

## 2

# In the Neighborhood

## A

## Dialogue

### *Renting an apartment*

*Tyler is talking to a real estate agent about renting a place in Brooklyn.*

- Tyler:** Hi there. I'm looking for an apartment to rent in Brooklyn.
- Agent:** Alright. Let's look at the listings. How many bedrooms?
- Tyler:** Either a studio or a one-bedroom apartment would be fine.
- Agent:** And what price range are we looking at?
- Tyler:** Up to about \$2000 a month.
- Agent:** Okay, let's see... there's a studio apartment for \$1100, right near the G train. It's a steal - but it won't be available until March 15th.
- Tyler:** Oh, that's too bad. I have to move in as soon as possible.
- Agent:** I have a one-bedroom in Park Slope - newly renovated, with hardwood floors and a balcony. Rent is \$2250 per month and it's available immediately.
- Tyler:** Looks very good, but I can't afford it - ooh, this one looks new. How much is the rent?
- Agent:** Rent for this is \$1700.
- Tyler:** Does it include utilities?
- Agent:** Water and electricity is included, but cable or Internet would be extra. Oh, and the building has a laundry facility.
- Tyler:** Is there a security deposit?
- Agent:** There is - \$1000. And a \$100 credit check.
- Tyler:** That could work... is it close to a subway station?
- Agent:** Yeah, it's a few minutes a way from the R train.
- Tyler:** I see. Is there air conditioning in the building?
- Agent:** No, but the description says it has great ventilation, so it doesn't get too hot.
- Tyler:** OK. When can I see it?
- Agent:** How about tomorrow at noon?
- Tyler:** Great. Oh wait, I forgot to ask - are pets allowed in there?
- Agent:** I'll have to check with the landlord, but I think small pets are allowed.



## B Vocabulary

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>real estate agent</b>                   | a person who helps arrange rentals and purchases of apartments and houses  |
| <b>listings</b>                            | a list or catalog  |
| <b>studio apartment</b>                    | an apartment with one big space that includes the bed, kitchen, living room, etc.  |
| <b>one-bedroom apartment</b>               | an apartment with a bedroom that is separate from the living room, kitchen, etc.   |
| <b>price range</b>                         | the <b>minimum and maximum</b> of what someone can pay   |
| <b>utilities</b>                           | essential services like water, electricity, internet, and cable TV   |
| <b>pet</b>                                 | a small domesticated animal such as a dog, cat, rabbit, etc.   |
| <b>lease agreement or rental agreement</b> | a contract that guarantees lease or rent for a specific period of time (for example, 6 months, 1 year, etc.)   |
| <b>landlord or landlady</b>                | the person who owns the apartment building and decides to rent out the apartments  |
| <b>tenant</b>                              | the person who leases or rents out an apartment  |
| <b>credit check</b>                        | a process that is done to check the person's financial records to see if they have paid in the past  |
| <b>references</b>                          | contact information of people who know the tenant and can describe the person  |
| <b>security deposit</b>                    | an amount of money that is paid to the owner to pay for any possible damage to the apartment; if there are no damages done to the apartment, it will be given back to the renter after they moved out of the apartment |

## C Phrases

### *Renting an apartment*

The first question the real estate agent asks is **how many bedrooms** Tyler would want in the apartment. Tyler answered that he wanted either a studio or a one-bedroom apartment. Bigger apartments can be described as two-bedroom, three-bedroom, and so forth. These are sometimes abbreviated as 1BR, 2BR, etc.

The real estate agent then asks for Tyler's **price range**. Tyler says he will pay up to \$2000, so when the agent shows him an apartment that is \$2250, he says:

- **"I can't afford it."** (*"I don't have enough money to pay."*)

You can also use the following phrases:

- "That's outside my price range."
- "I'm looking for something a little more affordable."

Tyler sees pictures of an apartment he likes, and he asks questions such as:

- "How much is the rent?"
- "Does it include utilities?"
- "Is there a security deposit?"
- "Are pets allowed?" or "Is it OK to have pets?"

