

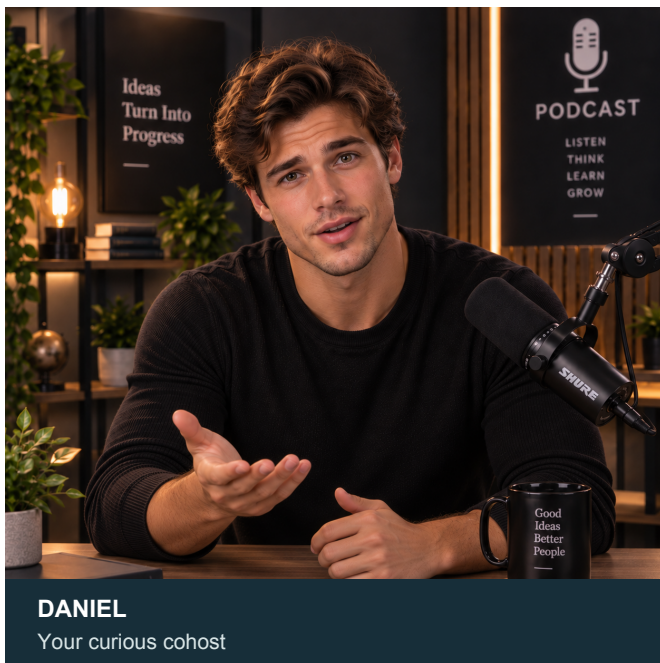


Finding a Place to Live

English listening & speaking with Daniel and Maya

Read along with Daniel and Maya. Practise useful English from this episode.

B1-B2 / 20:19 AUDIO / FULL TRANSCRIPT



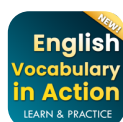
DANIEL
Your curious cohost



MAYA
Your English teacher

LISTEN. READ. SAY IT.

- 1 Listen once for the story.
- 2 Read along and notice useful expressions.
- 3 Choose one useful phrase and try saying it out loud.



Transcript edition 01

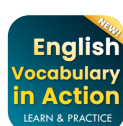


The conversation

Read along with Daniel and Maya. Times mark the start of each chapter.

00:00 What do you actually need?

- Daniel** Welcome back! I'm Daniel, and I'm looking for a new place to live. Every listing says "bright and cosy." One photo shows a window the size of a biscuit. Maya, where do I start?
- Maya** I'm Maya, your English teacher. Start by describing your needs before you read the adverts. Try, "I'm looking for a one-bedroom place near public transport." Then list what you need, what you'd like, and what you can live without.
- Daniel** I need a bed, a working shower, and a commute that doesn't require three trains and a small boat. I'd like a balcony. I can live without a decorative wall made of mirrors.
- Maya** Good. "Commute" is the regular journey to work or study. You can ask, "How long is the commute to campus?" If you don't know a neighborhood, visit at the time you would normally travel.
- Daniel** I used to say, "I want the perfect flat." That seems less useful than saying what matters. Is "flat" the same as "apartment"?
- Maya** Usually, yes. "Flat" is common in British English; "apartment" is common in American English and widely understood. "House" usually means a separate building. "Room" may mean just one room in a shared home.
- Daniel** What if a listing says "studio"? I imagine an artist's studio with paint on the floor. Is that what I would rent?
- Maya** A studio apartment usually has the sleeping and living space in one main room, with a separate bathroom. Ask to see the layout. "Could you tell me how the space is arranged?" is a clear question.
- Daniel** I have a budget, but I'm embarrassed to mention it. Is "I can't afford this" too direct?
- Maya** It's fine to be direct. You can say, "My budget is up to eight hundred a month, including bills." Make sure you know whether the advertised price includes utilities such as electricity or water.
- Daniel** The photos make the kitchen look enormous. Then I notice the kettle is the same size as the fridge. How do I ask for real measurements?
- Maya** Ask, "Could you share the floor plan and the room measurements?" A floor plan shows the layout from above. Photos help, but measurements and an in-person or live video viewing give you a better picture.
- Daniel** So my first step is a needs list, not a romantic relationship with an advert. I can do that.
- Maya** Exactly. A clear needs list makes the next conversation easier and helps you compare places fairly.



