

UNDERSTANDING RENTAL AGREEMENTS

Lesson Length: 1.5 hours + Extension Activity

Vocabulary & Expressions: Lease, security deposit, utilities, tenant/landlord responsibilities, and other words related to lease agreements

Language/Culture Point: Tenant's rights

Objective: Students will be able to understand and interpret common rental agreements

Materials: Example leases, red/green/yellow Signal Cards, Tenant Scenario Cards, graphic organizer, *leasing/housing resources from guest speaker*



Note: This lesson requires you to use the provided lease template to create several examples to be used throughout the lesson. When creating the example leases using the provided template, they can be modified based on the proficiency of your students. Information can be added or removed, and important details are in bold in the template, should you want to alter them to create more challenging examples for more proficient students. The activity can be modified to reflect any changes, as well. Additionally, create example leases that reflect the cost of living in your community. Blank scenario cards are also provided in case you would like to create additional scenarios.

STEP 1: ACTIVATE BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE

Time Frame	Materials	Teaching Strategies
5 minutes		- Brainstorming

TEACHING ACTIVITY

1. Write the words “rent” and “lease” on the board. Ask the students if they have ever rented or leased anything. Ask what it means to rent or lease. If none of the students know, explain to them that they mean to pay money to borrow or use something for a period of time.
2. As a class, brainstorm examples of what can be rented or leased, and create a list on the board. Common examples include: houses, apartments, hotel rooms, vehicles (long-term leases and short-term rentals), moving trucks, parking spots (in large cities), tools, and movies. College students can now even rent textbooks!
3. Ask if anyone in the class rents their home.

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STEP 2: MINI-PRESENTATION WITH PROMPT

Time Frame	Materials	Teaching Strategies
10 minutes	- Example Lease 	- Chalk Talk - Authentic Materials

TEACHING ACTIVITY

- Using Chalk Talk, tell a story about the last home that you rented. If possible, provide copies of your lease to your students so that they can follow along. Be sure to remove or change any sensitive information you don't want your students to have. If you don't have a copy of your lease, use the provided template to create a lease that goes along with the story.
- As you tell the story, draw images to represent the key pieces of the story. Be sure to include:
 - The address
 - Term of the lease
 - The cost of rent
 - Security deposit
 - The utilities that the landlord will pay
 - The utilities that you will pay
 - How to renew the lease or give notice if you want to move out at the end of the lease
- Tell the story again. This time, as you go through the story, write the key information next to the image, and stop and point out the information on the copy of the lease you provided to students. For example, next to the image of rent, write the amount, and show students where the information can be found on the lease.

STEP 3: DISCUSSION AND COMPREHENSION CHECK

Time Frame	Materials	Teaching Strategies
5 minutes	- Red, green, and yellow Signal Cards	- Signal Cards - True/False Quiz



TEACHING ACTIVITY

- Make true and false statements about the story in Step 2 and have students use their

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Signal Cards to indicate True/False/I don't know.

STEP 4: HIGHLIGHT LESSON FOCUS AND MODEL TASK

Time Frame	Materials	Teaching Strategies
15 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Graphic organizer - Example lease  - Tenant Scenario Cards  	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Authentic Materials - Graphic Organizers - Scenario Cards - Role Play

TEACHING ACTIVITY

1. Tell students that today we're going to learn about rental agreements and the important information they contain.
2. Create a chart on the board with the following categories: address, rent, term of lease, security deposit, utilities tenant pays, and utilities landlord pays.
3. Pass out a graphic organizer with the same categories to the class, or have them create the same graphic organizer in their notebooks.
4. Pass out an example lease to the class so that each student has a copy. Have students follow along as you read through the lease and identify the information needed to complete the chart. Complete the chart as you find the information.
5. Next, draw a scenario card that matches the information in the example lease and read it aloud. Model a role play between a potential tenant and a landlord about the property in the example lease. The tenant should ask questions about the rent, security deposit, etc. and the landlord should answer using the information in the chart. A sample dialogue is provided below. The dialogue can be written on the board for students to follow along and reference through the rest of the lesson, if needed.

Khadija: How much is the monthly rent?

Landlord: \$700 a month.

Khadija: And what about the security deposit?

Landlord: The security deposit is only \$650.



Khadija: Great! How long is the lease? And what utilities do we have to pay?

Landlord: The lease is 12 months. I pay for water but you pay for gas and electricity.

Khadija: Okay, we'll take it!

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STEP 5: GUIDED PRACTICE

Time Frame	Materials	Teaching Strategies
10 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Example lease  - Tenant Scenario Cards  	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Authentic Materials - Graphic Organizers - Scenario Cards - Role Play

TEACHING ACTIVITY

1. Choose a student volunteer and repeat the process with a new lease. Have the class follow along and write the information in their graphic organizers.
2. Once the chart is completed, choose a scenario card and role play with the student. Go through the role play twice, and switch roles so that you practice both.
3. Repeat the process with another student, time permitting.

STEP 6: PAIR OR SMALL GROUP WORK

Time Frame	Materials	Teaching Strategies
25 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Example leases  - Graphic Organizer - Tenant Scenario Cards  	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Authentic Materials - Graphic Organizers - Scenario Cards - Role Play

TEACHING ACTIVITY

1. Put students in pairs and provide each pair with three example leases, three matching scenario cards, and one graphic organizer.
2. The pairs should work together to first complete the graphic organizer by finding the correct information in the example leases.
3. Once they complete the chart, they should match the scenario cards with the appropriate leases. Note that more than one lease could fit one scenario card.
4. Have the pairs practice the role plays for each scenario/lease. They should take turns in both roles.

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- If pairs finish early, have them discuss which lease they would choose for themselves and why.

STEP 7: HIGHLIGHT HOW ENGLISH WORKS

Time Frame	Materials	Teaching Strategies
10 minutes		

TEACHING ACTIVITY

- Write “Tenant rights” on the board.
- Provide basic information on tenant rights for your state, and information on where students can go if they have an issue with their landlord. Some common tenant rights and rule are:
 - A security deposit cannot be more than one month’s rent. If it is higher, the tenant must receive interest.
 - The landlord must return the security deposit within 30 days of the end of a lease.
 - A landlord must provide an itemized list of deductions for any money deducted from a security deposit.
 - Tenants have the right to “quiet enjoyment” and landlords must remedy issues that disturb tenants’ ability to quietly enjoy their residence.
 - Tenants have a right to demand that a landlord repair any condition that affects their health and safety.
 - In Austin, students can go to Austin Tenant’s Council. A quick online search should provide you with information on who can be contacted in your community.
- Ask students if they have any questions about any of the rules, or if they have any stories to share about issues that they have had with a landlord.

STEP 8: QUICK CHECK AND REVIEW

Time Frame	Materials	Teaching Strategies
10 minutes	- Example Leases 	- Authentic Materials - Exit Check

TEACHING ACTIVITY

- Have students look through the leases they used in class and choose the lease they would want to have.
- As students leave, conduct an Exit Check where the student tells you which lease they have chosen and why.



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EXTENSION ACTIVITY: GUEST SPEAKER

Time Frame	Materials	Teaching Strategies
Varies	- Leasing/housing resources from guest speaker	

TEACHING ACTIVITY

1. Ask your students if they are interested in having a landlord, property manager, tenants' rights representative, or housing lawyer visit the class to talk about renting a home, tenants' rights and responsibilities, and/or other topics around leases that the students may be interested in.