

Independent Living Skills Module I

You've probably seen advertisements like this one in magazines and newspapers. It seems to offer you 10 CDs free. But, read the fine print in the ad and find out what you are obligated to do before you sign up.

On the surface, the Music Fan Club might seem like a good idea. But remember, you must buy 12 CDs during the next year. If you don't listen to CDs frequently, then this may not be the right deal for you. What if you cannot find 12 CDs on their sales lists which interest you? Well, that's too bad; you promised to buy 12 CDs, no matter what. Also, it is not mentioned in the ad, but frequently you have to pay the cost of having the CDs mailed to your home, which can add up to quite a bit.

These mail-order offers are not necessarily bad, but they do involve many obligations. Therefore, be very careful and check out everything (cost, quantity, penalties, etc.) before signing up. Sign up only if the purchase is one you planned to make anyway. Don't forget to consider the quantity of the items as well as the price.

Unethical/Deceptive Practices

Most business people are honest. They value their reputations and want customers to return. Unfortunately, there are a few companies that will try to trick you into buying merchandise that is more expensive than you want or need. If you are alert, you will not fall into these traps:

Bait and Switch occurs when you enter a store to buy an advertised item, only to have the salesperson steer you to a different, more expensive item. For example, you go to a store to buy house paint that has been advertised for \$6.99 a gallon, and the salesperson immediately tells you that the advertised paint is poor quality and tries to convince you to buy paint which is selling for \$20.00 a gallon. If you decide for yourself that you don't like the advertised item after you have seen it and ask to be shown another, you are not involved in "Bait and Switch." In this instance, the salesperson is only doing his/her best to show you something that will satisfy you.

Lowballing occurs when a business doesn't sell an item, like a car, at the advertised price. A dishonest car dealer, for example, tells you that "luxuries," like window and tires, are not included in the sales price and will cost extra.

The following practices are not unethical, but they are common ploys used to attract customers:

Loss Leaders is a situation that occurs when a store sells only a few items at a very low price to attract customers. The store owners hope that customers will purchase more expensive items while they are there, rather than comparison shop for a better value. Be wise. Buy only the sale items. Wait to comparison shop for other purchases. It will be worth it.

Conditional Purchases are also common. This occurs when you are required to purchase a non-sale item to get another item at sale price, or when you must purchase more than one of the sale items in order to pay the sale price (such as "Buy One, Get One Free" sales). This is not a bad thing as long as you want or need all the items you purchase.

Remember, according to the law, you have these rights:

If you are shopping by mail, you have the right to cancel your order if the merchandise does not arrive within the stated time.

If a warrantor does not honor a written or implied warranty on merchandise purchased after 7/4/75, you have the right to sue the warrantor under the Warranty Act.

Smart Shopping

To shop wisely and make your money last, keep the following in mind:

- Replace things only when they wear out.
- Check several stores to compare prices.

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- Check newspapers and flyers for sales.
- Examine quality, quantity, and durability.
- Decide what you will buy and buy only that item.
- Save money, rather than borrow, to buy a costly item.
- Try to buy things while they are on sale.
- Read all labels and tags carefully.
- Never buy clothing without trying on each item. Sizes may vary.
- Compare warranties.
- Always read the fine print.
- Evaluate any obligations.
- Always save sales slips, receipts, and warranties.
- Before you buy, you should ask yourself these questions:
 - ◊ Am I certain the merchandise is exactly what I want?
 - ◊ Will the store give a refund? Remember, some stores (such as factory outlets) have a policy that all sales are final.
 - ◊ Do I need the sales receipt and/or price tag to get an exchange or refund?
 - ◊ Is this a “Final Sale” item?
 - ◊ Does the item have a written warranty?
 - ◊ Before signing a contract: Do I fully understand it? Will I have a copy to keep?

If you know your rights, avoid traps, and follow the advice in this section, you'll be a very smart shopper indeed. Being a smart shopper, like anything else, takes some practice, but it's well worth the money you'll save.



ACTIVITY

Choose a fairly major item you plan to purchase within the next 12 months (clothing, furniture, stereo equipment, bicycle, etc.) Comparison shop at three different stores and list your findings below.

Store One:

<i>Item</i>	<i>Brand</i>	<i>Quality/ Durability</i>	<i>Warranty</i>	<i>Exchange Policies</i>	<i>Other things to be considered:</i>

Store Two:

<i>Item</i>	<i>Brand</i>	<i>Quality/ Durability</i>	<i>Warranty</i>	<i>Exchange Policies</i>	<i>Other:</i>

Store Three:

<i>Item</i>	<i>Brand</i>	<i>Quality/ Durability</i>	<i>Warranty</i>	<i>Exchange Policies</i>	<i>Other:</i>

In which of the three stores would you be likely to purchase your item? Explain your choice.

