

Real Talk #014 – Apartment hunting

Episode description

Apartment hunting can be an extremely stressful activity. Never fear, Andrew and Suzanne are here to help! In this Real Talk episode, they explain the words and expressions that you need to successfully find an apartment in an English-speaking country.

Fun fact

Did you know that Vancouver, a city in British Columbia, is the most expensive place to live in Canada? Toronto, Canada's largest city, and Montreal, Canada's second largest city, are more affordable by comparison.

Expressions included in the learning materials

- To go like hotcakes
- To fly off the shelf
- A deposit
- A viewing
- A utility



Transcript

Note: The words and expressions that appear in **bold text** within the transcript are discussed in more detail in the Detailed Explanations section that follows the transcript.

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Hey everybody. My name's Andrew.

Suzanne: And I'm Suzanne.

Andrew: And we're back with another Culips episode.

Hey Suzanne.

Suzanne: Hey Andrew. How are you?

Andrew: I'm not so bad. How about you?

Suzanne: Doing pretty good. A little tired today, but pretty good.

Andrew: Suzanne, right before we started to record this episode, we were chatting, and you told me that you have a new neighbour that just moved in.

Suzanne: Yeah! I'm getting new neighbours this month.

Andrew: This month. Well, it's funny that you're getting new neighbours because, today, we're talking about looking for an apartment. And I suppose your new neighbours would've just done this, right? They would've found the apartment, and it just happens to be right next door to you.

Suzanne: Absolutely. They just did the whole process of finding and getting an apartment.

Andrew: To be honest with you, there's nothing more that I hate than going through this process.

Suzanne: Yeah. It's one of the most annoying chores or things you have to do as an adult.

Andrew: Yeah. So today, we're going to tackle this annoying task head-on, and we're going to do a Real Talk episode. If you don't know what that is, well, Real

Talk is the series where we take a close look at situations that you need to know how to navigate if you live in an English-speaking country.

Suzanne: In this episode, we're going to look at a very important situation, looking for an apartment.

Andrew: Exactly, or more specifically, calling a landlord or a property manager to find out information about an apartment listing.

Suzanne: Andrew, let's break down that vocabulary quickly. What is a landlord and a property manager? What's the difference between the two?

Andrew: Well, a landlord is someone who owns a property and rents it out directly to a tenant, OK? So a tenant is the name for someone who lives in a rented house or an apartment. Like, I live in an apartment, so I am a tenant. And you do too, right? You're in an apartment, so you're a tenant.

Suzanne: Well, yes. But my boyfriend owns the apartment, so I may be his tenant?

Andrew: Maybe. Anyway, on the other hand, a property manager is someone who manages a large apartment building on behalf of a big company that owns that building.

Suzanne: Oh.

Andrew: Usually a landlord is the owner of a small apartment building or a house that's being rented, while a property manager cares for a very big apartment building. I think that's the difference.

Suzanne: OK, so the definition is kind of in the name. A property manager kind of manages the property, right? Takes care of the property of a large building and the surrounding property.

Andrew: Exactly. I think the difference is that the landlord is the owner, whereas the property manager is just a manager, doesn't actually own the building or the house.

Suzanne: Interesting. Got it.

Andrew: Cool. So let's break down the plan for today, for this episode. First, we're going to listen to a dialogue between an apartment hunter—this is somebody who's looking for an apartment, an apartment hunter—and a property manager.

Suzanne: So the apartment hunter has just seen an apartment listing, or an ad for an apartment online, and called the property manager for more info.

