

Lovable Livable Home?



Text Type: Complaint letter
Suggested finishing time: 25 mins



Listen!







Let's think! 

1. How do you feel about your neighbours?
2. What do you talk about with your neighbours?

More to Take Away

Leakage from water pipes is a common but hidden source of domestic water wastage. Due to such leaks, each household typically drains tens of thousands of gallons of water annually. Fixing them would save a lot of water and money.

Which of the following is NOT true about the Wongs?

- A. They are noisy. (²'clamour' means loud noise  )
- B. They are ignorant. (³'not to know' means unaware or inobservant  )
- C. They did inappropriate things. (⁴'took their misconduct to the next level' means escalating bad behaviour  )
- D. none of the above

Moral

'Running is not, as it so often seems, only about what you did in your last race or about how many miles you ran last week. It is, in a much more important way, about community, about appreciating all the miles run by other runners, too.'

Richard O'Brien, British-New Zealand actor

Flat C, 10/E, Block A
Seaview Estate
Sha Tin, NT

15th October 20XX

The Manager
Asia Pacific Property Management Ltd.
18/F, 15 Shing Mun Road
Sha Tin, NT

Subject: Complaint regarding the undesirable living conditions of Seaview Estate

Dear Sir/Madam,

Having lived in this estate for over 10 years, I have always been pleased with the services you provided the residents with. Yet, ¹thanks to the growing number of inconsiderate and self-centred residents, several problems concerning the worsening living conditions of Seaview Estate have been troubling me recently. I am writing to express my concerns over them.

My first concern is about the noise nuisance that my new neighbours are responsible for. The Wongs, who live one floor above me, dance the night away to electronic music every midnight. It was not until their deafening music found their way to my flat that I discovered how great the vibration effects of my ceiling and sofas could be: fully comparable to an IMAX theatre's, which are, of course, awesome. Partying, playing mahjong and singing karaoke—in short, indulging themselves in ²clamour—these night owls seemed ³not to know someone downstairs was praying for a peaceful night and a good night's sleep, which they deprived me of. As a result, for the whole month, I have had a hard time focusing on my work, since the residue of those intolerable noises would linger in my mind in the mornings. They kept looping themselves in my head during the day. Although I ³⁰approached the Wongs in person for a solution to the issue, they not only failed to respond but also, unfortunately, ⁴took their misconduct to the next level.

To me, dialling 999 is always the last resort, so I will try all other conceivable ways before taking that step. This is the reason why I sincerely request the property manager to file, without further ado,

The preposition ¹'thanks to' means 'with the help of'. Here, it is used in a negative sense, suggesting that the writer's living conditions are worsening 'because of' her self-centred neighbours.

an official complaint against the Wongs. I am ready to submit evidence (e.g. the noise level in the flat measured during that period and my previous contact records with the Wongs) for your reference. By getting the property management team involved, I hope to settle the conflict in a benign way. Under the Noise Control Ordinance, strict control of noise annoyance is imposed on every housing estate, so they must refrain from making noises after eleven at night. I swear that if the situation worsens, I will have no choice but to call the police. 40

To turn to my second concern: the estate's hygiene is deteriorating day by day. It has become a food paradise for little insects. The Chans, my next-door neighbours, throw their leftovers out in the corridor near the stairs all the time. But these things are extremely alluring to pests. With flies, mosquitoes and cockroaches all gathering for a feast, the corridor is bursting at the seams. How extraordinary their banquet is! Worse, sometimes the cleaners don't clean the corridor or empty the rubbish bins until the next day, and the rubbish is left to rot and decay. I'm sure all my neighbours, including the Chans, expect more frequent and thorough cleaning. I believe we're all in the same boat in this regard. Therefore, I would like to urge the property manager to do two things: first and foremost, to issue a notice that reminds all residents to observe the hygiene rules; then, to evaluate the performance of the current cleaning company and call for improvement. Doing these would ensure all residents a comfy living environment, for our living space is too tiny and crowded for more uninvited guests. 45 50