Here are some questions you can ask about an apartment you're thinking of renting:

- **Does it have...**
  - air conditioning?
  - a balcony?
  - carpeting? / hardwood floors?
  - laundry facilities?
  - an elevator?
  - appliances?
- **Is it furnished?** (*"Furnished" means having complete furniture - chairs, beds, tables, etc.*)
- **Is it close to...**
  - a subway station?
  - a hospital?
  - a bus stop?
  - a supermarket?
  - a laundromat? (*a laundromat is a place where you pay to use a washing machine*)
- **When is it available?** or **When can I move in?**
- **When can I see it?**
- **Do I have to sign a lease?**

Tyler asks if the apartment allows pets, and the real estate agent answers him by saying he will check with the **landlord**. A female landlord is a **landlady**. Before agreeing to let someone rent their apartment, many landlords will perform a **credit check** on the potential tenant. It's also possible for the landlord to request **references** from the potential tenant.

## D

## Dialogue

### *Describing where you live*

*Tyler has decided to rent the apartment and calls his friend Gary to talk about it.*

**Tyler:** Hey Gary, it's Tyler.

**Gary:** Tyler! How's the apartment hunt going?

**Tyler:** Actually, I just signed the lease on an apartment in Bay Ridge.

- Gary:** Bay Ridge? Isn't that a sketchy neighborhood?
- Tyler:** No, it's a working-class area. The buildings are a bit run-down, but it's actually quite safe.
- Gary:** Well, I'm glad to hear that. So tell me about the new place!
- Tyler:** It's wonderful! The building is clean and quiet, and the appliances in the kitchen are all brand-new. There are these huge windows that let in so much natural light. The bathroom is a bit cramped, but it doesn't bother me much.
- Gary:** Is it in one of those high-rise buildings?
- Tyler:** No, no, it's in a three-story walk-up. I'll be getting a lot of exercise since I'll be walking up and down three flights of stairs every day!
- Gary:** That saves you money for a gym membership. What's your commute like?
- Tyler:** Good, just twenty-five minutes.
- Gary:** Woah, lucky! Do you have a roommate?
- Tyler:** Nope - I like having the place to myself. So what about you? How's life in the suburbs like?
- Gary:** It's been nice. We're renting a pretty spacious house for a fraction of what we pay there in New York. There is a huge backyard, which is perfect for the kids. You can visit whenever you feel like taking a break from the city.
- Tyler:** Thanks! I'll definitely take you up on that sometime!

## E Vocabulary

|                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| sketchy            | a <b>slang</b> word that means unsafe and not well-maintained |
| working class      | people who work for typically lower salaries                  |
| run-down           | not well-maintained or cared for                              |
| brand-new          | never been used   |
| natural light      | sunlight or daylight  |
| high-rise building | a very tall building  |
| story              | the level of a building                                       |
| walk-up            | a building with no elevators                                  |
| commute            | the trip from your home to your workplace                     |
| roommate           | a person who lives with you and helps pay the rent            |
| suburbs            | a residential area outside the city                           |
| upscale            | rich, high-end, fancy   |
| outskirts          | the outer edge of a place                                     |
| cramped            | small and uncomfortable                                       |

## F Phrases

### *Describing where you live*

Here are some phrases that you can use to describe the area where you live:

- "I live in a residential area."
- "I live in the business district."
- "I live in an upscale area."
- "I live downtown." / "I live in the city center."
- "I live in the outskirts."
- "I live in the suburbs." / "I live in a suburban area."
- "I live in a rural area."

Tyler describes what he likes in his new apartment with sentences such as:

- "The building is clean and quiet."
- "The appliances in the kitchen are all brand-new."
- "There are huge windows that let in so much natural light."

Here are some other positive aspects about houses or apartments:

- "It's in a great location."
- "It's very spacious." / "It has a lot of space."
- "It was recently renovated."

On the other hand, Tyler says that the bathroom in his new apartment is cramped. You can use this to describe the problems in your living area, as well as the following sentences:

- "The apartment is very dark and dingy." (*dingy* [DIN-jee] - dirty)
- "There is no ventilation." / "There is no air conditioning."
- "My neighbors are noisy and inconsiderate."
- "The landlord takes forever to make repairs." (*takes forever* - takes an extremely long time)
- "It is infested with rats and cockroaches."

## G Speaking

### *Describing where you live*

*How would you describe the place and area where you live? Use the phrases you learned today to describe your home and neighborhood.*