- Andrew: So we'll listen to that conversation, and then afterwards, we'll take a close look at it and break down some of the most important expressions and information that's necessary to know when you are inquiring about an apartment.
- Suzanne: Awesome. So let's take a listen to that conversation. We'll get to it right after this message.
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- Billy: Hello.
- Christina: Oh hi, my name's Christina. I was just calling about the apartment that you're renting out. I saw an ad for it on the internet.
- Billy: Uh, yeah. Hi, Christina. My name's Billy. I am the building manager. How can I help you?
- Christina: Um, is the apartment still available?
- Billy: Yup, it sure is.
- Christina: Excellent. Could you give me some information about it?
- Billy: So it's a bright and sunny one-bedroom apartment. It was renovated about 2 years ago. It has modern furnishings, plus we're planning to throw a new coat of paint on the walls before the new tenant moves in.
- Christina: Oh, that's great. And what about the lease?
- Billy: Yeah, it's just a standard 1-year lease, nothing special. After a year, it goes month to month.
- Christina: OK. And if I remember correctly, the rent is \$800 a month?
- Billy: Mmhmm, that's right, \$800 a month plus a **damage deposit** of a half month's rent.
- Christina: Oh, OK. I see. Is there anything else I should know about the place?
- Billy: Huh, well, let's see. The building's quiet. We've never had any major incidents, and there's a secured entrance.
- Christina: Oh, that's nice.

Billy: Heat and hot water are included, but the other **utilities** are up to you.

Christina: Sure, I understand.

Billy: You don't have any pets, do you?

Christina: Uh, no, I don't. But if I did, is that a problem?

Billy: Well, yeah, that would be. Our building is pet- and smoke-free.

Christina: Oh, OK. One more question for you.

Billy: Shoot.

Christina: Is there in-suite laundry?

Billy: Unfortunately not. But we do have a laundry room in the basement. It's coin-operated.

Christina: Oh, OK. I see. Well, if possible, I'd like to come and see the apartment. Can I set up **a viewing**?

Billy: We're having an open house this Saturday from 9:00 to noon. Does that work for you?

Christina: Yeah, it sure does. I'll see you then.

Billy: OK, great. See you then, Christina.

Christina: Thanks, Billy. Bye.

Suzanne: OK, so we just heard a conversation between an apartment hunter and a property manager. The apartment hunter called the manager to find out more information about the apartment. Now, we'll go through the conversation and discuss and explain the important expressions and vocabulary we heard.

Andrew: All right. So Suzanne, the first part of the dialogue that I want to look at a little bit closer today is the first question that Christina, the apartment hunter, asks Billy, the property manager. She asks if the apartment is still available. And let's listen to that part of the conversation again.

Christina: Um, is the apartment still available?

Um, is the apartment still available?

Andrew: OK, Suzanne?

- Suzanne: Yeah.
- Andrew: Skill-testing question for you.
- Suzanne: OK.
- Andrew: Why is this the best question to ask first when you call a landlord or property manager?
- Suzanne: Well, usually, if it's a really good listing, meaning a good price, a good location, chances are apartments go pretty quickly. And if you're calling to get more information about the apartment, the first and most important part of that info is to know whether or not the apartment is still available or still in need of a tenant.
- Andrew: Exactly. If you live in a small town in Canada, a smaller city, this is not a problem at all. But in the urban centres, especially in Vancouver and Toronto, apartments **go like hotcakes**. They just **fly off the shelf**.
- Suzanne: In New York too, same thing.
- Andrew: New York too, yeah. The landlord puts an ad up and right away gets a lot of calls about it. So in order to save everybody's time, it's a good idea to ask, "Is this apartment available?" Before you ask many questions and then get to the end, and find out, oh, it's already been rented out.
- Suzanne: Yeah. It will save you a lot of time.
- Andrew: Totally. So this is our first tip. Make sure right from the top of the conversation you ask about the availability. All right, so the next part of the conversation that we're going to check out today is when the landlord describes the apartment, OK? Describes what it looks like and some of its features. Let's listen to that part of the conversation again.

Billy: So it's a bright and sunny one-bedroom apartment. It was renovated about 2 years ago. It has modern furnishings, plus we're planning to throw a new coat of paint on the walls before the new tenant moves in.

So it's a bright and sunny one-bedroom apartment. It was renovated about 2 years ago. It has modern furnishings, plus we're planning to throw a new coat of paint on the walls before the new tenant moves in.

