) or information in parenthesis after the word
 - **SYNONYMS or ANTONYMS:** looking for words that are the same as or opposite in meaning to the unknown word.

Consider posting these in some permanent place for easy reference.

2. Distribute the handout. Have learners work with a partner or in small groups to discuss and write the meanings of the underlined words as well as the strategies they used to figure them out.
3. When finished, consider having partners/small groups compare their answers. Discuss any outstanding questions. Alternately, take up the answers in a large group discussion. Provide additional practice making inferences as needed.

Answer Key (Strategies):

Paragraph 1:

Grimy: [SYNONYM] the first sentence includes the word *dirty*.

Paragraph 2:

Unpleasant odor: [SYNONYM AND ANTONYM] *bad smell* in sentence after the word is synonymous with *unpleasant odor*.

Paragraph 3:

Squeaking: [READING BEYOND THE WORD] *This should stop the noise*. This use of *this* refers to squeaking and the sentence defines *squeaking*

Lubricant: [EXAMPLES] of lubricants are given. The use of *like* indicates that examples will follow.

Reading: Inferring the Meanings of Unknown Words



Name: _____

Date: _____

Instructions: Read each paragraph below about how to solve different housing problems. In your group or with a partner, talk about what each underlined word means and what strategy you used to figure it out.

1. Dirty tiles on shower walls is a common problem. Here is a natural solution for getting rid of grimy shower tiles. Rub the tiles with baking soda. Then spray them with a mixture of one cup water and one cup vinegar using a spray bottle. Wait a few minutes and scrub the tiles with a brush.

Grimy: _____

Strategy: _____

2. Do you have an unpleasant odor coming from your kitchen sink? You can get rid of that bad smell by pouring 1/4 cup of baking soda into the drain, followed by one cup of vinegar. Let that sit for about two hours and then slowly pour some boiling water down the drain. After 15 minutes, run some cold water. And once again, your kitchen drain will smell fresh and clean!

Unpleasant odor _____

Strategy: _____

3. If you want to stop a door from squeaking, you can use a lubricant like cooking oil, wax from a candle, a bar of soap or even some butter! This will stop the noise.

Squeaking _____

Strategy: _____

Lubricant _____

Strategy: _____

Reading a Notice from the Landlord



Teaching Notes: In this activity learners are practising active reading as well as inferring the meaning of unknown words/phrases from the context.

Set Up:

1. Before handing out the text and task, promote active reading by having learners brainstorm typical questions they can ask before reading an informational text:
 - a. *What is the purpose of the text?*
 - b. *Are there important details I need to remember?* (e.g., date, time, etc.)
 - c. *Is there any action I need to take?*These questions will help focus their reading and improve comprehension when reading notices outside the classroom.
2. Hand out the reading text (*Important Notice*). Have learners scan the text and put the letter *a*, *b* and *c* next to the information in the text that corresponds to each question above.
3. Distribute the comprehension questions which focus on word meaning and tone. Have learners work with a partner or in small groups to discuss the questions.
 - a. Take up the answers as a large group and discuss the strategies learners used to determine word meaning in #2, 3 and 4.
 - b. Refer to questions 5 and 6 and engage learners in a class discussion on how the language (and punctuation) used in a written or oral text indicates the mood and attitude of the writer/speaker. For example, the tone of this notice is one of anger and frustration indicated by phrases like *completely unacceptable! Anyone caught may be evicted*. It is also indicated through the use of exclamation marks and bold text. Learners could circle all of the items that indicate mood and attitude in the text.

Additional Practice Suggestions:

Have learners bring notices posted in their rental units to discuss in class. The three self-guiding questions above can provide the focus. Learners can also discuss the tone of the notice and how the writer created the tone. The findings could be shared in small groups.

Answer Key

1. a
2. c
3. b
4. a
5. *completely unacceptable! Please use them! Anyone caught ... may be evicted.*

Reading a Notice from the Landlord



Name: _____

Date: _____

Instructions: Read the notice and answer the questions.

