

Speaking and Listening Discussion

Let's Talk About... Cleaning

New Vocabulary Mark the stressed vowel sound in each word or phrase:

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|----------------------|------------------|------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. bacteria | 6. cloth | 11. dust | 16. polish |
| 2. bin | 7. cobweb | 12. feather duster | 17. rubber gloves |
| 3. brush and dustpan | 8. crumbs | 13. hygiene | 18. soap |
| 4. chore | 9. dirt | 14. mop and bucket | 19. spring cleaning |
| 5. cleaner | 10. disinfectant | 15. nooks and crannies | 20. vacuum cleaner |

Discussion Questions Ask and answer them with a partner or small group:

1. Do you like cleaning or do you find it a complete **chore**? Do you know where the **brush and dustpan** are?
2. What is your favourite and least favourite cleaning task? Why? How often do you... a) **vacuum**, b) dust, c) sweep the floor, d) mop, e) tidy up, f) wipe the surfaces, g) wash windows, h) **polish** the furniture, i) scrub the bath, j) wash clothes, k) hang out washing, l) iron, m) clean behind the fridge, n) wash the car, o) organise cupboards, p) throw out old stuff, q) change the beds? How good are you at each task?
3. How do you usually get rid of... a) **cobwebs**, b) **dust**, c) mould, d) stubborn stains, e) pet hair, f) **dirt**, g) mud, h) chocolate, i) pen marks, j) creases in clothes, k) baked-on food, l) smears on windows?
4. What is the hardest thing to get clean? Why? How do you manage it?
5. What products do you use for cleaning? What are the best brands? Isn't **soap** and water good enough?
6. Would you consider hiring a **cleaner** to do the jobs that you hate? How much would you pay per hour?
7. Would you like to work as a cleaner? Why? / Why not? Do cleaners receive a fair wage? If not, why not?
8. 'A spotless house is a sign of a misspent life.' – *Anonymous*. Do you agree or disagree? Why?
9. Why is **hygiene** important? How important is it to you and your family? Do you take pride in the cleanliness of your surroundings? Are you upset when somebody makes a mess in your home? Why?
10. What does the phrase '**spring cleaning**' mean to you? Are you excited about making a fresh start with a clean home? Can we do spring cleaning at any time? Why do we feel like cleaning in springtime?
11. Discuss the meaning of this one-liner by Phyllis Diller: 'Housework can't kill you but why take a chance.'
12. Is cleanliness next to godliness, as the idiom goes? Why? / Why not?
13. Is housework 'women's work', as some people think? Do you think that men can be equally proficient with a **cloth** and an old pair of **rubber gloves**? Is everybody equal when it comes to manual jobs?
14. When cleaning do you do a quick clean or make sure that every **nook and cranny** is spick-and-span?
15. Do you pay a window cleaner? How much do you pay them? How often do they clean your windows? Do they do a good job? Why don't *you* do it? Why does somebody decide to become a window cleaner?

English Idioms about Cleaning

Say a new sentence with each idiom:

1. a new broom sweeps clean
2. be clean as a whistle
3. be squeaky clean
4. clean somebody out of something
5. clean up [win a lot of money]
6. come clean about something
7. do the dirty on somebody
8. get stuck in
9. get your hands dirty
10. have a clean record
11. it's a dirty job, but somebody's got to do it
12. keep your nose clean
13. maintain a clean sheet / slate
14. make a clean break
15. make a clean getaway
16. put your back into it
17. show a clean pair of heels
18. use some elbow grease
19. wipe the slate clean

Discussion Situations about Cleaning

What would you do if...?

1. One of your friends is a 'clean freak' who cannot relax unless their environment is entirely free of **bacteria**.
2. You hate cleaning but can't afford to hire a cleaner.
3. You've just finished mopping the floor when a wayward toddler runs in and drops **crumbs** all over it.
4. After beating the carpet for ten minutes, your partner is still dissatisfied, demanding you remove every speck of dust.
5. Your friend's home looks like a pigsty every time you visit.
6. On your first day as a cleaner you find £100,000 in used notes underneath a floorboard.
7. You can't decide which kind of **disinfectant** to use.
8. Your family refuses to help you clean and tidy up at home.
9. While employing your **feather duster** you break a priceless vase belonging to your Great Aunt Gwendolen.
10. You're afraid of spiders and can't bear to disturb them.
11. Nobody in your flat empties the kitchen **bin** for four days.
12. You can't find your **mop and bucket**.
13. Your mother always criticises your cleaning.
14. Your window cleaner falls off their ladder.

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1. Describe the pictures. 2. Discuss them. 3. Compare them. 4. Create a quiz about them using different question types: comprehension, wh-, yes/no, true/false/unknown, etc. 5. Improvise a dialogue or story.

Picture A



Picture B