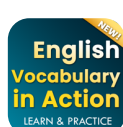


The conversation

Read along with Daniel and Maya. Times mark the start of each chapter.

02:37 Reading the listing

- Daniel** Here is one advert: "Furnished, utilities excluded, available immediately, five-minute walk from the station." It sounds simple until I remember I don't know what half of that means.
- Maya** "Furnished" means some furniture is included. But it may be a bed and table, not everything you expect. Ask, "What furniture is included?" "Utilities excluded" means the regular service bills are separate from the rent.
- Daniel** "Available immediately" means I could move in now. What if I can't move until next month? Should I avoid the listing?
- Maya** You can still ask: "Would a move-in date at the beginning of next month be possible?" "Move in" means start living there. The answer may be no, but a clear question costs less than guessing.
- Daniel** Another advert says "share of a four-bedroom house." Does that mean I get one bedroom and share the other rooms?
- Maya** Usually, yes, but ask what is private and what is shared. "Would I have my own bathroom?" "How many people share the kitchen?" "Is there space to work from home?" The word "share" can cover different arrangements.
- Daniel** I see "short let" and "long let." I can guess, but how do I confirm the minimum stay?
- Maya** Ask, "What's the minimum rental period?" or "How long is the initial agreement?" "Short let" often means a shorter stay, but exact terms vary. Read the details rather than relying on a label.
- Daniel** This one says "bills included." It sounds lovely, but I should ask which bills, right? I don't want to discover the internet is powered by hope.
- Maya** Right. "Does the rent include electricity, water, heating, and internet?" Ask who is responsible for each payment. A phrase like "bills included" is useful but too broad to answer every practical question.
- Daniel** What about "pet-friendly"? I don't have a pet, but my friend has a very small dog with a very large personality.
- Maya** "Pet-friendly" suggests pets may be allowed, but the details still matter. If you have a pet, ask about the rules before you agree. Don't assume a guest's pet is automatically included.
- Daniel** I'm learning to read the advert as a starting point for questions, not a promise written in stone.
- Maya** Exactly. Save the listings that fit your needs, and write down the questions each one leaves unanswered.



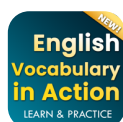


The conversation

Read along with Daniel and Maya. Times mark the start of each chapter.

05:11 Arranging and attending a viewing

- Daniel** I've found a place I like. My message says, "Hi. Can I see it?" It gets the job done, but could it sound more professional?
- Maya** Try, "Hello, I'm interested in the flat on Park Street. Is it still available? If so, could I arrange a viewing this week?" A "viewing" is a visit to see the property. Include a couple of times that work for you.
- Daniel** "I could come on Tuesday after five or Thursday morning." That's useful. Should I explain my whole life story and my relationship with the mirror wall?
- Maya** No. A short introduction is enough. You can add when you hope to move in and how many people would live there. Keep private details for later if they're necessary. The first message is just to arrange a conversation.
- Daniel** At the viewing, what do I ask first? The kitchen sink is doing a strange musical performance, but I don't want to sound rude.
- Maya** Be polite and specific: "I noticed the tap is dripping. Is that being repaired?" You can ask about heating, water, storage, noise, and what furniture stays. It is normal to check the space carefully.
- Daniel** Can I say, "Would you mind if I opened this cupboard?" Or is opening cupboards part of the viewing already?
- Maya** Ask before touching personal belongings. "Would you mind if I checked the storage space?" is polite. "Would you mind" is followed by an -ing form: "Would you mind if I opened the window?" is also natural.
- Daniel** I want to test the commute too. Could I ask, "Is the bus stop far?"
- Maya** You can, but try a precise question: "How long does it take to walk to the nearest bus stop?" Then check the journey yourself using a route you would actually take. A five-minute walk feels different in heavy rain.
- Daniel** What if the agent says the place will go quickly and I must decide while standing in the hallway?
- Maya** You can say, "Thank you. I'd like to read the details and think it over before deciding." "Think it over" means consider it carefully. You don't have to give an answer before you understand the costs and terms.
- Daniel** That phrase might save me from agreeing to a home with a singing sink and no internet.
- Maya** Exactly. Take notes after each viewing so you don't mix up one kitchen with another.



