

Grade 8 English Home Language Worksheet

Listening skills, speaking, discussion, bias and prejudice

Listen to and watch the following short conversation between a landlord and his/her tenant. The landlord does not approve of the tenant's lifestyle, and makes his prejudice very clear.

When you have listened and watched, divide into groups of four. Discuss the following questions. Each member of the group is to take notes. Choose a spokesperson for the report-back session with the class.

Discussion points

1. Is the landlord biased for or against young people?
2. How does the landlord make this prejudice clear? Discuss both his words AND his body language and tone of voice.

Text

LANDLORD: I should never have allowed someone like you to stay in my home!

TENANT: What exactly do you mean by that?

LANDLORD: (arms folded, head cocked): The youth of today are worthless. They lie about, doing nothing and expecting to reap the benefits of society. They do absolutely nothing to help themselves. They are parasites and layabouts and –

TENANT: Don't you think you're generalising? You know that I am a student. You see me go off to varsity every day and work half the night. I am doing my bit so that I'll be able to participate as a responsible member of society.

LANDLORD: Oh, yes, I see you. Rushing out to meet your girlfriend; revving your motorbike at all hours. Studying! Ha! (with contempt)

TENANT: That's not fair!

LANDLORD: It's perfectly fair. I'm sure you're drunk every other night -

TENANT: When have you seen me drunk?

LANDLORD: And smoking – what do you call it? We called it pot or dope. Yes, drugged to the eyeballs. Studying? How can you study when you're high? Do you still call it 'high'? When you're shooting yourself full of some foul substance?

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TENANT: When have you ever seen this? I don't believe this!

LANDLORD: And the girlfriend. That's another thing. Sex, sex, sex. That's all you're interested in.

TENANT: I thought you said it was drinks and drugs?

LANDLORD: Don't answer me back. That's the trouble with people like you. You're cheeky, you answer back, you always have so much to say for yourself – nothing sensible, but oh so much!

TENANT: I've hardly said a word. You haven't even allowed me to defend myself.

LANDLORD: Well I don't want you in my home anymore. I am giving you a month's notice. I expect you to be out of here by the end of July.

TENANT: Why? What have I done?

LANDLORD: You know what you've done! I'm sick of dealing with young people who have no sense of responsibility, have no sense of what is due to other people. In my day, we were hard-working and responsible. I went out to work when I was seventeen. I helped pay the bills every month. My mother knew she could rely on me. God rest her soul, if she could see what I see now. We were never like this. We knew what it was to grow up without privileges like going to university or having a motorbike. We knew what it was to struggle and sweat. Unlike you people -

TENANT: But –

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Suggested Solutions

1. The landlord is biased against young people.
2. The landlord makes this bias clear in the following ways:

NOTE: The learners will give you the EXAMPLES (language, body language and tone), but you must show the learners how to group their examples under TECHNIQUES. You need to identify the TECHNIQUE for the learners; giving the words or describing the tone and body language is not enough. Learners need to start to understand that certain techniques are used when expressing bias and they are expected to be able to analyse these techniques in Grade 10, particularly when studying PROPAGANDA.

Techniques

1. The use of stereotypes: The young person must be dedicated to drugs, drink, and sex. Young people do not work; they are worthless; they make no contribution to society.
2. The substitution of names: labelling/name-calling
“someone like you”, instead of saying the person’s name; ‘young people’; ‘the youth of today’
3. Selection:
The tenant has a girlfriend and a motor bike the landlord makes use of this against him.
4. Stooping to downright lying: the landlord accuses the tenant of drinking and taking drugs. The tenant protests that he has never been seen doing either.
Gross exaggeration and untruths: he is always out with the girlfriend. The tenant protests that he attends university and studies late into the night. Highly emotive language, e.g. “worthless”, “nothing”, “parasites” “layabouts”.
5. Repetition:
The landlord says the same thing over and over again, e.g. “you answer back, you always have so much to say for yourself – nothing sensible, but oh so much!”
6. Assertion:
The landlord is not really arguing (logical argument is less emotive and therefore does not serve his purposes) but makes bold statements and assertions, e.g. Studying? How can you study when you’re high? Do you still call it ‘high’? When you’re shooting yourself full of some foul substance?
7. Pinpointing the enemy:

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Young people, the youth; they are seen as the enemy waiting to destroy society.

8. The appeal to authority:
The appeal to authority here is that of the older person. The older generation is seen as responsible, sensible, dedicated, hard-working, contributors to society.
9. To arouse emotions effectively by slanting or suggestion: Here the connotation of a word is of great importance. The landlord uses words like “parasites”.
10. To use rationalisation: (the use of reason not to seek truth but to justify unpleasant facts)
If the tenant is a drug-taking, sex-obsessed drunkard, then the landlord has every right to ask him to leave. There is no attempt to prove the claims the landlord makes.
11. To use distortions of logic known as fallacies: The landlord draws illogical conclusions from available data: the tenant goes out, therefore he must be partying, having sex, using drugs and getting drunk.
12. Glamorising own viewpoint/ideas: e.g. the older generation are seen as hard-working, loyal and loving of their parents – in particular, their mothers.
13. Making the audience feel guilty/embarrassed for not responding to the appeal: The tenant is made to feel that he is worthless and ungrateful.
14. Body language and tone of voice: The landlord folds his arms and cocks his head, indicating his disapproval.

His tone is angry, contemptuous, mocking, dismissive when he is talking about the youth, and passionately admiring when he talks of what his generation were like.