- Andrew: The property manager, Billy, mentions that the apartment was renovated 2 years ago. Sue, what does this mean, renovated?

- Suzanne: It usually means that the apartment or part of the apartment has been upgraded, so maybe knocked down and new materials have been added, and rebuilt.
- Andrew: Mmhmm. Maybe the flooring has been changed.
- Suzanne: Yeah.
- Andrew: Or the cabinets in the kitchen have been changed.
- Suzanne: Maybe the bathroom has new tile or a new bathtub.
- Andrew: Mmhmm. So this is a great thing. If the apartment's been renovated, it means it's fresh and current.
- Suzanne: Yeah, and probably cleaner as well.
- Andrew: Yeah, hopefully. Now the property manager also mentioned that it has modern furnishings. Now be careful everybody not to get this word, furnishings, confused with furniture because they're actually different, aren't they?
- Suzanne: Yeah. Furniture is referring to a couch, a chair, a dining room table—things that are moveable, that you bring in and out of the apartment.
- Andrew: Mmhmm.
- Suzanne: Whereas furnishings usually refer to maybe the banister on the staircase or the knobs and cabinets, or flooring or countertops, right?
- Andrew: Mmhmm. The sink and the shower, the toilet. The things you can't move.
- Suzanne: Yes, the things that are attached to the house, maybe an island in the kitchen with a granite countertop. These are things you can't move around. They come stuck to the apartment.
- Andrew: Now, the last thing that the property manager explained to the apartment hunter is that he plans to throw a fresh coat of paint on the walls before the new tenant moves into the apartment.
- Suzanne: Those walls must be cold. Just kidding, just kidding.
- Andrew: Ah, it's a good joke. I like it. So yeah, but we can imagine somebody just getting a bucket of paint and throwing it on the wall.
- Suzanne: Yeah.
- Andrew: But this is not what he's talking about, right? I don't think so at least.

Suzanne: No, it's really a slang for putting on a new layer of paint. You know, they're going to probably do it with care and consideration and not throw it on. But it's more casual. It's more, "We're gonna take, not a lot of time, but some time to put on a nice coat of paint."

Andrew: Yeah, that is the impression I get too when you say, "Oh, we're just gonna throw a new coat of paint on the walls." It means that they're going to clean things up. Make it look nice, but they're not going to do a very, very elaborate, fancy job.

Suzanne: Right. And it's probably a neutral colour or a white colour.

Andrew: Mmhmm, just to clean things up.

Suzanne: Exactly. Now, let's take a look at the next part of the conversation, where the landlord talks about the lease of the apartment. Let's listen to that clip.

Billy: Yeah, it's just a standard 1-year lease, nothing special. After a year, it goes month to month.

Yeah, it's just a standard 1-year lease, nothing special. After a year, it goes month to month.

Andrew: OK, so a lease is very similar to a contract, isn't it, Suzanne?

Suzanne: Yeah, you sign a paper similar to a contract.

Andrew: A lease is just a technical term for the contract that you sign when you are renting an apartment. So both the landlord or the property manager signs it, and the new tenant also signs it. And in Canada, at least, the standard or typical lease length is 1 year. And then after 1 year, you can talk with your landlord about what you want to do. And commonly, people just go month to month, so they rent by the month. And if they want to move, they can do so at any time without penalty.

But if you feel like you want a little bit more security, you can also renegotiate and re-sign the lease with your landlord.

Suzanne: This is interesting, Andrew, because in the US it's different.

Andrew: OK.

Suzanne: We have two different kinds of leases. You either sign a yearly lease or a 2-year lease, or a month to month. It's very rare that it starts off as a 1-year lease and then goes month to month. Only certain properties that are open to quick turnover or having people coming in and out, maybe furnished apartments for business people, go month to month. It's not very common.

Andrew: Interesting, yeah.

Suzanne: Yeah.

Andrew: I would say that it's fairly typical in Canada for a month-to-month relationship between the landlord and tenant to happen, but only after 1 year.