Identifying the Meaning of Unknown Words/Phrases

1. *It has come to our attention* in this notice means _____.
 - a. one (or more) tenants probably complained about the problem
 - b. the landlord is evicting some tenants
 - c. the landlord is trying to get the reader's attention
2. What does the word *proper* in the sentence... "not putting their garbage in the *proper* containers" mean?
 - a. wrong
 - b. clean
 - c. correct
3. The word *evicted* means tenants might be _____.
 - a. asked to pick up their garbage
 - b. asked to leave their apartment
 - c. asked to stop leaving their garbage in the stairwell

Identifying Tone:

4. How would you describe the tone of this message?
 - a. angry and serious
 - b. scared and worried
 - c. sad and depressed
5. Which words/phrases in the notice do you think indicate the tone?

IMPORTANT NOTICE



It has come to our attention that some tenants are not putting their garbage in the proper containers. We have found bags of garbage in the stairwell, near the back door and even in the laundry room.

This is completely unacceptable!

There are large garbage bins behind the building. Please use them! Anyone caught leaving bags of trash in any other areas of the building may be evicted!

The Landlord

Competency Area: Getting Things Done

Indicators of Ability: Understands the main idea; Finds factual details; Recognizes mood and attitude from the tone of the message; Makes Inferences about unfamiliar words/phrases.

Teaching Notes: The note to the landlord provides an exemplar of the kind of note they will be working on in the Writing section of this module.

Set Up:

1. If needed, review the reading strategies practised in class before learners do the activity.
2. Remind them to read the whole text through to the end before beginning to answer the questions.
3. After completing the assessment, engage learners in a discussion about the language used in the note that indicates the seriousness of the situation and the urgency to have it fixed. Also, talk about the importance of establishing the right tone for communicating about a problem. Not all problems are urgent and it's important that the tone be appropriate for the type of problem being reported.

Assessment:

Consider having learners correct their own work. They should not erase their mistakes. Explain that this is a good strategy because it allows them to see where the errors are and note any patterns in the errors.

Answer Key

1. c
2. b
3. a
4. b
5. a
6. c
7. b
8. a

Reading a Note to the Landlord



Name: _____

Date: _____

Instructions: Read the note to the landlord and answer the questions.

1. What is the problem?
 - a. The tenant's baby is sick.
 - b. The tenant doesn't know how the thermostat works.
 - c. The tenant's apartment is very cold.
2. When someone says, "*I am writing to inform you*" they are _____.
 - a. giving a suggestion
 - b. giving information
 - c. making a request
3. From the tone of this message, we could say the problem is _____.
 - a. Very serious
 - b. Not very serious
 - c. Not serious at all
4. What did Ana do to try and solve the problem?
 - a. She called someone to fix the thermostat.
 - b. She adjusted the thermostat.
 - c. She tried getting another thermostat.
5. How is Ana feeling?
 - a. concerned
 - b. angry
 - c. sick
6. If the temperature *drops* it means it is _____.
 - a. going to get warmer
 - b. going to stay the same
 - c. going to get colder
7. What does Ana say to make a polite request?
 - a. Fix it right away, please.
 - b. Could you please call someone to have it fixed right away?
 - c. Can you call someone right away?
8. When Ana says, *Thank you for your immediate attention to this matter*, she means _____.
 - a. Thank you for trying to solve my problem right away.
 - b. Thank you for letting me tell you about my problem.
 - c. Thank you for reading this message.

January 12, 2020

Dear Mr. Sanchez,

My name is Ana Brasio and I live in apartment 307. I am writing to inform you that there has been no heat in my apartment since yesterday. I tried adjusting the thermostat, but nothing happened. Could you please call someone to have it fixed right away?

The temperature is going to drop to minus 10 degrees tonight. I have a three-month-old baby and I am very worried she will get sick.