The last matter I have planned to address is the serious water leakage and dripping in my block. The old, leaky and cracked drainage pipes above the ceiling make my flat's ceiling and walls soggy and covered in stinky moulds. Owing to the dampness, layers of paint peel and hairline cracks are visible on the ceiling and walls. The drips are not any less irritating. I must not only clean up pieces of loose paint, but also mop the wet ceiling and floor in my living room, nearly on a daily basis. It gives me a big headache. These leaky pipes need to be fixed, as they now lead to occasional sprinkling. If I place my plants right below the cracked walls, I will save time in watering the plants. 55 60

Although I am appalled by the above issues, I am still confident in my belief that, in the future, your team will maintain the quality management I have observed for years in the past. It is my sincere hope that, for the sake of the residents' well-being, these issues will be investigated in no time. I am certain all of us would like to live under habitable standards. Please keep me informed about any follow-up actions. 65

Thank you very much for your attention.

Yours faithfully,
Jenna Chim

~800 words

Looking into Grammar

We may use the sentence pattern 'Subject + verb + object + object complement', in which the object complement is usually an adjective or a noun phrase, to describe the effect of the subject on the object. Note that without the object complement, the object's meaning is incomplete.

- ✓ The dust turns the windows **opaque** (✗ **are opaque**).
- ✓ The refrigerator keeps the food **cold** (✗ **is cold**).

? Underline TWO similarly structured sentences in paragraphs 5 and 6.

Part A Multiple Choice Questions

Answer the following questions based on the information provided in the complaint letter. Choose the best answer by blackening the appropriate circle.

1. The Wongs _____.
- A. live one flat above the writer
 - B. may have hearing impairment
 - C. do not sleep until the writer is at work
 - D. are also annoyed by noise pollution
2. Official complaints have to be _____.
- A. police's referrals
 - B. accompanied by the submission of evidence
 - C. filed before alarming the police
 - D. handled by the property manager
3. The _____ the pest problem.
- A. cleaning company turns a blind eye to
 - B. leftovers from the Chans give rise to
 - C. leaking drainage pipes are the consequence of
 - D. property management team is aware of
4. In line 46, 'bursting at the seams' means _____.
- A. ruptured
 - B. crammed
 - C. seamless
 - D. spacious
5. In line 57, 'Owing to' can best be replaced by '_____':
- A. According to
 - B. In spite of
 - C. In consequence of
 - D. Instead of
6. Which of the following is TRUE about the writer's flat?
- A. The pipes are under maintenance.
 - B. The pipes require maintenance.
 - C. Leaking causes more trouble than dripping does.
 - D. The walls have been repainted for the leaks.
7. Which of the following is TRUE?
- A. The writer recognises the upside of the leaks and drips.
 - B. Leaks and drips matter only when they are visible.
 - C. Moulds leave stains on the ceiling and walls.
 - D. The living room floods occasionally.
8. The writer provides a(n) _____ account of what she is displeased with, despite her _____ remarks. She is _____ about how her complaint will be followed up.
- A. arrogant...rude...doubtful
 - B. sensible...sarcastic...optimistic
 - C. brief...offensive...reserved
 - D. funny...unkind...confused

8 Read the first and the last paragraphs first. Does the writer sound friendly or blunt?

5 Substitute the preposition with each of these cohesive devices.



Self-evaluation
Checklist

Please scan the QR code on P.6 to access the checklist for evaluating your own reading progress.

Part B Pre-HKDSE Questions

Answer the following questions based on the information provided in the complaint letter. For question 2, answer in complete sentences.



1. Why could the writer NOT focus on work in the mornings?

1 What happened to the writer at night?

Due to _____, the writer _____ at night, and hence _____.



2. The writer might not be pleased with the service of the property management team. Suggest two reasons why she said the opposite. Infer your answers from paragraphs 1 and 6.

