

Tell the difference between:

- 1.a porch and a balcony
- 2.a door chain and a dead bolt lock
- 3.a smoke detector and a burglar alarm
- 4.a peephole and a window
- 5.a landlord and a tenant
- 6.an air conditioner and a fan
- 7.a trash can and a disposal
- 8.a sink and a drain
- 9.a garage and a parking lot
- 10.a dormitory and an apartment
- 11.a mobile home and an apartment
- 12.a closet and a cabinet
- 13.a backyard and a courtyard
- 14.a driveway and a parking space
- 15.a screen door and a solid door
- 16.steps and stairs

Read and discuss these conversations:

Ann: I had to put a security deposit down on my apartment. I sure hope I get that back.

Dana: You should record any damage that was there when you moved in. Take pictures or ask the manager to do a walk thru with you. Be sure to leave a forwarding address when you move out. Your security deposit may be mailed to you up to 90 days after you move out.

If you “record damage”, you write it down, film it or save it in some way. Record is a verb and the accent is on the second syllable. After you record information, you have a record. Record is a noun and the accent is on the first syllable. Practice saying these two words.

Jill: My landlord says he is raising my rent. I have only lived there two months. Can he do that?

Jody: Do you have a lease or are you renting month to month?

Jill: I did not sign a lease because I don't know how long I will be here.

Jody: With thirty days notice, the landlord can raise your rent if you don't have a lease.

Jess: My plumbing doesn't work and I can't get my landlord to fix it. The sinks drain very slowly and the toilet doesn't flush well. Sometimes the water overflows. There is also a stain on my carpet.

James: Your landlord must keep your unit in a safe and sanitary condition. He is not required to repair the stain on your carpet, but he is required to keep your plumbing working. A toilet that overflows or a sink that will not drain are unsanitary.

Jess: How do I make him fix it?

James: First, ask him to repair it. Tell him it is unsanitary. Then write him a letter. If that doesn't work, call the Austin Tenants Council. They can tell you what to do next. Their website is: www.housing-rights.org/

To fix something and to repair something mean the same thing. In Texas, we use “fixin” to mean about to do something. It is not considered proper English. It is regional slang used by many Texans. EX: I'm fixin' to go to the store. Do you need anything?

Other helpful organizations:

For people who can pay for a lawyer but are not experienced with the legal system, contact Lawyer Referral Service:

<http://www.lawyerreferralservices.org/travis-county-tx/local-public-referral-services.html>

Texas Rio Grande Legal Aid helps people who are residents of Travis County, but cannot afford a lawyer. www.trla.org/

If you are a UT student and need legal aid, contact the dean of students–legal services. deanofstudents.utexas.edu/lss/

If you have a consumer complaint, you can contact the Attorney General’s Consumer Complaint office. www.oag.state.tx.us/consumer/filing.shtml

The Austin Dispute Resolution Center provides mediation for a fee. <http://www.austindrc.org/>

Match these idioms to the definitions, then use them in a sentence.

1. Chad can seem a bit rude, but deep down he’s a nice guy.
2. When the legislature is in session, parking is a problem at our church.
3. We don’t have that item in stock, but I can order it for you.
4. Baggy pants are not in style right now.
5. We are so glad to hear Ed’s cancer is in remission.
6. Alice was in seventh heaven when she got a car of her own.
7. My mother said Dad was in his second childhood because he bought a model train.
8. Put the car in park before you try to start it.
9. I told Billy to be home by ten, but it went in one ear and out the other.
10. I bought an older model used car, but it is in mint condition.
11. We gave her money in lieu of a present this year.
12. In retrospect, we should have sent the kids to a better school

(as a replacement for, instead of)

(perfect shape)

(interested in things that interest children)

(the gears are locked so the vehicle can’t move)

(improving condition, getting better)

(ignored)

(very happy)

(readily available, here in the store)

(fashionable)

(at heart)

(operating, functioning, meeting)

(reconsidering the past with knowledge you have now)