Thank you for your immediate attention to this matter.

Sincerely

Ana Brasio

647-555-1234

Writing: Skill-Building and Skill-Using Activities

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Writing a Note to a Landlord	47

Structuring Written Requests to the Landlord



Teaching Notes: The purpose of this activity is to create awareness around key information, the sequence of information and how to make a request when reporting a problem.

Set Up:

1. Give each pair or small group of learners a set of cut up sentence strips and have them sort the note to the landlord into the correct order.
2. When learners have completed the activity, identify the structure of and key information in the note – date, addressee, purpose, brief explanation/description of concern, request, closing, name and contact information. Consider posting this information for future reference. Point out that business correspondence in Canada is direct and often begins with the writer stating the purpose of the message up front.
3. Considering the needs of the learners, decide whether to debrief as a group or have two groups compare their results and then debrief any questions that arise.

Additional Practice Suggestions

1. Register: Learners can analyze the note for politeness and locate words/expressions that the writer uses to make it polite.
2. Urgency: Learners can determine how urgent the request is and the language used to indicate urgency. Consider brainstorming additional phrases they can use to convey urgency.

Structuring Written Requests to the Landlord



August 16, 2020

Dear Mr. Minelo,

I am writing to inform you that my refrigerator hasn't been working properly for the last three days.

The temperature in the refrigerator isn't cold enough to keep my food from spoiling. Today I noticed that the freezer isn't working properly either and some of my food has thawed.

Could you please call someone to come and take a look at it as soon as possible? I'm concerned that all of my food will go bad if the refrigerator isn't fixed right away.

Thank you very much,

Sylvia Tunis

Apartment 711

555-234-6699

Stating a Purpose and Making a Request to the Landlord



Teaching Notes: This activity can be done in two parts.

Set Up:

Part 1

1. Write some housing problems on the board that can be used for the brainstorming activities that follow (e.g., window screen is ripped; the fan in the bathroom isn't working; the front door to the building isn't locking properly).
2. Create a blank 3-column chart with the headings: *Stating the Purpose*, *Making a Request*, *Conveying Urgency*. In a class discussion, brainstorm:
 - a. phrases learners could use for stating the purpose using the previous household problems. Mention that we often provide a reason why the problem should be resolved (e.g., The window screen is ripped. Bugs can come in.).
 - b. phrases for making a polite request.
 - c. language that can be used to convey a sense of urgency.

Have learners copy the chart into their notes.

Stating the Purpose	Making a Request	Conveying Urgency
I am writing to inform you... I am writing because there is a problem in my apartment. <i>Identify problem</i>	Could you please ... Would you mind (+ gerund) I wonder if you could ...	I hope you can fix it as soon as possible . Could you please send someone right away ?

3. Have learners complete the handout that follows. Consider having them work with a partner to complete the first scenario (dishwasher not working), and then working on their own before sharing their ideas with their partner. Encourage them to use different phrases for each of the three requests.
4. Circulate while learners are completing the activity and provide in-the-moment feedback on wording, tone, punctuation, etc. Take the answers up in a large group discussion or by having individual learners write their sentences on the board.

Part 2

1. In small groups, have learners review their requests to determine which problems require an urgent fix. Have them rewrite the request conveying a strong sense of urgency while still being polite.
2. Circulate and provide in-the-moment feedback. Have small groups compare their answers with each other.

Stating a Purpose and Making a Request to the Landlord



Instructions: For each picture below, write the opening sentence of a note explaining why you are writing – the purpose. Then make a polite request to have the problem fixed.



Dishwasher- Not working

State purpose:

Make a request:



Paint in the bathroom- Peeling

State purpose:

Make a request:



Window- Cracked

State purpose:

Make a request:

Writing a Note to a Landlord



Competency Area: Getting Things Done

Indicators of Ability: Describes problem and makes a polite request; Uses proper format for the message

Teaching Notes: Choose a problem from the previous list of housing problems (see previous skill-building activity) to practise writing a note to the landlord. Depending on learners' needs, consider first completing one note together as a class or provide an exemplar to review.

