

COMMUNICATING WITH YOUR HOST FAMILY

It is natural that you will experience some difficulties while living with your Canadian family. Remember that it is important that you talk to your host family about any problems you are having, so you can work together to resolve the situation and prevent similar problems from happening in the future. Canadians are very honest. They are direct, but very polite. Your host will want you to tell them your problem or concern so that together you can find a solution which makes both of you feel more comfortable in the home. The following chart has some examples of common concerns that students experience while living with host families and steps to show you how to express them in a direct but polite way:

Example Problems	PROBLEM SOLVING STEPS			
	1. Start with a positive statement	2. Tell your host about your problem or difficulty	3. Suggest solution(s) or ask your host for ideas/solutions	4. Working towards a solution—Possible host responses
Student wants more interaction with host family.	Thank you for welcoming me to your home.	I really want to improve my English while I am here, so I would like more opportunity to practice my English with you each day.	Could we schedule some time to talk together each night?	Host: Sure, let's sit down and talk together each night after we put the children to bed. How about 9pm?
	I really enjoy living with you and your family, but	I would like to get to know you and your family better.	Could I come with you when you walk the dog each evening so that we can talk together? Could we sit down each week and schedule some activities to do together?	Host: Of course! I would love the company! Host: Sure, our family has scheduled commitments on Monday and Wednesday nights, but you are welcome to come with us. The other nights we can plan some things that you would like to do with our family.
Student is having difficulty communicating with host family.	I am having a great time living with your family, but	I am having difficulty communicating with _____.	Can you help me to feel comfortable talking with him/her?	Host: Sure, _____ is shy, so it can be difficult to get to know him/her at first, but we will help you to feel more comfortable.
		I feel shy/frustrated about my English level.	Could you please speak more slowly?	Host: Of course, thank you for reminding me/asking me.
		I am having difficulty understanding your English.	Could you please write it down for me?	
Student wants host to buy additional food or different foods for them.	Thank you for doing the grocery shopping for the family, but	I would like to take _____ in my lunches.	Could you please buy some _____ for my lunches and snacks?	Host: Sure, but we will not be grocery shopping again until the weekend. Are you able to wait?
		I miss food from my home country.	May I please go grocery shopping with you? I do not know the names of the foods that I would like to request.	Host: Sure, but _____ is expensive in Canada. I could buy one for you each week and then you can choose other foods that are more common in Canada to have for the rest of the week.
	Thank you very much for the _____, but	I would like to try many different foods while I am here.	I would really like to try _____.	Host: Thank you for telling us, we will buy some _____ for you, or maybe you would like to come grocery shopping with us and select some items that you like.
		I prefer _____.	May I please try_____.	
Student finds some foods hurt their stomach.	You are a very good cook, but	I am not used to Canadian food and _____ hurts my stomach.	Next time you prepare this meal, could I please have something different?	Host: Sure, thank you for telling us.
Student would prefer to take hot food for lunch.	I really enjoyed our dinner tonight.	I prefer to take hot food for my lunch.	Could I please take the leftovers for my lunch tomorrow?	Host: Sure, but there is only a small amount left. Next time, please tell us before dinner or the night before and we will prepare more food for dinner.
Student is having difficulty with dinner schedule.	I really enjoy the time that we spend together talking over dinner, but	Sometimes I find it difficult to get home from school early enough for dinner.	Could you please delay your dinnertime by 1 hour so that I can eat with you each evening?	Host: The children need to eat early so that they can go to bed early. We would be happy to delay our dinner by 30 minutes.
		Sometimes I get hungry late at night because we eat dinner earlier in Canada than we do in my home country.	Could you please buy some _____ that I can have as a snack before dinner?	Host: Yes, we can buy you some _____, but please clean up your dishes when you have finished eating.
		Sometimes I get hungry before dinner because I have very busy days at school.	Could we please eat earlier or could you buy some _____ so that I can have a snack before dinner?	Host: Sure, we can eat earlier 3 days per week, but the other days we work late, so we will buy some snacks for you to eat before dinner.
Student does not want to play with children.	I really enjoy playing with you, but	I am tired right now.	Perhaps, we could play later/tomorrow?	If children do not listen, please ask host mom or dad to help you.
	Thank you for asking me to play with you, but	I need to study.	I will come and get you when I am ready to play.	
		I want to relax right now.		
Student is cold in their bedroom or home.	I really like my room/the home, but	I come from a warmer climate and I find my room/the home cold at night when I am trying to study or sleep.	Do you have an extra blanket or space heater that I can use?	Host: Sure, we will get you another blanket and if you still feel cold, please tell us.
			Could you please show me how to use the space heater/thermostat in my room?	Host: Sure, you can use the space heater/thermostat, but please make sure that you turn it off when you go to bed or are not in the room.
Student finds room too dark.	Thank you for preparing my room so nicely, but	I do not have enough light in my room to study.	Could I please have a brighter light for reading in my room?	Host: Sure, but we will not be able to go shopping to buy one for you until the weekend.
Student is having difficulty with the shower schedule.	I really enjoy living with your family, but	I am having difficulty with the shower schedule in the morning because it is too busy and there is no hot water.	Could I please shower in the evening?	Host: Sure, but please shower before 9:30pm as the shower noise can wake up the children.