HOME MANAGEMENT

SKILL ASSESSMENT

The following questions will help you identify home management /housekeeping skills in which you excel and target those which you need to develop. By yourself or with your team try to answer each of the questions as honestly as possible. After completing this independent living skills assessment, review it with your team and identify those skills you would like to strengthen.

I do not know how to do this *I need to know more about this* *I can do/have done this*

1. Know how to make a bed and how frequently I should change the sheets.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Know how to clean up after a meal (clear the table, put food away, wash the dishes with hot, soapy water, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Know how to use the different cleaning products that are specially made for each particular cleaning job such as bathtubs, ovens, windows, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Know how to keep room/apartment clean by sweeping and washing floors, dusting furniture, vacuuming rugs, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Know the importance of keeping the bathroom sink, toilet, tub, tile floor, etc., clean.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Understand the need for properly storing, bagging, and disposing of garbage. Participate in re-cycling glass, aluminum, and plastic.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Know what causes sinks and toilets to clog and what to do to prevent clogs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Know how and when to defrost the refrigerator, if it is not frost free.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Know when to call the landlord for maintenance and repairs and when to “do it myself.”	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

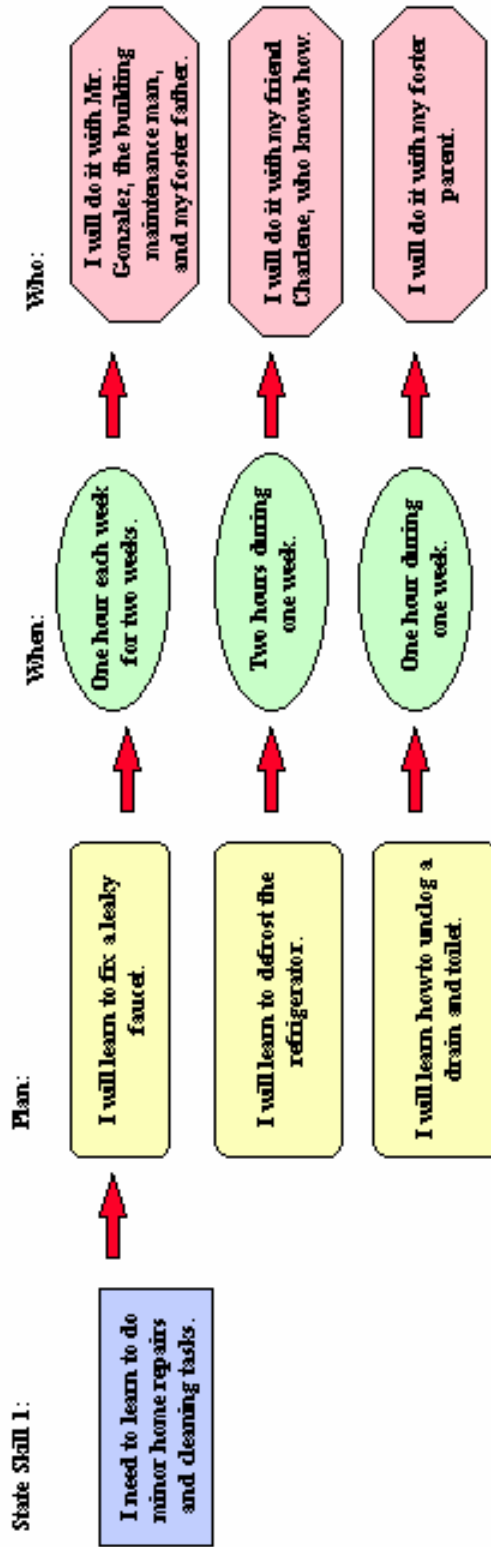
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	<i>I do not know how to do this</i>	<i>I need to know more about this</i>	<i>I can do/ have done this</i>
10. Understand the danger of using furniture polish or waxing stairs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. Know how to keep pests and rodents out of my home.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. Know how to unclog a toilet or sink with a plunger or drain cleaner.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. Know how to change a light bulb using the correct wattage, change a fuse, and/or reset a circuit breaker.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. Know how to use a dishwasher and garbage disposal safely.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15. Know how to check smoke detectors to see if they are working and can replace the battery, if necessary.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16. Can maintain a regular house cleaning schedule.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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You have now completed the assessment section and identified those skills in home maintenance that you would like to strengthen in order to be better able to do things on your own. The following guide can help you in planning how you can learn about and practice these skills. Choose a few skills that you want to develop, and with your team, write down your plan of action. Remember, once you accomplish these goals you can go back to your assessment tool and select new goals to build on your new skills.

