




Learning about the Law

Lesson: Renting a Home – Security Deposits and Dispute Resolution

CLB 4 Instructional Package

2013


Learning about the Law:



Working in BC Renting a Home

This booklet will help you understand the laws that may affect you at work and at home.

It focuses on how the law protects you when you are working and when you are a tenant or a landlord.




 PEOPLE'S LAW SCHOOL THIS BOOKLET PROVIDES PUBLIC LEGAL INFORMATION ONLY. IF YOU NEED LEGAL ADVICE YOU SHOULD CONTACT A LEGAL PROFESSIONAL. **FREE**

Renting a Home



Lesson Plan: Security Deposits and Dispute Resolution (CLB 4)

CLB Outcomes

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|--|--|
|  CLB 4-IV: Sharing Information | Give brief descriptions of personal experiences, situations or simple processes, such as getting goods or services. |
|  CLB 4-IV: Comprehending Information | Understand the purpose, main idea, key information and specific details in simple, short texts related to everyday familiar and personally relevant situations and topics. |
|  CLB 4-III: Getting Things Done | Write simple business or service messages. |

Content Outcomes

- Identify the rules associated with giving and returning security deposits
- Identify where to get more information about rights and responsibilities of tenants and landlords
- Write a simple letter to a landlord making a request

Resources

- Peoples Law School (PLS) wikibook, *Learning about the Law*, section on *Renting a Home*, sub-sections on *Security and deposit* and *Residential Tenancy Dispute Resolution*
- PLS worksheets "Renting a Home: Security Deposits and Dispute Resolution"
- Computer Lab (optional)

External Resources and Referrals

- For more information on dispute resolutions services for tenants and landlords, visit www.rto.gov.bc.ca.
- For more information on laws and rights for tenants, visit www.tenants.bc.ca.
- For information about housing and mortgages, visit www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca.

Assessment Plan and Tools

- Self-assessment checklist

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Sample Procedures

Time	Sample Tasks	Expected Outcome	Resources
15'	<p>Warm up</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In pairs, students look at the pictures and create a story Write some key words as prompts for the story: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>tenant – renter</i> <i>look for – house hunt</i> <i>landlord – owner/manager</i> <i>tenancy agreement – contract</i> <i>monthly rent – lease</i> <i>security deposit – extra money</i> <i>give notice – write a letter</i> <i>pay back – return</i> Ask students about the laws and steps involved in renting a house or apartment in their countries 	<p>Generate interest</p> <p>Activate prior knowledge</p>	<p>PLS Worksheet: Get Ready!</p>
20'	<p>Vocabulary practice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students work individually to complete the reading cloze Students compare their answers with a partner Students check answers in the PLS booklet Go over any new vocabulary, but encourage students to apply word attack strategies first: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask for peer support Guess the meaning from context Look in monolingual dictionaries In pairs, students discuss questions As a whole class, check answers and discuss 	<p>Understand key information and specific details about giving security deposits and getting security deposits back</p> <p>Predict information in a text</p>	<p>PLS Worksheet: Predict the Vocabulary!</p> <p><i>Renting a Home</i>, p. 12.</p>
20'	<p>Read and comprehend</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students read the PLS booklet in order to check off true statement Students correct false statements by changing them into true statements 	<p>Identify information about landlord and tenancy laws</p> <p>Identify true and false statements</p>	<p>PLS Worksheet: Read and Check!</p>

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Time	Sample Tasks	Expected Outcome	Resources
30'	<p>Write and peer edit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare the class by reviewing letter writing format and drawing their attention to the sample letter Tell students to use your name as the landlord and the school's address Write the school's address on the board for the students Students <u>individually</u> write their letters Students exchange letters and use the checklist at the bottom of the page to peer edit Check students' letters and go over issues that were not resolved by the peer edit 	<p>Write a simple letter to a landlord making a request</p> <p>Peer edit and provide feedback</p>	<p>PLS Worksheet: Write a Letter!</p>
30'	<p>Vocabulary practice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In pairs, students write their own definitions for the underlined vocabulary words and phrases Encourage students to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guess the meaning from context Look in monolingual dictionaries Check answers as a class In pairs, students summarize the main points they learned in class and use the new vocabulary 	<p>Understand key information and specific details related to dispute resolution</p> <p>Summarize main points and details</p>	<p>PLS Worksheet: In our own words!</p> <p><i>Renting a Home</i>, p. 13.</p>

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Time	Sample Tasks	Expected Outcome	Resources
45'	<p>Dialogue practice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pass out the cut up dialogue to pairs of students to arrange in order • Students read through and act out the dialogue in pairs • Go over the rhythm and intonation in the dialogue and highlight any other pronunciation points you want to cover and have them read the dialogue again <p>Comprehension Check</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students work in pairs to answer the comprehension questions about the conversation • Students guess the meaning of the vocabulary phrases and create their own dialogue using these words and phrases 	<p>Understand the purpose and main idea in the short dialogue about a security deposit problem</p> <p>Practice rhythm and intonation in pronunciation</p>	<p>PLS Worksheet: Act it Out!</p> <p>PLS Worksheet: Comprehend the Conversation!</p> <p><i>Renting a Home</i>, p. 13, 25.</p>
10'	<p>Self-Assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow students to fill out self-assessment form independently 	<p>Self-assessment</p>	<p>PLS Worksheet: What did you learn?</p>

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Get Ready!