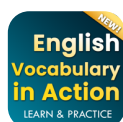


The conversation

Read along with Daniel and Maya. Times mark the start of each chapter.

07:34 Costs, deposits, and written details

- Daniel** I can pay the monthly rent, but now I see a deposit, a first payment, and other possible charges. How do I ask for the total without sounding suspicious?
- Maya** Ask plainly: "Could you give me a written breakdown of everything I'd need to pay before moving in?" A "breakdown" is a clear list of parts. It helps you see the deposit, first rent payment, and any other stated cost.
- Daniel** Is a deposit the same as rent? I know I might get it back later, but I want to understand what the agreement says.
- Maya** A deposit is money held under the rental agreement, separate from regular rent. The rules about it differ by place. Ask, "When is the deposit returned, and under what conditions?" Get the answer in writing and check the local rules.
- Daniel** What does "due on the first" mean? I assume it means I pay on the first day of each month, but I should confirm.
- Maya** Yes. "When is rent due each month?" and "Which payment methods are accepted?" are simple questions. If a charge or term is unclear, ask before paying. You can say, "Could you explain this part of the agreement?"
- Daniel** The agreement is long. Can I say, "I need time to go through it," or does that sound like I'm about to climb through the paper?
- Maya** "Go through" means read or check carefully. It's perfect here: "I'd like to go through the agreement before I sign." You can also ask for a copy in advance and write down anything you don't understand.
- Daniel** What if someone promises to repair the sink but it's not written anywhere? Should I say, "I trust your face, but I also trust email"?
- Maya** Maybe phrase it more smoothly: "Thanks for confirming. Could we include the repair plan in writing?" That keeps the conversation clear. Written details help both sides remember what was agreed.
- Daniel** I also want to know who to contact if something stops working after I move in. Is that too early to ask?
- Maya** Not at all. "Who should I contact about repairs?" is practical. Ask how to report a problem and when you can expect a response. You're learning the process, not accusing anyone.
- Daniel** So the useful language is "breakdown," "due," "go through," and "in writing." Less exciting than a balcony, but probably more useful.
- Maya** Both matter. A beautiful balcony is easier to enjoy when you understand the agreement and the monthly costs.



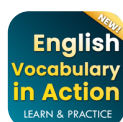


The conversation

Read along with Daniel and Maya. Times mark the start of each chapter.