Suzanne: Interesting, huh.

Andrew: At least, in many of the apartments I've lived in, this has been the case.

Suzanne: That's so interesting.

Andrew: Let's take a look at the next part of the conversation that is important. And this is talking about, well, maybe the most important thing, the rent.

Suzanne: Aha!

Andrew: Let's listen again to that section.

Billy: Mmhmm, that's right, \$800 a month plus a **damage deposit** of a half month's rent.

Mmhmm, that's right, \$800 a month plus a **damage deposit** of a half month's rent.

Suzanne: So the landlord says that it's \$800 a month plus a **damage deposit** of a half a month's rent. Now, Andrew, what's a **damage deposit**?

Andrew: Well, a **damage deposit** is some money that you have to pay at the start of your lease. And in Canada, legally, it can only equal half of 1 month's rent. So if your rent is \$800 a month, half of that is \$400. That is the maximum **the damage deposit** can be. And like I said, it's some money you have to give the landlord at the start of the lease as a kind of insurance policy, OK? So that if you damage the apartment somehow—maybe you break a window, or you make a hole in the wall—well, the landlord can use this money at the end of the lease to pay for the repair.

Suzanne: Huh.

Andrew: But if you don't damage the apartment, if you leave it in the same condition it is when you moved in, then you get that money back.

Suzanne: Wow, that's great. It's nice to know that in Canada, they only can charge a half a month's rent legally. Because I feel like in the US, they don't do that. I've had to pay the first month's rent and 2 extra months' rent just to get a

lease. What they normally do is you have to pay the first month's, the last month's, and a **security deposit**, which is equal to 1 month.

So usually, you're paying 3 months' upfront, and there's really no rules on that. Each landlord and property manager sort of makes their own rule. So in New York City, there's no legal protection as far as only being charged a certain amount. Sometimes they ask you for more than that, in fact. It's crazy.

Andrew: A tip for all of our listeners that may be looking for an apartment in Canada or even in the US: when you move in, you have to do what's called a walk-through with the landlord. And you do this while the apartment is still empty. You both walk through together, and you inspect the apartment to search for any damage because ... You know, if there's maybe a dent in the wall, you don't want to be held responsible for that when you move out. You want to note with the landlord that it's there before you move in, so you're not responsible for that.

And in this situation, it's always good to take some pictures with your phone, just in case you're very unlucky and get a sneaky landlord who wants to try and trick you at the end. You can have some proof that, "No, no, no, no, no, I didn't cause this damage. It was there all along."

Suzanne: Mmhmm, good tips.

Andrew: Oh yeah. Can you tell I've moved a lot, Suzanne?

Suzanne: Yeah. This very good advice.

Andrew: The next part of the conversation that we'll look at is when the apartment hunter asks for a little bit more information about the property. And the landlord responds using some interesting expressions. So let's listen to the property manager one more time.

Billy: Huh, well, let's see. The building's quiet. We've never had any major incidents, and there's a secured entrance.

Huh, well, let's see. The building's quiet. We've never had any major incidents, and there's a secured entrance.

Andrew: The property manager mentioned that the building is quiet. This is always a perk. You don't want to live in a loud place, right?

Suzanne: Yeah, that's good.

Andrew: And he also said that there have never been any major incidents in the building. What does he mean by this, major incidents?

- Suzanne: Hmmm, I would think that he means any kind of burglary or theft that could occur on a property.
- Andrew: Exactly.
- Suzanne: Like a break-in or any crime. So he's saying that it's been quiet and pretty crime-free.
- Andrew: Exactly. That's what I think he's talking about too: no major incidents, no crime, no burglaries, no theft, no vandalism. So it's a safe place to live, essentially, is what the property manager is communicating.
- Suzanne: Yeah. And I think the secured entrance is referring to perhaps a doorman at the building. Someone who is stationed in the front of the building for security, or maybe a locked foyer where people have to buzz in and can't just access the building straight away.
- Andrew: So there's some extra security measures at the front door, right? Maybe an extra lock or a security guard, doorman. There's something that is protecting the entrance to this apartment building, which can give the tenants some peace of mind.
- Suzanne: The next section of the conversation, Christina asks to come and see the apartment. So let's listen to that section.

