

Introduce yourself. Tell where you are from and where you live now. Answer: Would it better to live in an old house with lots of character or a brand new house that was plain?



Conversations with Plumbers: Read the conversations sentence by sentence, explaining the meaning. Then switch roles and read the conversation again. Note: This plumber is holding a plumber's friend and a wrench.

Deb: Hello, is this ABC Plumbing?

Plumber: Yes, it is. How may I help you?

Deb: My sink in the kitchen is clogged. It stopped up this morning when I cleaned up the kitchen.

Plumber: Do you have a garbage disposal in the sink?

Deb: Yes. I put a lot of potato peels in the sink and turned on the garbage disposal. But the peels didn't go down the drain. They just spun around and the sink filled with water. Now it won't drain at all. The water is standing in the sink.

Plumber: If you have a plumber's friend you can try to push it through.

Deb: I don't have a friend that is a plumber. That is why I'm calling you.

Plumber: No, not a friend who is a plumber, a plumber's friend. Another word for it is "plunger". It's a tool for unclogging a drain or a toilet. It's a stick with a rubber cup at the end. You fit the rubber cup over the drain and push hard several times. It will force the food down the drain.

Deb: Oh. Well, I don't have one of those either. Can you just send someone out to unclog the drain?

Plumber: Yes. But the earliest I can get someone out there is tomorrow. We are booked up today.

Deb: Tomorrow! But I can't wait until tomorrow to use my sink! Can't you come any earlier?

Plumber: No, I'm sorry. All of my employees have appointments with other customers. You can try another plumber, but I don't think you'll get anyone out today. A stopped up drain isn't an emergency. We have customers with toilets overflowing. We will need to help them first.

1. Do you ever have clogged drains? What do you do about it?
2. Do you try to fix plumbing problems yourself or call a plumber?
3. Do you have a "plumber's friend"?
4. Have you ever had a plumbing emergency? Tell about it.
5. What does Deb mean when she says, "the water is standing" in the sink.

Sam: Hello, is this ABC Plumbing?

Plumber: Yes, it is. What can I do for you?

Sam: We just bought an older house. After we moved in, we discovered there are lots of plumbing problems.

Plumber: OK. What are your problems?

Sam: Several of the faucets drip. It's wasting a lot of water. And one of our toilets keeps running after you flush. You have to jiggle the handle to make it stop. Also the water is only hot for a very short period. The end of our showers are in icy, cold water. And finally, I think some of our pipes are rusty because the water coming out of one faucet is orange. Can you help us?

Plumber: That is a lot of problems. It sounds like we may need to replace some of your faucets and put in a new toilet kit. You might need a bigger hot water heater. But the big problem is rusty pipes. We might need to dig those pipes up and replace them. That could get expensive.

Sam: I understand that it will cost a lot to fix all our problems, but my wife is miserable. She wants to sell the house and move again. Whatever we need to spend to get the plumbing working will be worth it if it makes her happy.

Plumber: Alright. I'll be out later today to take a look at things and give you an estimate. Give me your address.

1. Why is Sam's wife miserable?
2. What are the plumbing problems?
3. What will the plumber have to do to fix the problems?
4. What will the plumber do later today?
5. Have you ever had plumbing problems in your apartment or house?

Choose the correct vocabulary word.

1. My sink has been (stuck / clogged) for a couple of days.
2. My toilet won't (flash / flush).
3. How much do you (cost / charge) to fix my leaky faucet?
4. The water is (coming out / coming about) orange.
5. Can you give me the (exact / exactly) time you will be here?
6. I don't have much water (pressure / strength).
7. Will I have to pay (out front / up front)?
8. I'll have to (shut off / shut out) the main water supply for a couple of hours.

Practice Speaking:

1. What home repairs can you do yourself?
2. If you are renting, have you had any problems getting the landlord to repair your apartment?
3. When you are choosing a home, how important is it to have modern plumbing?
4. Are bathrooms in American homes usually bigger than in your country?
5. Are plumbing fixtures (sinks, showers, bathtubs, toilets) much different here than in your home country?
6. Would you buy a house that had no bathtubs, only showers?
7. Some people really enjoy a long soak in a bathtub. Others, prefer showers, not baths. Which type are you?