EXAMPLE **GOAL: TO IMPROVE HOME MAINTENANCE SKILLS**



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GOAL: TO IMPROVE HOME MAINTENANCE SKILLS

State Skill 1:
to be developed
and/or improved



Plan:
how do you plan to learn,
develop and improve this skill?



When:
when, where, and how often will you
work on this skill and by when will you
have mastered this?



Who:
will assist you?



State Skill 2:
to be developed
and/or improved



Plan:
how do you plan to learn,
develop and improve this skill?



When:
when, where, and how often will you
work on this skill and by when will you
have mastered this?



Who:
will assist you?



HOME MANAGEMENT / HOUSEKEEPING

The kind of environment you live in can greatly influence your well-being. Having a clean place to live is important for several reasons. Keeping your living space clean reduces the risks of germs, bacteria, pests, and rodents which can have a harmful effect on your health. A clean home will also make you feel better about yourself and help you to stay organized.

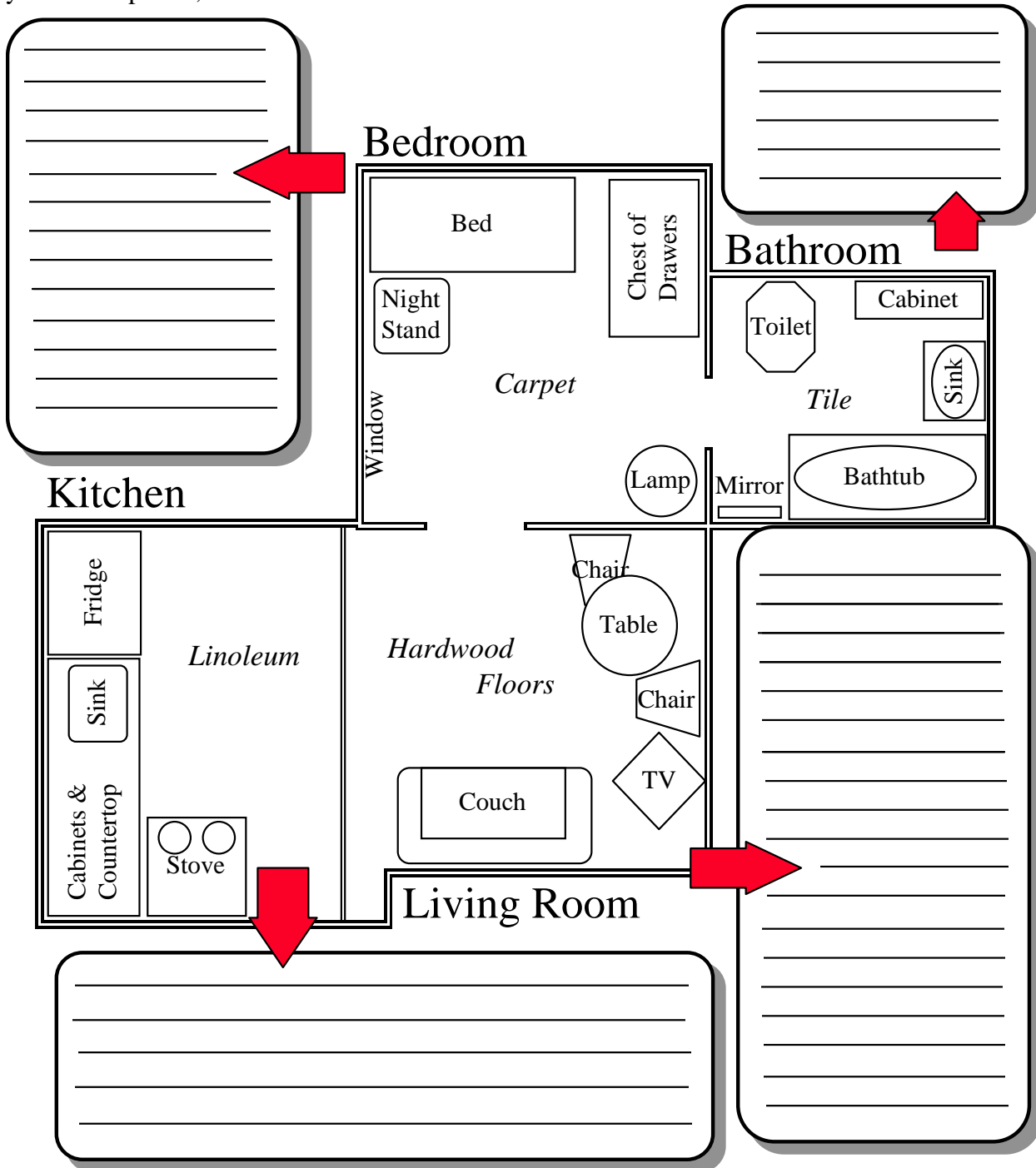
In order to keep your home clean, you will have to utilize the appropriate disinfectants, cleaning supplies, and techniques for various chores.