- | | |
|------------|--|
| Christina: | If possible, I'd like to come and see the apartment. Can I set up a viewing ? |
| Billy: | We're having an open house this Saturday from 9:00 to noon. |
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- Andrew: All right. And she asked an interesting question here. She said, "Hey, property manager, can I set up **a viewing**?" Set up **a viewing**, what does this mean, set up **a viewing**?
- Suzanne: Well, it means to have an appointment and time where you can go and check out the apartment to see it for yourself, see all the things in person.
- Andrew: Exactly. Now this is kind of a specialized way to ask this question. You could simple ask, "Can I come take a look?" or "Can I see the apartment?" These are all different ways of asking essentially the same thing, right?
- Suzanne: Yeah, or "[Can I] set up an appointment to come see it?"

- Andrew: Mmhmm, exactly. But instead of having a private, one-to-one apartment tour, the property manager mentions that he's having an open house on Saturday. Now, maybe everybody can guess by the words in this expression, open house, but Suzanne, can you explain what an open house is?
- Suzanne: Yeah. So an open house is usually a time frame, in this case, 9:00 a.m. to noon, where the landlord or property manager will be there. And the doors of the apartment are open so that people who are interested in being tenants can come in as they want, on their own time, and check out the apartment. So no one has a specific time, an appointment. It's just open for people to come in and out as they please during those times.
- Andrew: Exactly. And this is more convenient for the property manager. He doesn't have to schedule a bunch of different appointments. He just makes one time where anybody who wants to can come and check out the place.
- Suzanne: Yeah. I kind of like those because it's less pressure sometimes. Sometimes when you have a one on one, they ask a lot of questions. And you feel like you're being pressured into renting the apartment, even if you don't know if you want it. So sometimes it's nice 'cause you can just walk around freely, and check it out and then leave if you don't like it.
- Andrew: That is right. And you'll also hear this expression used sometimes to talk about houses that are for sale. A real estate agent will have an open house where you can come, look at a house for sale. Also, some types of schools and universities will have an open house night where you can come, check out the school, and check out the class with no pressure of enrolling in that school.
- Suzanne: So that brings us to the end of today's episode, Andrew.
- Andrew: Don't forget that we'll be replaying the conversation one more time at the end of the show. So please stay tuned for that.
- Suzanne: Yes. And if you enjoyed today's episode, please support us. Rate and review us wherever you listen to your podcasts.
- Andrew: And if you have any questions or comments for us, you can send us a message through our Facebook page. That is [Facebook.com/CulipsPodcast](https://www.facebook.com/CulipsPodcast), or on our website, Culips.com. And I'd encourage everybody to check out our new comment feature. The comments are back, guys! And I'm waiting for you to leave me a comment, so do it right now.
- Suzanne: He really enjoys those comments.

Andrew: Oh yeah.

Suzanne: All right, that's it for now, but we'll be back soon with another new episode.

Andrew: OK. Bye-bye.

Suzanne: Bye!

Billy: Hello.

Christina: Oh hi, my name's Christina. I was just calling about the apartment that you're renting out. I saw an ad for it on the internet.

Billy: Uh, yeah. Hi, Christina. My name's Billy. I am the building manager. How can I help you?

Christina: Um, is the apartment still available?

Billy: Yup, it sure is.

Christina: Excellent. Could you give me some information about it?

Billy: So it's a bright and sunny one-bedroom apartment. It was renovated about 2 years ago. It has modern furnishings, plus we're planning to throw a new coat of paint on the walls before the new tenant moves in.

Christina: Oh, that's great. And what about the lease?

Billy: Yeah, it's just a standard 1-year lease, nothing special. After a year, it goes month to month.