10:08 Sharing a home

- Daniel** The places I can afford are mostly shared homes. One listing says, “Friendly housemates wanted.” How do I find out whether “friendly” means quiet chats or a party every Tuesday?
- Maya** Ask about daily routines. “What are the usual quiet hours?” “How do you handle visitors?” “How are cleaning tasks shared?” The answers tell you more than one cheerful adjective in an advert.
- Daniel** I don’t mind washing a few dishes. I do mind discovering that I am the unofficial dishwasher for six people and a mysterious guest called Steve.
- Maya** Then say what you can do. “I’m happy to take turns cleaning the kitchen, but I’d like us to agree on a schedule.” “Take turns” means each person does the task at a different time.
- Daniel** Is “housemate” different from “roommate”? I don’t want to invite somebody to share my bedroom by mistake.
- Maya** A housemate shares your home. A roommate can mean someone who shares your room in some places, but in American English people also use it for someone who shares a home. Ask what space is private. Clear questions beat clever guesses.
- Daniel** How would I ask about working from home without sounding as if I plan to turn the kitchen into an office?
- Maya** “I sometimes work from home. Is there a quiet place for calls?” You can also ask about internet speed, shared desk space, and whether daytime noise is common. Explain your routine, then listen to theirs.
- Daniel** Suppose they ask if I’m tidy. “My desk is an exciting archaeological site” probably isn’t the best answer.
- Maya** Try something honest and useful: “I keep shared spaces tidy, and I clean up after cooking.” “Clean up” is a phrasal verb meaning make a place clean after an activity. Your private desk can keep its secrets.
- Daniel** If a housemate leaves food in the sink, can I say, “You are a terrible person” in a polite voice?
- Maya** The polite voice won’t save that sentence. Describe the problem and a request: “Could we make sure the sink is clear after dinner? I need it in the morning.” This makes it easier to solve the issue together.
- Daniel** And if I’m the person who leaves a cup out, I should own up to it, right?
- Maya** Yes. “Sorry, that was my cup. I’ll put it away.” “Own up to” means admit you did something. Small, direct apologies prevent small problems from becoming house dramas.





The conversation

Read along with Daniel and Maya. Times mark the start of each chapter.

10:08 Sharing a home (continued)

Daniel So a good shared home needs clear rules, a little flexibility, and fewer mysterious guests named Steve.

Maya Exactly. Ask about the people and routines, not only the rent and the size of the room.

12:55 Choosing an area

Daniel I found two possible places. One is closer to work but has no shops nearby. The other has a lovely café, but my journey might become a documentary series. How do I compare them?

Maya Start with your real week. Think about travel time, grocery shopping, evening activities, and visits to friends. You could say, "The first place is more convenient for work, whereas the second has more to do nearby."

Daniel "Whereas" helps me show a contrast. Could I also say, "On the one hand, I save time; on the other hand, I spend more on rent"?

Maya Yes. That's a useful B2 comparison. Keep it connected to a decision, though. Don't make a speech to the letting agent while they are waiting for the keys.

Daniel Fair. How do I check whether the area feels right? A map tells me where the supermarket is, but it doesn't tell me whether I like walking there.

Maya Visit at different times if you can. Try the journey to work or class. Notice practical things like lighting and transport when you would actually travel. Ask residents or local contacts about their experience, but remember one person's experience may not match yours.

Daniel The advert calls it "a lively neighborhood." That could mean excellent restaurants or a trumpet player outside my window at midnight.

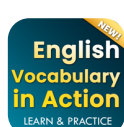
Maya Exactly why you should ask. "What is the street like in the evening?" "Is there much noise from traffic or nearby businesses?" You can also listen during the viewing. "Lively" is positive for some people and exhausting for others.

Daniel What about settling in? Is that just another way to say moving in?

Maya They are different. "Move in" is the act of starting to live there. "Settle in" means become comfortable with the new place and routine. You might move in on Monday but need a few weeks to settle in.

Daniel I could say, "I moved in last week, and I'm still settling in." Especially if I'm still learning which cupboard hides the plates.

Maya Perfect. And "get around" means travel within an area: "It's easy to get around by bus." Test that claim with the routes you need, at the times you need them.





The conversation

Read along with Daniel and Maya. Times mark the start of each chapter.

12:55 Choosing an area (continued)

Daniel I should compare my everyday life, not just the attractive photos. The café won't help if I'm never home before it closes.

Maya Exactly. A place should fit the life you have, not only the weekend you imagine.

15:20 A complete viewing conversation

Daniel Let's practise. You're the agent, and I'm viewing a flat. Please don't try to sell me the singing sink.

Maya Welcome, Daniel. Thanks for coming to see the flat. Please take your time and let me know what you'd like to ask.

Daniel Thank you. First, could you tell me what furniture is included? I can see a sofa and a table, but I can't tell whether the bedroom has a bed.

Maya The sofa and table are included. The bed belongs to the current tenant, so it won't stay. The written inventory will list everything that comes with the flat.