ACTIVITY

Look at the following apartment floor plan and describe in the designed spaces how and with what kind of cleaning supplies you would clean each of the rooms. Discuss the outcome with your foster parent, social worker or staff.



Helpful Hints:

- The easiest way to clean a room or apartment is to first put everything away where it belongs. (If you are just moving into an apartment, it will be much easier to do your cleaning before you move your furniture and belongings in.)
- Wash and dry the dishes and put them away. (Load the dishwasher if you have one.)
- Wipe off the table and counter tops with a sponge.
- Put your clothes in the closet or drawers, remembering to sort those items that need to be washed or dry cleaned.
- Make the beds. If the sheets need to be changed, wash them.
- Dust your wooden furniture using a cloth and furniture polish.
- Use a damp cloth in place of furniture polish for non-wood surfaces.
- Vacuum your rugs/floors.
- You should sweep the kitchen floor, however, and then wash it.
- Using a sponge and soapy water, clean the top of the stove. Be certain that the burners are off while you are cleaning.
- Clean the mirrors using paper towels.
- Empty your wastebaskets and take out the garbage.

Less Frequent Tasks

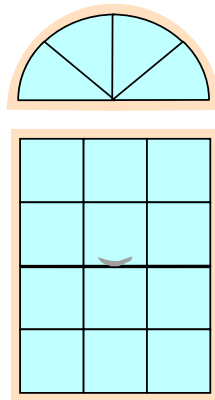
- Using a sponge or damp cloth and soapy water, clean the inside of the refrigerator.
- If you do not have a “frost-free” refrigerator, you will also have to defrost the freezer every two or three months, or according to the appliance maintenance directions.
- Clean the oven when it is cold. Make sure the oven setting is on “off.” Use a damp sponge to wipe it out. Newer ovens may be self-cleaning; check for directions inside the door.
- Try to become familiar with some of the various cleaning products on the market. There are many!
- One cleaning product may be more expensive than another, but it is not necessarily better. Shop wisely.

Cleaning the Bathroom

- Using a cleaning product and sponge, clean the sink, tub, and tiles.
- Always use a separate sponge or brush to clean the toilet bowl. Wash the floor. If you have a scatter rug in the bathroom, don't forget to wash it too.
- Put out fresh towels and washcloths.

Congratulations! You have a neat and clean home.

Every six months or so you should plan to really clean your whole apartment - curtains, windows bedspreads, blankets, walls, etc. Some people call this “spring cleaning.”



Laundry Hints

- Wash light and dark colored clothing separately.
- Read clothing labels for washing instructions. Some clothes must be “hand washed” or washed in cold water.
- Do not wash clothing marked “dry clean only.”
- Follow the directions on the laundry detergent package which will tell you how much detergent and what water temperature to use.
- If shrinkage is a possibility, remember to use **cold** water.
- Use bleach carefully. It can discolor and damage clothing if not used properly. Read the directions on the bottle or box.
- “Color-safe” bleach is available for use on colored clothing.

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Now that you know how to clean different items, you have to decide how often you will have to perform different chores. While some tasks (like vacuuming, emptying the garbage, or cleaning the dishes) have to be done fairly often, others (washing the windows, defrosting the freezer) don't need to be performed as frequently. A cleaning chart will be helpful in keeping track of which chores need to be done and arranging tasks around your schedule.



ACTIVITY

Utilize the house cleaning chart on the next page to schedule when and how frequently you would clean various items.

