POLYGLOT HOUSE • POLYGLOT ENGLISH

How to Rent an Apartment in English

Ask first, sign second — from search to moving day

EPISODE 28 • LEVEL B1–B2

Episode summary

- Your landlord says, the deposit is two months rent. You nod. You smile. You have no idea what a deposit is. Nobody ever taught you renting English — until one flat with beautiful light taught Leo the difference between looking and asking.
- Move one: the search. Say what you want before you start looking: rooms, place, budget, furniture. A must have list and a nice to have list keep you honest. Furnished, unfurnished, and semi furnished are three different flats, not three words for the same one.
- Move two: the viewing. Ask about money, time, and home, in that order. Rent, deposit, utilities, lease length, notice, furniture, noise, water, parking. Three questions at every viewing, even if you love the flat. Visit twice, talk to a neighbour, and take photos.
- Move three: the lease. Read every line. Rent, deposit, length, notice, who fixes what, rules. Renewal and breaking the lease are words to learn before you sign, not after. On moving day, photograph every mark and send the photos the same day.
- Move four: problems. Report early, in writing, with a photo. Follow up politely. Urgent means today. A flat is not just a key. A flat is a contract, a home, and a year of your life. Ask first, sign second.

What’s inside this PDF
18 key words • the viewing checklist • lease lines • Say It Better upgrades • 3 practice exercises

Key Vocabulary

18 words from this episode — learn them, then use them this week

1. landlord
the person who owns the flat you rent.
> My landlord fixes problems fast.

2. tenant
the person who rents the flat.
> You are the tenant.

3. lease
the written agreement.
> Read the lease before you sign it.

4. deposit
money you pay at the start, and get back at the end if nothing is broken.
> The deposit is one month.

5. furnished
a flat with furniture inside.
> The flat is furnished, beds, tables, chairs, everything.

6. unfurnished
a flat with empty rooms, you bring your own furniture.
> The flat is unfurnished, so we need beds.

7. semi furnished
a flat with some furniture, not all.
> Semi furnished means a bed, but no washing machine.

8. utilities
water, electricity, heating, internet.
> Are utilities included?

9. viewing
a visit to see a flat before you decide.
> I have a viewing on Saturday.

10. notice
a message that says, I will move out on this date.
> The notice is two months.

11. renewal
the lease starting again for another year.
> Ask about renewal before you sign.

12. guarantor
a person who pays your rent if you cannot.
> Some landlords ask for a guarantor.

13. estate agent
the person who shows flats and connects you with the owner.
> The estate agent showed us three flats.

14. budget
the most money you can spend.
> My budget is eight hundred a month.

15. damp
wet walls, dark marks, a smell you do not want.
> Is there damp on the walls?

16. move in
to enter a flat to live there.
> We move in on Saturday.

17. move out
to leave a flat.
> When you move out, take photos again.

18. lift
a machine that carries you up and down a building.
> Is there a lift in the building?

Ask First, Sign Second

search with a list, view with questions, read slowly, report early

Move one: the search

“Rooms, place, money, furniture. Must have, nice to have.”

Move two: the viewing

“Money, time, and home. Three questions at every viewing.”

Move three: the lease

“Read every line. Photos on moving day, sent the same day.”

Move four: problems

“Report early, in writing, with a photo. Urgent means today.”

The rule

“Ask first, sign second. A question now is cheaper than a problem later.”

Say It Better — 10 upgrades

☐ “I want to hire a flat.”	☐ “I want to rent a flat.”
☐ “The house owner is kind.”	☐ “The landlord is kind.”
☐ “I pay the rent for the flat owner.”	☐ “I pay the rent to the landlord.”
☐ “The flat is with furniture.”	☐ “The flat is furnished.”
☐ “I give a deposit of one month.”	☐ “The deposit is one month.”
☐ “How many months is the agreement?”	☐ “How long is the lease?”
☐ “I will move in the flat tomorrow.”	☐ “I will move into the flat tomorrow.”
☐ “The landlord must to fix it.”	☐ “The landlord must fix it.”

Practice Time

3 exercises — do them today, not “someday”

Exercise 1 — Fill in the blank

Word bank: landlord • tenant • lease • deposit • furnished

1. My _____ fixes problems fast.
2. Read the _____ before you sign it.
3. The _____ is one month.
4. You are the _____.
5. The flat is _____, beds, tables, chairs, everything.

Exercise 2 — Say it like a local

Upgrade each renting-English line (answers below):

1. “I want to hire a flat.” > Rent, not hire:
2. “The flat is with furniture.” > One word for it:
3. “The landlord must to fix it.” > Drop one word:

Exercise 3 — The viewing checklist

Take this nine word checklist to your next viewing: rent, deposit, utilities, lease, notice, furniture, noise, water, parking. Ask every word, write every answer, then decide after one day.

- The search: I am looking for a one bedroom flat near the station.
- The viewing: How much is the deposit? Are utilities included?
- The lease: The tenant must give two months notice in writing.

Answer key

Ex 1: 1 landlord • 2 lease • 3 deposit • 4 tenant • 5 furnished

Ex 2: 1 “I want to rent a flat.” 2 “The flat is furnished.” 3 “The landlord must fix it.”