- (i) _____
 (ii) _____

3. Look for words or phrases in the complaint letter that are similar in meaning to the following:

- (i) took away from (*phr. v.*) _____ (para. 2)
 (ii) avoid oneself (*v.*) _____ (para. 3)
 (iii) obey (*v.*) _____ (para. 4)
 (iv) a cause of annoyance (*n.*) _____ (para. 4)

4. Circle TWO adjectives that best describe the writer's tone.
 sarcastic / spiteful / serious / indifferent / playful / threatening

4 People tend to express discontent implicitly. They may deliver criticism without sounding too disrespectful.

5. What are the details of the writer's complaint? Complete the complaint form below. Some of the details have been completed to help you.

Complaint Form			
Housing estate concerned: (i) _____		Name of the complainant: Jenna Chim	
People being complained:	(ii) _____	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the Chans (iii) _____ 	N/A
Category of complaint(s):	(iv) _____	Hygiene	Leaking pipes
Proposed action(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to (v) _____ a complaint against them to (vi) _____ the police 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to post a (vii) _____ to ensure the cleaning company will (viii) _____ its service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to (ix) _____ the leaky pipes

Part C Vocabulary Bank

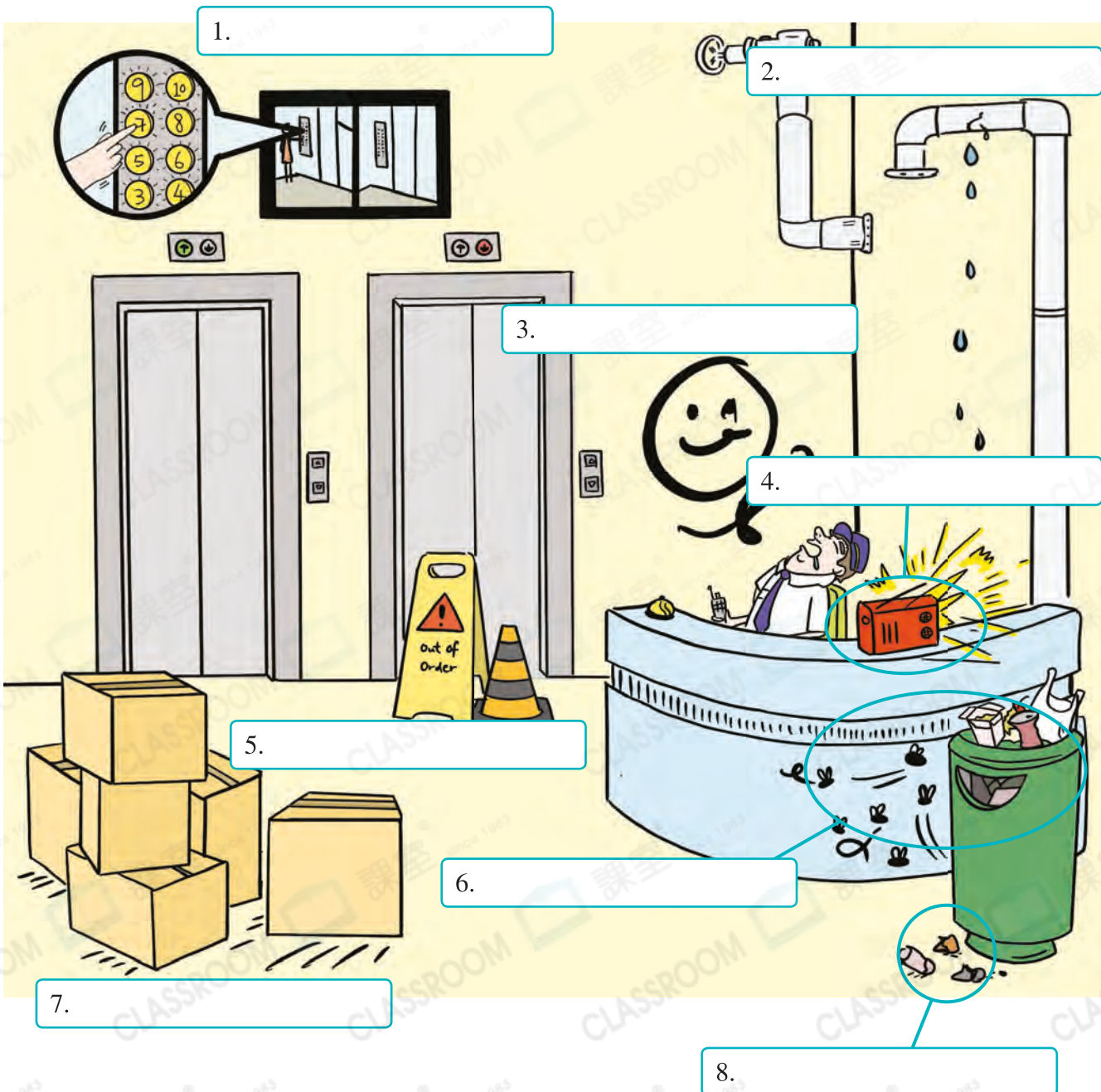
Label the items below with the undesirable living conditions from the word box.