CLEANING CHART

Kitchen	When	How Often
Wash Dishes		
Clean Sink		
Wash Windows		
Clean Counter Tops		
Clean Refrigerator		
Defrost Freezer		
Clean Stove Top/ Range		
Empty Garbage		
Others:		

Bathroom	When	How Often
Clean Tub/Shower		
Clean Sink		
Clean Toilet		
Wash Floor		
Clean Cabinets		
Clean Rug/Mats		
Clean Light Fixture		
Others:		

Bedroom	When	How Often
Make Bed		
Wash Sheets		
Sweep/Vacuum Floor		
Wash Windows		
Clean/Dust Bureau		
Clean/Dust Dresser		
Clean/Dust Nightstand		
Clean Lamps		
Clean Fan		
Others:		

Living/Dining Rooms	When	How Often
Clean Couch		
Clean/Dust Table		
Clean Chairs		
Sweep/Vacuum Floor		
Clean/Dust Television		
Clean/Dust Shelves		
Clean Light Fixtures		
Clean Fan		
Others:		

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In addition to cleaning your home, you will also have to perform minor repair and maintenance tasks. Professional services through repairmen are expensive and unnecessary for many repairs you could do on your own.

To test your knowledge about maintenance tasks, answer the following questions and discuss the outcome with your social worker, foster parent, or group care staff.

a) How would you change a lightbulb using the correct wattage?

b) How would you unclog a toilet or a sink?

c) How would you change a fuse and/or reset a circuit breaker?

d) How do you properly fit shades and curtains for a window?

e) How would you plaster a hole in the wall?

Aside from the repairs and tasks listed above, you might also encounter problems like the following:

Beth moved into her own apartment three months ago. Although she kept her apartment very clean and emptied the garbage regularly, she discovered roaches in her kitchen. She's not sure what to do.

What would you do in Beth's situation?

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Even if your home is clean, roaches can appear. You should try to get rid of them as soon as possible. You can buy different roach control products at drug stores and supermarkets but you should call your landlord for assistance in obtaining professional pest control services.

Additional Hints: Don't leave food lying around! Make sure all your food is properly stored. It may also be helpful to clean all cabinets and counter tops.

Consider the following:

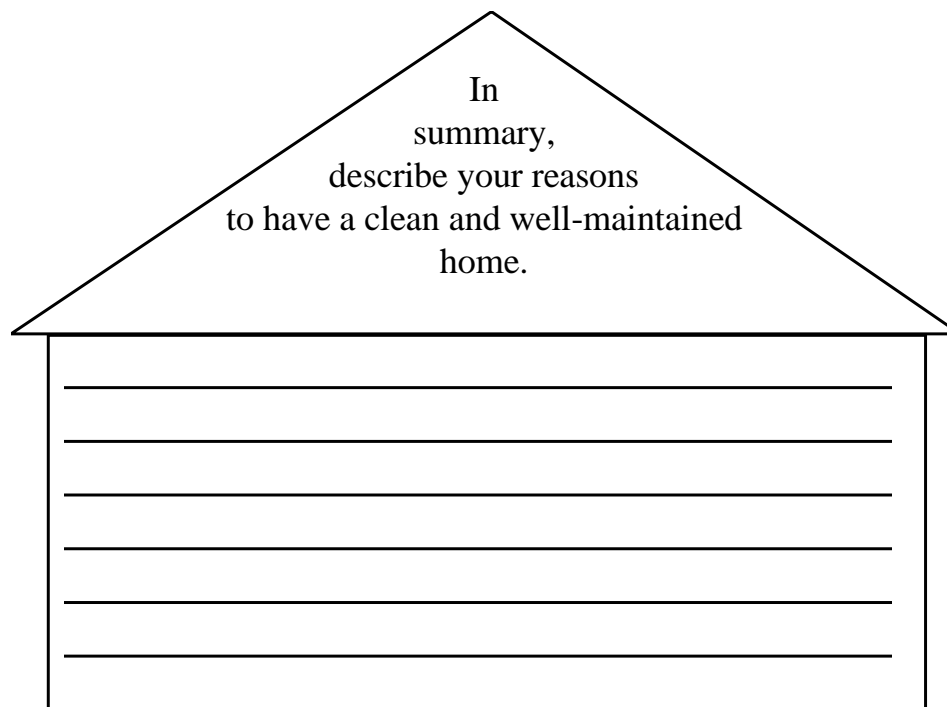
Brian has been sharing an apartment with a roommate for six months. One morning, he sees a bad leak in the ceiling of his bathroom. Water is dripping down the wall onto the floor. Brian is not sure what to do.

What would you do in Brian's situation?



Unless otherwise specified in the lease, landlords are responsible for structural repairs/problems (plumbing, wiring, etc.) which were not caused by you.

NOTE: For more information on lease agreements, please refer to Module IV.



In
summary,
describe your reasons
to have a clean and well-maintained
home.