Work with a partner. Look at the pictures. What is the story?

<p>1</p>	<p>2</p>
<p>3</p> <p>Tenancy agreement</p> <p>Monthly rent deposit</p> <p>Security</p>	<p>4</p> <p>Two years later</p> <p>Moved to Montreal</p> <p>One month notice</p>
<p>5</p> <p>In Montreal</p>	<p>6</p> <p>http://www.clker.com</p>

Commented [C1]: Should this be positioned under the word Security? In my version it looks like it is under monthly

Commented [C2]: Rather than have this as a link, maybe it could just say Source: clker.com

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Predict the Vocabulary!

Use the words in the boxes to complete the paragraphs. Compare your answers with a partner. Check your answers in the PLS booklet, p. 12.

Paying a security deposit

receipt	place	important
security	one-half	damage
extra	deposit	move

When tenants move into a place, they usually must pay the landlord some _____ money that they may get back when they _____ out. This is called a _____ deposit. It is to pay for any _____ the tenant might do. It can't be more than _____ of the month's rent money. It is very _____ for the tenant to keep the _____ for the security _____.

Getting your money back

interest	landlord	security
permission	return	given
address	repairs	agree

When the tenant moves out, the tenant should give the landlord an address in writing saying where to send the _____ deposit. Once the tenant has _____ the landlord this _____, the landlord must _____ the security deposit with _____ within 15 days or ask the Residential Tenancy Branch for _____ to keep some or all of it.

If the tenant damaged the place, the landlord can with permission from the Residential Tenancy Branch use some of the security deposit money for the _____. However, the tenant must _____ to this in writing.

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Read and Check!

Read the PLS booklet, p.11-12 and check off all of the statements that are true. For the statements that are false, change the statement to make a true statement. Write it below the statement.

- Tenants have to pay security deposits when they move into a new place.
- Security deposits can be the same amount as the rent.
- The tenant should keep a copy of the receipt of the security deposit.
- Tenants must give a letter to the landlord when they move in order to get back the security deposit.
- The landlord has a month to return the security deposit after the tenant moves out.
- Tenants do not have to pay for any damages they cause.
- Tenants must agree if the landlord wants to use the security deposit for damages.
- An inspector can order the landlord to fix things in an apartment.
- If you can't settle a dispute with your landlord, there is nothing you can do.
- If you go to a dispute resolution hearing, you must have evidence for your argument.

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Write a Letter!

Look at the sample letter. You are a tenant and you have just moved. Write a letter to your former landlord requesting the security deposit and telling him/her your new address.

Sample Letter

Landlord's Name
Address
City, Province
Postal Code

Date

Dear [**landlord's name**]:

This letter is a request for _____ for the amount of _____ plus interest. Please send the money to my new address: _____.

Thank you,

Tenant's signature

Tenant's printed name
Phone number

Peer Edit!

Exchange your letter with a classmate. Use the checklist below to check your classmate's letter. Check off Yes or No for each point.

Letter checklist	
Landlord's address	
Date and opening salutation	
Clearly states request and new address	
Closing salutation	
Contact number	
Correct capital letters and punctuation	

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In your own Words!

Work with a partner. The sentences below are from the *Residential tenancy dispute resolution* section on page 13 in the PLS booklet. Explain the underlined words and phrases *in your own words*.

1. If you have a problem with your landlord, you may be able to resolve the matter by talking to him or her.

resolve the matter means _____

2. If you cannot work it out on your own you can access dispute resolution services through the Residential Tenancy Branch.

access means _____

dispute resolution means _____

3. A dispute resolution hearing is a bit like a court.

a bit like a court means _____

4. You ask a Dispute Resolution Officer (DRO) to make a decision based on the law.

based on means _____

5. You would need to have evidence in support of your argument.

evidence means _____

Practice!

With your partner, use the vocabulary in sentences to summarizing or re-stating some of the main information you learned in class today.

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Act it Out!

Hand out the conversation cut up into strips to pairs of students. Have each pair arrange the conversation in order and then read through it and act out.