Daniel That's helpful. Are utilities included in the monthly rent, or would I pay them separately?

Maya You would pay electricity and internet separately. Water is included. I can send you a written breakdown of the monthly costs we know about.

Daniel Please do. I noticed the kitchen tap is dripping. Is there a repair planned before the next person moves in?

Maya Yes, a repair is planned for next week. I'll confirm the date by email, and you can ask for it to be noted in the agreement.

Daniel Great. I'd also like to know when the flat is available. I could move in at the beginning of next month. Would that date work?

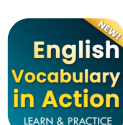
Maya It may work. I need to check with the owner, so I won't promise it yet. I'll include the answer when I email the other details.

Daniel One more thing: how long is the initial rental period, and who would I contact if something broke after I moved in?

Maya The proposed agreement is for twelve months. The contact details for repairs are in the agreement, and I can show you that section before you decide.

Daniel Thank you. I'd like to go through the written details and think it over. When could I get back to you with my answer?

Maya Tomorrow afternoon would be helpful. How did that conversation feel, Daniel?





The conversation

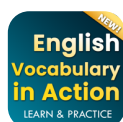
Read along with Daniel and Maya. Times mark the start of each chapter.

15:20 A complete viewing conversation (continued)

- Daniel** Much better than, “Nice flat. Is the sink singing because it’s happy?” I was polite, but I asked specific questions and didn’t promise anything too soon.
- Maya** Exactly. Specific questions produce useful answers. When the answer is uncertain, ask when you can expect a follow-up in writing.

17:29 Decide and remember

- Daniel** I have three sets of notes now. Place A is cheap but far away. Place B is close to work but has the dramatic sink. Place C has friendly housemates and a fridge with seven different labels. How do I decide?
- Maya** Make a simple comparison using your original needs list. For each place, note the monthly total, travel time, private space, included items, and unanswered questions. Then ask which compromises you can live with.
- Daniel** “Compromise” means accepting something less than ideal in order to gain something else, right? I could accept a smaller bedroom if I saved time every day.
- Maya** Right. You could say, “The bedroom is smaller, but the shorter commute makes up for it.” “Make up for” means balance a disadvantage with a benefit.
- Daniel** I like that phrase. But I shouldn’t let a nice coffee shop make up for a cost I can’t afford. Coffee doesn’t pay rent, despite my best efforts.
- Maya** Exactly. Also separate facts from guesses. “The rent includes water” is a confirmed fact if it’s written down. “The street is always quiet” may be an impression from one visit.
- Daniel** Let’s give listeners a mini challenge. They find an advert that says “furnished, bills included, flexible move-in.” What three questions should they ask?
- Maya** Pause and try it. My questions would be, “What furniture is included?” “Which bills are included?” and “Which move-in dates would be possible?” Your answers can vary, as long as they turn broad claims into clear details.
- Daniel** Now the phrasal verbs. “Move in” means start living there. “Settle in” means become comfortable. “Go through” an agreement means read it carefully. “Think it over” means consider the choice before answering.
- Maya** Good. Add “get around” for travel within an area, “clean up” for making a shared space tidy, and “make up for” when one benefit balances a drawback. Try one sentence about a real or imaginary home.





The conversation

Read along with Daniel and Maya. Times mark the start of each chapter.

17:29 Decide and remember (continued)

- Daniel** "I could move in on Monday, but it might take me a month to settle in because the kitchen cupboards are arranged like a puzzle."
- Maya** Excellent. And remember the useful polite patterns: "Could you tell me...?" "Would it be possible to...?" and "I'd like to go through the details before I decide." You can use those beyond housing, too.
- Daniel** I feel ready to look for a place now. I'll bring my questions, a notebook, and perhaps a tiny biscuit to measure the windows.
- Maya** You bring the questions. Leave the biscuit for your tea. Thanks for listening, everyone. Practise one clear question today, and we'll see you in the next episode.