Set Up:

1. Write the housing problem on the board.
2. Review the expressions for stating the purpose, making the request, and conveying urgency (if appropriate) as well as the structure of a written business note as needed.

Additional Practice Suggestions:

If learners have access to a computer lab, they could complete this task as an email.

Assessment:

When learners have completed the writing activity, they can exchange their work with a partner for peer feedback using the handout. Note: Have the peer use the numbered criteria in the peer feedback form to locate the corresponding information in their partner's writing (e.g. they put #1 next to the reason for writing, etc.) to ensure that the message is clear and complete.

Also consider reviewing the writing and the peer feedback and make additional notes if needed. Make notes for future lessons. If additional practice is required, repeat this task with a different topic.

Writing a Note to a Landlord



Instructions: Write a note to tell the landlord the problem in your apartment. Remember to:

- _____ Give your name and apartment number
- _____ Say why you are writing at the beginning of the message
- _____ Explain why it is important
- _____ Make a polite request
- _____ Include all parts: date, opening, closing, signature

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

_____:

Writing a Note to a Landlord



Peer Feedback: Note to a landlord about a problem.

Name _____ Date _____

Peer's Name _____

Each item is numbered. Find the information in your partner's writing and put the number by the information.

1. Your partner said why they are writing the message at the beginning
2. Described the problem
3. Made a polite request
4. Included their name and location

Read the whole note again. Is the information clear?

Yes some problems needs work



Peer Feedback: Note to a landlord about a problem.

Name _____ Date _____

Peer's Name _____

Each item is numbered. Find the information in your partner's writing and put the number by the information.

1. Your partner said why they are writing the message at the beginning
2. Described the problem
3. Made a polite request
4. Included their name and location

Read the whole note again. Is the information clear?

Yes some problems needs work

Assessment Tasks: Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing

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Preparation for Assessment Tasks



Each assessment task is the culmination of the SB activities and SU tasks in the module. They are to be completed independently.

Set Up: Review the task, instructions for completion and criteria for success when introducing the task to learners.

Feedback:

Productive Tasks:

Provide feedback that is simple and direct – focussing on a few key items the learner can do to improve communication. Consider providing class time for learners to review and, if appropriate, implement the action-oriented feedback given. While learners are doing this, circulate and provide individual support as needed. Ask learners to show you when work is completed. If a common issue surfaces, consider giving a clarifying, mini lesson on the area that learners are having difficulty with.

Consider having learners use the assessment tool for self-assessment before they hand in their work. Learners insert their initials in the appropriate column (not yet/meets expectations) beside each criterion – or writing “not sure” if appropriate.

Receptive Tasks:

In addition to the formal assessment provided on the assessment task, provide feedback on any error patterns noticed. Depending on the needs of learners, give feedback as a group or individually. Consider returning the marked task and text to allow learners to review their answers individually or in small groups, perhaps discussing the strategies they used to find the answer promoting peers as instructional resources

Listening Assessment Task Answer Key

1. b 2. a 3. b 4. a
5. c 6. a 7. c
8. ✓ Watch a video explaining how to use the oven
 ✓ Ask a friend to help

Reading Assessment Task Answer Key

1. Water shut off in the building
2. b
3. turn off the faucets in their apartments
4. 555-321-8866
5. no
6. a
7. c



Listening Assessment Transcript

Lena: My new place is great. I just love it! If only I could figure out how to get the oven to work.

Habiba: Oh, did you check the user manual?

Lena: No, I don't have one.

Habiba: Well maybe you could get the landlord to show you how to turn it on.

Lena: Hm, I don't know. I'm kind of embarrassed to ask her. I'm sure it's something really simple.

Habiba: What about looking online. Sometimes there are videos that show you how to do things.

Lena: That's a good idea. I could try that.