vandalism
poor hygiene

noise nuisance
hallway obstruction

harassment
leakage

odour
maintenance



Part D Cloze Passage

Complete the newspaper clippings below with the appropriate nouns introduced on the previous page.

20TH OCTOBER, 20XX (THUR)

DAILY NEWS

A3

Fire at Kowloon Bay School

Though the fire yesterday was put out in an hour, the strong (1) _____ of the smoke left by the accident was still in the air in Kowloon Bay School's main hall today. All the students and staff were evacuated in time, and no one was injured in the incident.

An extensive investigation is needed to find out the cause of the fire. At present, the investigation is proceeding in two directions. One is that the fire may have been related to (2) _____: the stairs behind the stage were stacked with inflammable items, like huge cardboard boxes and curtains, which should not be stored in such small and crowded space. Water (3) _____ is thought to be another possible cause. With the rainy weather this week, water might have leaked from the ceiling to the speakers. This could have been the cause of electrical short circuit, hence the fire.

The Fire Services Department is taking this opportunity to raise public awareness of the need to keep escape routes neat and clean as blocked pathways can be a great obstacle to evacuation. When there is a fire, every second counts.

The Library is Watching You

Public libraries are installing more security cameras in view of the growing threat of (4) _____. On Hong Kong Island and in Kowloon, seven public libraries have reported an increased number of damaged books and CDs. The police are now investigating the cases. More CCTV cameras will be installed. It has been estimated that five hundred thousand dollars will be spent on the installation and (5) _____ fee.

TST Residents Want to Sleep

Residents of Tsim Sha Tsui have been complaining about the (6) _____ caused by street buskers since May. Every weekend, they claimed, the street buskers would be singing and playing music so vigorously until around 3 am to an extent that sleep is routinely disturbed. Consequently, they filed a formal complaint to the Environmental Protection Department in May, but have not received any response yet. The matter was brought to court last month, and a session has been scheduled for next Wednesday.

Tenant Drives Landlord Crazy and Landlord Retaliates

Tyson Tiger, a landlord, was recently accused of (7) _____. A tenant claimed that Tyson had attempted to evict him by performing a series of aggressive actions. Tyson, it was claimed, entered the tenant's apartment without notice or consent and cut off the electricity supply and Wi-Fi utilities. He, allegedly, was constantly making threatening nuisance calls to the tenant's apartment at midnight as a form of retaliation to the tenant's persistent delay in paying rent.

Tyson defended himself that the 'hellish tenant' had 'disastrous' housekeeping and (8) _____, making his well-maintained apartment 'unbearably unlivable', as he saw trash scattered on the floor, windows broken and pipes leaking. Yet still, the tenant was unresponsive to his notice and made no attempt to remedy the situation.

Let's Discuss!

1. Do you consider your home lovable? Why or why not?
2. Do you agree that the living conditions in Hong Kong are generally undesirable?