Christina: OK. And if I remember correctly, the rent is \$800 a month?

Billy: Mmhmm, that's right, \$800 a month plus a **damage deposit** of a half month's rent.

Christina: Oh, OK. I see. Is there anything else I should know about the place?

Billy: Huh, well, let's see. The building's quiet. We've never had any major incidents, and there's a secured entrance.

Christina: Oh, that's nice.

Billy: Heat and hot water are included, but the other **utilities** are up to you.

Christina: Sure, I understand.

Billy: You don't have any pets, do you?

Christina: Uh, no, I don't. But if I did, is that a problem?

Billy: Well, yeah, that would be. Our building is pet- and smoke-free.

Christina: Oh, OK. One more question for you.

Billy: Shoot.

Christina: Is there in-suite laundry?

Billy: Unfortunately not. But we do have a laundry room in the basement. It's coin-operated.

Christina: Oh, OK. I see. Well, if possible, I'd like to come and see the apartment. Can I set up a **viewing**?

Billy: We're having an open house this Saturday from 9:00 to noon. Does that work for you?

Christina: Yeah, it sure does. I'll see you then.

Billy: OK, great. See you then, Christina.

Christina: Thanks, Billy. Bye.

Detailed Explanations

To go like hotcakes

To go like hotcakes is an idiom that means to disappear or to sell quickly. **To go like hotcakes** can be used to describe any item that is popular and becomes unavailable quickly.

When referring to something that sells quickly, you can use the verb to sell instead of to go, so you can say, “**To sell like hotcakes.**”

For example, in this episode, Andrew says that apartments in the urban centres of Canada, particularly Vancouver and Toronto, **go like hotcakes**. In other words, apartments in these cities are in demand, and do not stay on the market for long.

Here’s one more example with **to go like hotcakes**:

Maria:	Did you bring in cookies for everyone today?
Lucas:	I did! I brought two dozen cookies with me this morning, but they went like hotcakes . There are none left!
Maria:	Wow, they must have been really tasty and popular to go so quickly.

To fly off the shelf

To fly off the shelf is an expression that has almost the same meaning as **to go like hotcakes**. When an item **flies off the shelf**, it sells so quickly that stores cannot keep it in stock. So this expression means to sell very quickly and very easily.

So if something is so popular that it is hard to purchase, you can say, “The item **flew off the shelf.**”

Here’s one more example with **to fly off the shelf**:

Harold:	Hey, is that a new phone? It looks really cool.
Jeannine:	Thanks! Apparently, a lot of other people like it too. I had to go to five stores to get this one.
Harold:	Sounds like they’re flying off the shelf!

A deposit

When you're looking to rent an apartment, it's very important to know the different payments that you might be asked to make to the landlord or property manager:

- **Rent:** This is the regular monthly payment that you must make to live in an apartment.
- **Deposit:** This is a sum payment that you may be asked to make before moving into an apartment. There are three types of **deposits**:
 - **Holding deposit:** This is a sum payment to reserve an apartment before you sign a lease. **The holding deposit** is taken off the first month's rent.
 - **Rent deposit:** This is a sum payment equivalent to the first or last month's rent. In some Canadian provinces, renters may be asked to make **a rent deposit** when signing a lease.
 - **Damage/security deposit:** This is a sum payment to any cover potential damage to an apartment. Unless you damaged the apartment, **your security deposit** is returned when you move out of the apartment.

While paying monthly rent is always required, the type and amount of **deposit** required varies among Canadian provinces. If you are looking to rent an apartment in Canada, make sure you do your research on what types of **deposits** are legal and illegal.

Here are a couple more examples with **a deposit**:

Katie:	I found this really cool apartment in Montreal, but the landlord wants me to pay a huge security deposit . Is that legal in Quebec?
Bruce:	Oh, that's not good. Security deposits are illegal in Quebec. You shouldn't rent from that landlord!
Katie:	Thanks for telling me! I guess I should look for another apartment.