Habiba: I wish I lived closer to help you out. Sophie lives near you. Why not ask her to come over? Maybe she can get it going.

Lena: Good idea. Thanks for the suggestions.

Listening to a Household Problem



Module Topic: Dealing with Household Problems

CLB 3 ☐ or **CLB 4** ☐

Competency Area: Getting Things Done

Criteria: Get the main idea (#1); identify details (#3, 7); make inferences (# 2, 4, 5, 6, 8)

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

Instructions: Listen to part of a telephone conversation between Lena and Habiba. Lena is telling Habiba about a problem she is having in her apartment. Answer the questions.

Part 1 for CLB 3 and 4:

1. What is Lena's problem?
 - a. Lena's oven is broken.
 - b. Lena doesn't know how to turn the oven on.
 - c. Lena doesn't have an oven.
2. How long do you think has Lena lived in her apartment?
 - a. She moved in recently.
 - b. She has been there a long time.
3. Lena says, "If only I could figure out how to get the oven to work." What does *figure out* mean?
 - a. use
 - b. understand
 - c. find
4. Why doesn't Lena want to talk to the landlord?
 - a. The landlord might think she isn't very intelligent.
 - b. The landlord might think she broke the oven.
 - c. She doesn't want to bother the landlord.

Listening to a Household Problem



Part 2 for CLB 4:

5. What is a *user manual*?
 - a. Information about how to use an appliance
 - b. Information about the tenant
 - c. Information about the apartment
6. Why can't Habiba help Lena?
 - a. She doesn't know how to solve the problem.
 - b. She is too busy to help Lena.
 - c. She lives far away.
7. Put a ✓ beside the suggestions below that Lena thinks are the best. **(2 pts.)**

- _____ Watch a video explaining how to use the oven
- _____ Read the instructions
- _____ Talk to the landlord
- _____ Ask a friend to help

TASK SUCCESS		Your Score
CLB 3	3 out of 4 in Part 1.	/4
CLB 4	3 out of 4 in Part 1 and	/4
	3 out of 4 in Part 2.	/4

Reporting a Problem to a Landlord



Instructions: The instructor plays the role of the landlord; however, this role play can also be done as a pair activity with some adjustments. Learners are expected to talk about one of the problems below.

For CLB 3: Role play (LANDLORD)

Note: There may be variations in the actual dialogue depending on how learners respond. However, the dialogue must include a description of the problem and a polite request to have the problem fixed.

Landlord: Hello, MYK Management. Mrs./Mr. Smith speaking. How can I help you?

Tenant: *[states problem and request.]*

Landlord: I'm sorry to hear that. I will call someone to come as soon as possible. What is your name and apartment number?

Tenant: *[gives name and apartment number]*

Landlord: Thank you.

For CLB 3:

Role play a conversation with your partner. You are the **RENTER**.

Problem: security lights in parking lot not working

For CLB 3:

Role play a conversation with your partner. You are the **RENTER**.

Problem: mold in the bathroom

Reporting a Problem to a Landlord



Instructions: The instructor plays the role of the landlord; however, this role play can also be done as a pair activity with some adjustments. Learners are expected to talk about one of the problems below.

CLB 4: Role play (LANDLORD)

Note: There may be variations in the actual dialogue depending on how learners respond. However, the dialogue must include a description of the problem, why it is a concern and a polite request to have the problem fixed.

Landlord: Hello, MYK Management. Mrs./Mr. Smith speaking. How can I help you?

Tenant: *[The learner may identify him/herself with name and apartment number but must state the problem, the concern and a polite request.]*

Landlord: When did you first notice this problem?

Tenant: *[gives information]*

Landlord: Okay, I will call someone to come as soon as possible. Can you give me your name and apartment number again?

Tenant: *[gives info and thanks the landlord]*

Landlord: You're welcome.

For CLB 4:

Role play a conversation with your partner. You are the **RENTER**.

