

C1: Annoying Habits

Lead-in:

Has anything in particular been getting on your nerves recently? At home? In the street? On public transport?

Expressing Annoyance

Look at the sentences with different structures and expressions to express annoyance.

1. He's **always** leaving his clothes on the floor.
2. She **keeps** forgetting to lock the door.
3. I **wish you wouldn't** play music so loudly at night.
4. I'd **rather he didn't** use my things without asking.
5. **It drives me up the wall when** people leave dirty dishes in the sink.
6. **I can't stand it when** my flatmate talks on the phone for hours.
7. **Would you mind** cleaning up after yourself for once?
8. **She acts as if** she's the only person living here.

Can you apply any of these expressions to the things you mentioned in the lead-in?

Reading & Conversation

Read the texts and discuss the situations.

1. The "I'll Do It Later" Person

"Honestly, the thing that drives me mad is when my flatmate says they'll do something later, and then just... never does it. Like, if you leave your dishes in the sink for three days, that's not 'later' anymore, that's basically interior decoration. And the annoying part is they act surprised when I bring it up. Apparently, I'm the unreasonable one because I don't enjoy living in what looks like the aftermath of a student party. I swear, if procrastination were an Olympic sport, they'd win gold without even training."

Questions

1. What household habits annoy you the most?
2. Do you think some people naturally have different standards of cleanliness?
3. How long is it acceptable to leave dishes in the sink?
4. Is it better to confront someone immediately about annoying habits or ignore them?
5. Have you ever lived with someone whose lifestyle was very different from yours?

2. Thermostat Wars

"My partner and I have completely different ideas about what counts as a normal temperature indoors. I'm convinced she's secretly part reptile because she keeps the heating on even when it's warm outside. I'll walk into the living room sweating like I've just run a marathon, and she'll be sitting there wrapped in a blanket saying, 'It's freezing in here.' Freezing? We could grow tropical plants in this flat. At this point, our energy bill needs its own bank account."

Questions

1. Are you usually too hot or too cold at home?

2. Have you ever argued with someone about air conditioning or heating?
 3. Should the person paying more bills have more control over the temperature?
 4. What's more important: comfort or saving energy?
 5. Do couples and housemates need rules to avoid arguments about shared spaces?
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3. The Loud Cleaner

"I appreciate that my boyfriend likes cleaning. I really do. But why does he always decide to vacuum at the worst possible moment? Sunday morning, 8 a.m., when everyone else in the building is unconscious? Perfect time for industrial-level noise, apparently. And he doesn't just clean normally either. He cleans aggressively. It sounds like he's trying to remove the floor itself. Meanwhile, I'm lying in bed wondering if this is how I die."

Questions

1. What time is too early to do noisy housework?
 2. Would you rather live with a messy person or an overly tidy person?
 3. Do you think people should change their routines to avoid disturbing others?
 4. Have you ever had noisy neighbours or housemates?
 5. Is being considerate more important than being productive in shared living situations?
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4. Passive-Aggressive Notes

"My housemate has this incredibly irritating habit of leaving little notes around the flat instead of just speaking to people like a normal human being. You'll open the fridge and see something like, 'Some people should remember milk doesn't magically replace itself :)' with a smiley face that somehow makes it worse. If you've got a problem with me, just say it directly. Don't turn the kitchen into some kind of sarcastic office environment."

Questions

1. Which is worse: direct confrontation or passive-aggressive behaviour?
 2. Why do some people avoid saying things directly?
 3. Have you ever received a passive-aggressive message or note?
 4. What's the best way to deal with conflict at home?
 5. Do you think honesty sometimes creates more problems than it solves?
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5. The Endless Phone Calls

"My girlfriend calls her friends every single evening, and somehow every conversation becomes a three-hour podcast. The problem isn't even the talking. It's that she speaks at exactly the same volume whether the person's in the room or on another continent. I'll be trying to watch TV, read, work, think — impossible. And every call ends the same way. She says, 'Okay, I'll let you go,' then continues talking for another forty minutes. It's honestly impressive."

Questions

1. Do you enjoy long phone calls, or do you prefer texting?
2. How much quiet time do people need at home?
3. Should people change their behaviour when they live with others?

4. What's the most annoying public or household phone habit?
 5. Is it rude to ask someone to be quieter in their own home?
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6. Kitchen Experiments

"My partner keeps trying these complicated recipes they find online, which sounds great in theory. The problem is the kitchen looks like a crime scene afterwards. There'll be flour on the ceiling somehow, seventeen dirty pans, and ingredients I've never even heard of just lying around. And after spending four hours cooking, they'll make me try something called 'deconstructed mushroom foam' when all I wanted was pasta. I miss normal food. I miss visible countertops."

Questions

1. Do you enjoy cooking, or do you see it as a chore?
2. How much mess is acceptable when someone cooks for other people?
3. Would you rather eat simple food every day or try unusual dishes?
4. Have you ever pretended to enjoy someone's cooking?
5. Do social media and food trends make people overcomplicate cooking?

Expressions & Conversation

Guess the meaning from the context.

1. I had to **bite my tongue** when my flatmate blamed me for the mess he'd made himself.
 - a. In what situations do you have to bite your tongue?
 - b. Are you good at keeping quiet? Or do you find it difficult?
2. My partner **gave me the silent treatment** for two days when I broke her favorite mug.
 - a. Do you think the silent treatment is an effective way to deal with conflict?
 - b. What's a healthier way to show you're upset with someone?
3. He **hogs the bathroom** every morning, so I'm always late for work.
 - a. What annoying habits do people have in shared spaces?
 - b. How would you deal with someone who takes too long in the bathroom?
4. During lockdown, we started **living in each other's pockets**, and every little habit became annoying.
 - a. Do you think people need personal space to have a good relationship?
 - b. How much time is too much time to spend together?
5. My housemate and I constantly **clash over** how clean the flat should be.
 - a. Do you think people should adapt to each other's habits when living together?
 - b. What household rules are important in shared accommodation?
6. The constant tapping noise he makes with his pen really **does my head in** when I'm trying to concentrate.
 - a. What small noises or habits annoy you the most?
 - b. Are you easily distracted when you work or study?
7. Everyone else was cleaning up after dinner while he sat on the sofa and **didn't lift a finger**.
 - a. How important is it to share household chores equally?
 - b. Have you ever lived with someone lazy?
8. Whenever my brother cooks, he **leaves a trail of destruction** in the kitchen.
 - a. Are you a tidy or messy cook?
 - b. Would you rather cook or clean up afterwards?
9. I usually apologise first just to **keep the peace**, even if I'm not wrong.
 - a. Is it better to avoid conflict or be completely honest?
 - b. Have you ever apologised just to end an argument?
10. Ever since they started arguing, everyone in the house has been **walking on eggshells** around them.
 - a. Have you ever been in an uncomfortable atmosphere because of other people's arguments?

b. What's the best way to deal with tension in a group or household?