Navdeep: Vera, can I ask you a favor?
Vera: Sure, what's up?
Navdeep: Are you free next Wednesday morning? I'm going to the Residential Tenancy Branch. I'm wondering if you would come with me. I'm really nervous.
Vera: Next Wednesday? Yeah, sure. I can go with you. What's this all about?
Navdeep: Kevin, my former landlord, won't give me all of my security deposit. He says that I damaged the place.
Vera: No way! You're kidding me! You didn't damage anything, did you?
Navdeep: No! In fact the place is in better condition than when I first moved in.
Vera: What are you going to do?
Navdeep: Well, I'm going to go to the Residential Tenancy. Kevin is way off! I have photos of the place when I first moved in. Kevin was with me when I took those pictures. I also did a walk through with him after I moved out and cleaned up the place. Everything was fine! I just don't get it!
Vera: Gees! That's weird. You bet I'll go with you on Wednesday. It sounds so unfair!

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Navdeep: Thanks! I really appreciate it! I owe you one!

Understand the Conversation!

In pairs, discuss the following questions.

1. What favor does Navdeep ask Vera?
2. Why is Navdeep going to the Residential Tenancy Branch?
3. What did Navdeep do when she first moved into the place? Why did she do that?
4. What did Navdeep do after she moved out? Why did she do that?
5. Why do you think her former landlord, Kevin, won't give her all of her security deposit?
6. What do you think will happen?
7. Look in the PLS booklet, *Renting a Home*, and find the following information:

Residential Tenancy Branch Vancouver phone number:

Toll Free number:

Website address:

Focus on Vocabulary!

Look at the list of expressions from the dialogue. What do you think they mean? Role play your own conversation with a partner. Talk about renting an apartment or security deposits. Use 2 – 3 of the terms below.

1. What's up _____
2. No way _____
3. You're kidding me _____
4. Gees _____
5. That's weird _____
6. I owe you one! _____

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What did you learn? Fill this out on your own.

	Yes, I can do this on my own.	I need to review this.	I can't do this yet.
I can describe the steps to renting a home.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I can write a notice letter to my landlord.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I can find information about renting a home and security deposits.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I can ask for a favor.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I can summarize key points.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

What else did you learn today? What other questions do you have about renting a home?

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Predict the Vocabulary! ANSWER KEY

Paying a security deposit (reading cloze)

receipt	place	important
security	one-half	damage
extra	deposit	move

When tenants move into a place, they usually must pay the landlord some extra money that they may get back when they move out. This is called a security deposit. It is to pay for any damage the tenant might do. It can't be more than one-half of the month's rent money. It is very important for the tenant to keep the receipt for the security deposit.

Getting your money back (reading cloze)

interest	landlord	security
permission	return	given
address	repairs	agree

When the tenant moves out, the tenant should give the landlord an address in writing saying where to send the security deposit. Once the tenant has given the landlord this address, the landlord must return the security deposit with interest within 15 days or ask the Residential Tenancy Branch for permission to keep some or all of it.

If the tenant damaged the place, the landlord can with permission from the Residential Tenancy Branch use some of the security deposit money for the repairs. However, the tenant must agree to this in writing.

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Read and Check! ANSWER KEY

- ✓ Tenants have to pay security deposits when they move into a new place.

- Security deposits can be the same amount as the rent.
Security deposits can only be half or less of the amount of a month's rent.

- ✓ The tenant should keep a copy of the receipt of the security deposit.

- ✓ Tenants must give a letter to the landlord when they move in order to get back the security deposit.

- The landlord has a month to return the security deposit after the tenant moves out.
The landlord must return the security deposit within 15 days.

- Tenants do not have to pay for any damages they cause.
Tenants may have to pay for some of the damages and this will come out of their security deposits.

- ✓ Tenants must agree if the landlord wants to use the security deposit for damages.

- ✓ An inspector can order the landlord to fix things in an apartment.

- If you can't settle a dispute with your landlord, there is nothing you can do.
If you can't settle a dispute with your landlord, you can access the dispute resolutions services through the Residential Tenancy Branch.

- ✓ If you go to a dispute resolution hearing, you must have evidence for your argument.

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Comprehend the Conversation!

ANSWER KEY

1. What favor does Navdeep ask Vera?

to come with her to the Residential Tenancy Branch

2. Why is Navdeep going to the Residential Tenancy Branch?

because her landlord won't give back her security deposit for damages she didn't do

3. What did Navdeep do when she first moved into the place? Why did she do that?

she took pictures of everything in order to have evidence of how the place looked and the damages that were there when she moved in

4. What did Navdeep do after she moved out? Why did she do that?

did a walk through and cleaned the place so that everything would be in good condition when she left and so she get back her deposit

5. Why do you think her former landlord, Kevin, won't give her all of her security deposit?

(answers will vary) he is not following the residential tenancy branch guidelines

6. What do you think will happen?

(answers will vary) because she has evidence, she will probably get the full deposit back

7. Look in the PLS booklet, *Renting a Home*, and find the following information:

Residential Tenancy Branch Vancouver phone number: 604-660-1020

Toll Free number: 1-800-665-8779

Website address: www.rto.gov.bc.ca