Problem: security lights outside aren't working

Concerns: not safe

Length of time: yesterday

For CLB 4:

Role play a conversation with your partner. You are the **RENTER**.

Problem: mold in the bathroom

Concerns: family's health

Length of time: 1 month

Reporting a Problem to a Landlord



Module Topic: Dealing with Household Problems

Competency Area: Getting Things Done

Name: _____

Date: _____

Instructions: Role play reporting a problem to a landlord and making a polite request to solve the problem.

SPEAKING: CLB 3 or CLB 4		Meets	Not yet
*Content: CLB 3: gives a description of the problem. CLB 4: gives description of the problem and states concern			
*Request: CLB 3/4: Makes a polite request			
Vocabulary CLB 3: Tries to use some key vocabulary to state and describe the problem. CLB 4: Adequate use of vocabulary to state and describe the problem.			
Sentence Structure: CLB 3- uses some short simple sentences CLB 4- uses several connected sentences to describe problem			
TASK SUCCESS: CLB 3/4: Meets 3 out of 4 criteria. Must include starred (*) items.			
Doing well:		Next time:	

Reading a Short Notice from a Landlord



Module Topic: Dealing with Household Problems

Competency Area: Getting Things Done

Criteria: Get main idea (#1) and identify details (#3, 4); make inferences (#2, 5, 6)

NAME _____ **DATE** _____

Instructions: Read a notice from a landlord and answer questions. Spelling and grammar are not marked.

Part 1 for CLB 3 and 4:

1. What is the notice about? _____
2. *Please be advised* means the writer is _____.
 - a. giving advice
 - b. giving information
 - c. asking permission
3. What do the tenants have to do? _____
4. What number can they call if they have any questions? _____

Part 2 for CLB 4:

5. Can tenants use the toilet? Yes No
6. When someone says, "*Thank you for your cooperation,*" it means _____.
 - a. Thank you for helping me solve a problem
 - b. Thank you for being so kind
 - c. Thank you for being a tenant here
7. *Routine maintenance* means _____.
 - a. Not fixing a problem until it gets worse
 - b. Fixing a serious problem that has never happened before
 - c. Checking and fixing things regularly (e.g., every month) to prevent a problem

TASK SUCCESS		Your Score
CLB 3	3 out of 4 in Part 1.	/4
CLB 4	3 out of 4 in Part 1 and	/4
	2 out of 3 in Part 2.	/3



NOTICE

Please be advised that the water will be shut off in the building on:

Thursday, July 24th

from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

We will be doing routine maintenance and inspections on our water tanks. Please make sure all faucets in your apartment are turned OFF at that time.

If you have any questions, please contact the building management office.

Thank you for your cooperation and we apologize for any inconvenience.

Building Management
555-321-8866

Writing a Message to a Landlord



Module Topic: Dealing with Household Problems

Competency Area: Getting Things Done

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

Instructions: Your landlord is Ron Smith. The elevator is broken. Write a message and ask him to fix it.

CLB 3: Writing is up to 5 sentences **CLB 4:** Writing is up to a paragraph

WRITING: CLB 3 or CLB 4		Not yet	Meets expectations
Content: Includes all relevant information CLB 3: Includes personal information, identifies the problem, and makes a request. CLB 4: Includes personal information, identifies the problem, gives a reason for fixing the problem and makes a request.			
Format: Uses the proper format for a business message CLB 3/4: Includes date, polite opening and closing			
Vocabulary CLB 3: Uses some simple, everyday vocabulary and module words CLB 4: Uses a good range of simple, everyday vocabulary and module words			
Grammar: CLB 3: Some control of simple sentences CLB 4: Adequate control of simple sentences and may include some coordinated clauses			
Doing well:	Next time:		

TASK SUCCESS:

CLB 3 and 4: Meets expectations on 3/4 criteria Must include all relevant information	Your score: /4 Includes all relevant information Yes No
--	---