

Teaching the Topic

There are two scenarios, with a real person and with an answer phone. Answer phones that require us to follow instructions and press different buttons are extremely difficult and frustrating. There may be another way to approach the business. The learner must be clear about what they need – a service at the house (for example, a plumber), something done away from the house (for example, internet connections) or information (for example, flight arrival times).

Resources

Yellow pages; leaflets; notices in community papers and on noticeboards; web listings.

Activities

- Phone a few businesses and note down what people say. Use these as examples of different ways of answering business calls.
- Prepare written details, for example, make of washing machine.
- Talk about what is needed – what model, what the problem is, what the learner wants to happen as a result of the call. The tutor needs to be aware of what a business might say.
- Practise clear, succinct assertive language for the beginning of the phone call, for example, *I have a serious/an urgent problem.*
- Practise leaving a message on an answer phone so that someone will call you back. Focus on clear pronunciation of the reason for the call, name, phone number and time available.
- Role play the phone exchange and record it. Listen together and correct any language problems.
- Repeat what is going to happen or what the learner needs to do, for example, *I will expect you on Tuesday 10th after 10.00am, at 38 Green Street.*

Language

- Describing the problem, situation or need, *broken, won't work, doesn't move.*
- Clarifying, *So you will be here tomorrow after lunch? So you will ring before you come? So I need to pay in cash?*

Using the Worksheet

A possible introductory activity: Has the learner ever called a business in New Zealand? What for? What happened?

This is a speaking activity based on nine pictures in order. The learner looks at the pictures and tells the story about the plumbing problem. Depending on the learner's level, the tutor could tell the story first and ask the learner to repeat using their own words; the pictures could be cut up and the learner could put them in order to tell the story; the learner could write the story after speaking.

Main learning points

Tell a story clearly. Use the past tense to show chronological order. Use simple sentence patterns correctly – *She told her husband. Her husband couldn't fix the tap. She called the plumber. He came to the house.* Use words associated with plumbing.

What else could be learnt?

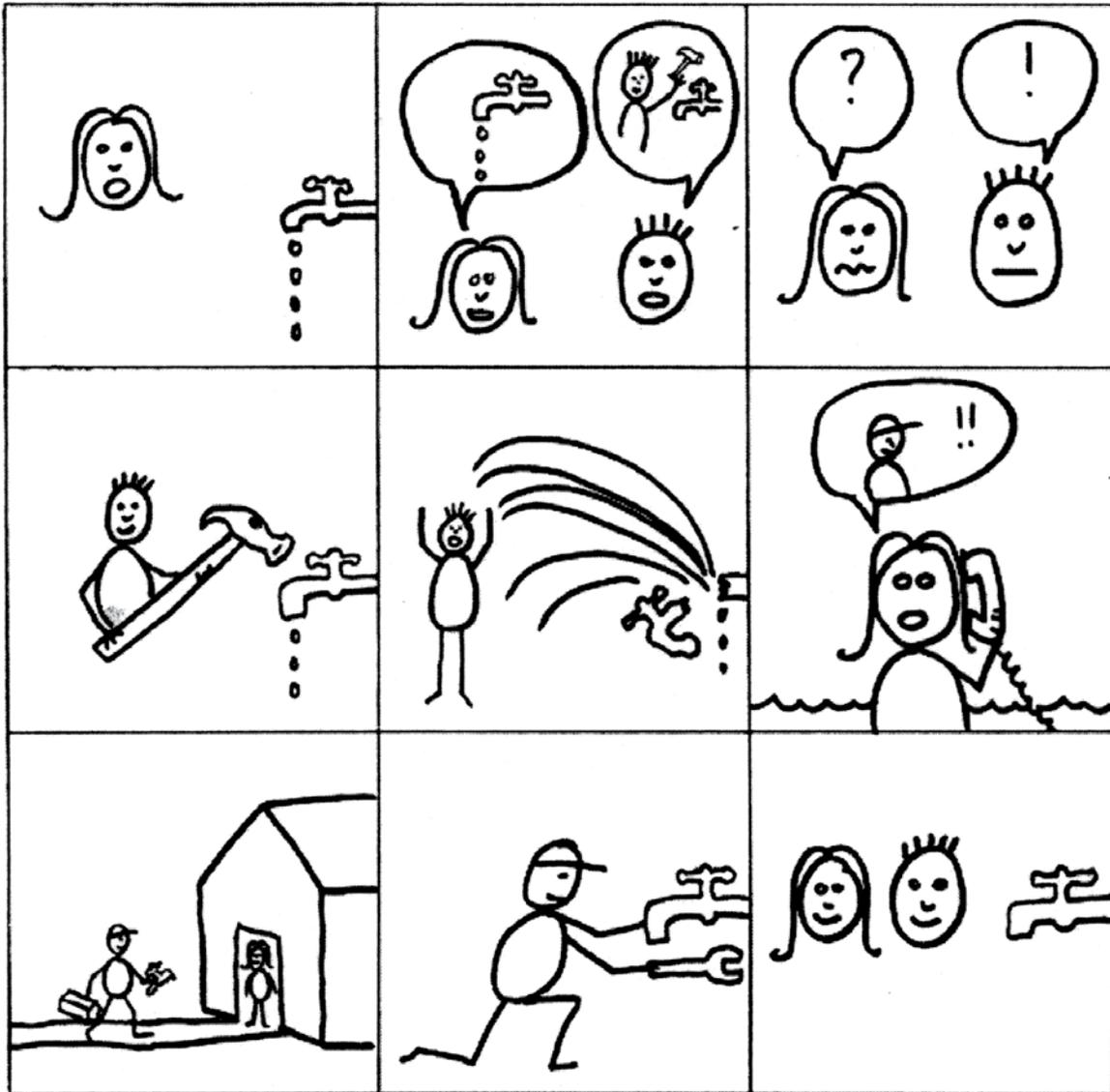
Tell stories using the simple past tense. The tutor tells a similar story and asks the learner to tell a story of their own experience – a broken water pipe, for example. Practise the simple past in other stories.

Words for other house problems – leaking roof, light switch not working.



Call a plumber!

Tell the story from the pictures below. Use words in the box to help you.



a dripping tap a hammer telephone a plumber a spanner