**Neighbours**

Worried that they hadn't heard anything for days from the widow in the apartment next door, the mother said to her son, "Tony, would you go next door and see how old Mrs. Johnson is?"   
A few minutes later, Tony returned.   
"Well, is she all right?" asked the mother.   
"She's fine, but she's rather annoyed with you," remarked Tony.   
"At me?" the mother exclaimed. "What for?"   
Tony replied, "Mrs. Johnson said it's none of your business how old she is."

***What are neighbours? Discuss:***

• *A neighbour is a person who helps you in times of need*

• *A neighbour is a person who lives next door to you*

• *A neighbour is a person who watches you from across the street*

• *A neighbour is a person who knows everything about you, but you don’t know how*

• *A neighbour is a person who feeds your cat when you are on holiday*

• *A neighbour is a person you want to know is there, but never want to see*

• *A neighbour is a person who interests you more than your own family*

• *A neighbour is a person who keeps you awake at night*

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1)    What do you know about your neighbours? Do you get along with them?

2)    What is your neighbourhood like? Is it becoming better or worse?

3)    What types of disagreements often arise between neighbours?

**Neighbour from Hell: Russian Businessman Alexei Zakharov**

Rene Mandys has been living in Dolní Olešnice in the Czech Republic for 40 years. Four years ago, Russian businessman Alexei Zakharov bought the chateau neighboring his property. Shortly afterwards, a real estate agent began regularly visiting Mandys, **insisting** that he sells his land to Zakharov. When Mandys said that his property was not for sale, the agent replied, “Everything is for sale.”

Mandys has paid a high price for his refusal. He runs a gardening business from his home, which is **suffering**. His plants have been damaged, his windows broken, and his greenhouse burned down. Zakharov’s bodyguards prevent his customers from entering Mandys' shop, and two paths leading to Mandys' garden have also been blocked.

Last month, Mandys was walking in a forest near his house. He had the **eerie** feeling that someone was following him. Then he felt a **sponge** over his face. When Mandys regained **consciousness**, his left leg was covered in blood and bruises. His wife heard him screaming and took him to the hospital. After 3 months of **recovery**, Mandys can now walk with the **aid** of a walking stick.

The police have charged one of Zakharov’s bodyguards with the attack. However, they lack **evidence** to prove Zakharov ordered it. Mandys has hired a lawyer to have the paths to his property reopened. The lawyer is confident they will win the case, but he is also aware that a **fine** of 50,000 crowns will not likely make the rich bully start **obeying** the law.

The townsfolk are afraid of Zakharov, who seems to want more land in their valley. No one knows what is happening up in the chateau. “The rumor is that they are **shooting** porn films there”, says the town’s mayor.

**Look at the bold words. Do you understand their meaning?**

1. Mandys has hired a real estate agent to sell his home. T / F
2. Why is Mandys’ business suffering?
3. Why was Mandys screaming from the forest?
4. A bodyguard has been charged with the attack on Mandys.
5. What does Mandys' lawyer think Zakharov will do if he gets fined?
6. According to a rumor, what is happening in the chateau?

1 – False. Mandys was asked to sell his home, but he does not want to.

2 – His business is suffering because his property is being damaged and his customers are being prevented from accessing his home.

3 – He was screaming because he was in pain. His had just been attacked and his leg was badly injured.

4 – True.

5 – He thinks he will not do anything because Zacharov can afford to pay small fines.

6 – Pornographic films are being shot there, according to a rumor.

**Connect the below idea(s) to make a sentence.**

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| insist / hospital |
| sponge / floor |
| bully / lose / consciousness |
| suffer / disease |
| eerie / feeling |
| recovery / 6 months |
| fine / $100,000 |
| obey / new law |
| shoot / documentary |

*Possible Answers*:

* My wife insisted that I go to the hospital so a doctor could look at my injury.
* I used a sponge to clean up the wine that had spilled on the floor.
* The little boy lost consciousness after being hit in the head by the school bully.
* Cancer is a disease that many people suffer from.
* I have an eerie feeling that someone is watching me.
* It took me six months to make a full recovery.
* The billionaire was fined $100,000 for not paying his taxes.
* Bar owners believe that many people won't obey the new anti-smoking law.
* Peter is in Africa to shoot a documentary on elephants.

**Role-Play #1**

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| Student A: | Your neighbour has a dog. It barks all day and all night. You and your family can’t sleep. The dog also leaves droppings on your yard. Knock on your neighbour’s door and tell him to take care of his dog…. or you will do something. |
| Student B: | Your neighbour wants to speak with you about your lovely dog. |

**Role-Play #2**

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| Student A: | You repair cars as a hobby. Your neighbour wants to speak with you. |
| Student B: | Your neighbour moved to the neighbourhood a two months ago. Since then, he has filled his yard with old car parts and broken machines. He has old cars in his driveway and parked on the street. He also doesn’t cut his grass. His yard is a mess, and it makes the neighbourhood look really bad. Knock on his door and try to convince him to clean it up. |

**Discussion Questions**

1. What would you do if you were Rene Mandys?
2. "**Everything is for sale.**” What do you think of this statement?
3. Have you ever had to *take the law into your own hands*?
4. It is often said that “what a man does in the privacy of his own home is his business.” Is this true?
5. Do you get on well with your neighbours?
6. • Do you often visit them, or do they visit you?
7. • Are they similar people to you, for example are they the same age, or do they have the same interests?
8. • Could you go on holiday with your neighbours? Why (not)?
9. • Do you depend on them for anything, for example to look after your plants and cat while you are away?
10. • Do you know any stories of bad neighbours, either from your friends or from the media?
11. • What is your idea of terrible neighbours?
12. • What would you do if your neighbours were causing you problems?
13. • What would you do if you thought your neighbours were involved in organised crime?