Landlord:	Congratulations, the apartment is yours! When can you sign the lease?
Leah:	Does Thursday work?
Landlord:	Yes, absolutely. When you come to sign the lease please bring a rent deposit of the first month's rent.

A viewing

The first step in renting an apartment, after finding out if the apartment is still available, is to set up **a viewing**. **A viewing** means an appointment to inspect or look at something. In other words, **a viewing** involves walking around and looking at the apartment. There are many ways you can phrase a request for **a viewing**, here are a few examples:

- “When can I come by to see the apartment?”
- “Can we set a time for **a viewing**?”
- “I would like to visit the apartment. When works for you?”

There are two different types of **viewing**:

Open house: This is a time, set by the landlord or property manager, when prospective tenants can see an apartment without an appointment. At open houses, there will be multiple groups of people walking through the apartment at once.

Private viewing: This is an appointment to see an apartment without other people present.

Here are a couple more examples with **a viewing**:

Robert:	Hello, I'm interested in the two-bedroom apartment you have for rent. Is it still available?
Landlord:	Yes, it's still available.
Robert:	Wonderful! I would love to come see the apartment as soon as possible. When can I stop by?
Landlord:	We're having an open house this Saturday at 5 p.m. I hope you can make it!

Michelle:	Hi, I'm calling about the bachelor apartment that I saw advertised online.
Landlord:	Well, it's still available for rent.
Michelle:	Great. Can we set a time for a private viewing ?
Landlord:	Absolutely. How does Wednesday at 2 p.m. sound?
Michelle:	That works for me. See you then!

A utility

A utility means a service paid for and used by the public, such as electricity, hot water, and gas. In Canada, apartments and houses for rent have access to heat, running and hot water, and electricity. So when asking a landlord about **utilities**, you're not asking if the apartment has these **utilities**, but rather if the cost of these **utilities** is included in the rent.

For example, in the sample dialogue in this episode, the landlord says, "Heat and hot water are included in the rent, but the other **utilities** are up to you." In other words, the renter does not have to pay for heat and hot water, but does have to pay for any other services. **Utility** payments can be a bit confusing, as the type and number of **utility** payments vary from building to building and from province to province. If you see an apartment listing that says the rent is "all inclusive," this means the **utility** payments are included in the price of the rent.

When you're looking to rent an apartment, it's important to ask which **utilities** are included in the rent. You can also ask the current tenant or the landlord how much you can expect to pay in **utilities** each month—this is not considered rude.

Here are a couple more examples with **a utility**:

Vick:	I love your apartment! Can I ask how much you pay?
Fran:	The rent is only \$600 a month, but I pay a fortune in utilities .
Vick:	I guess it costs a lot to heat a place with such high ceilings?
Fran:	Yup!

Carl:	Hi, I'm calling about the three-bedroom apartment. I saw a sign outside the property. How much is the rent?
Landlord:	It's \$2,500 a month.
Carl:	Are utilities included?
Landlord:	No.
Carl:	Oh, I'm sorry. That's a bit out of my price range.
Landlord:	No problem. Thanks for calling.

Quiz

1. Which of the following is a term for the monthly payment that you must make to live in an apartment?
 - a) a deposit
 - b) a damage deposit
 - c) the rent
 - d) a rent deposit

2. The following are all utilities, except for _____.
 - a) heat
 - b) furnishings
 - c) electricity
 - d) hot water

3. You can use the expression _____ to describe something that is so popular that it's difficult to purchase or acquire.
 - a) to run like hot dogs
 - b) to fly off hot cakes
 - c) to go like hot cakes
 - d) to sell a lot of hot cakes

4. An appointment to see an apartment in person is called _____.
 - a) a seeing
 - b) an arrival
 - c) a viewing
 - d) a private

5. When an item flies off the shelf, it sells _____.
 - a) quickly
 - b) slowly
 - c) cheaply
 - d) expensively

Quiz Answers

1.c 2.b 3.c 4.c 5.a

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