



Survival Topic #2: Housing

Questions to Ask:

What was your home like?
Did you have a yard or a garden? Or a farm?
Was your kitchen different? How did you cook?
What do you miss about your country?

Topics to Share:

Draw a picture of your home. Invite your mentees to your home sometime. Tell them about experiences you had living in a different environment.

English Language Learner Tips:

For those who don't know much English, teach simple nouns that relate to things in the home. One useful technique is to write the name of an item on a post-it note and stick it to that item. This way, your mentees can practice and associate the written word with the object.

Pictures can open up discussion about life here and how it differs from their previous experiences. See if your library carries any pictorial resources, like National Geographic, about their country of origin. Some mentees will have their own pictures to show you. A trip to a local store can help clarify the use of cleaning products. Talk about how each product

is meant to be used. The same thing can be done with first aid products, like Band-Aids, and safety products, like smoke detectors.

Other Notes:

Housing in the U.S. can be quite a challenge for refugees. Though some may have an idea about Western-style housing, others will be baffled by their initial experiences here. They might not know how to operate appliances or how to make the most basic household repairs.

Some refugees end up living in sub-standard housing and may need help in dealing with landlords who are not treating them fairly. **Make sure that you talk to us first to clarify the situation and find out the agency's policy about housing.** We depend on good relationships with landlords to find apartments for our clients, and ask that you do not contact landlords directly without first reporting the problem to RefugeeOne's housing coordinator.

Discuss safety, especially if your mentees live in a crime-prone area. Check to see if they have proper locks and can securely fasten their windows. See if they have smoke alarms in the kitchen and near the bedrooms. Be sure they know how and when to call 911.