

Practise writing a summary

Exercise 1. Read carefully the report 'Nightmare Neighbours' and then answer these two summary questions. You should write between 150 and 180 words.

- 1 Summarise the problems caused by neighbours mentioned in the passage.
- 2 Summarise the advice given about how to deal with these problems.

Nightmare Neighbours

A clash with a neighbour can make life hell. And if things turn sour between you and your neighbour, you may not be able to get away from the problem – unless you move house.

For this report, we take the disputes which people have most often with neighbours and explain how to deal with each of them.

Noise next door can drive you mad. It could come from a barking dog or from non-stop, all-night parties. If you can't bear it any longer, contact the Environmental Health Department of your local council. You'll need to prove that the noise stops you from enjoying your property or that it is making you ill. You will need proof, so keep a diary.

Many house and car alarms seem to go off for no reason at any time of the day or night. If this is a problem, you can phone either the police or your local Environmental Health Officer. There is a new law which allows them to turn off a car alarm, and to enter premises to disconnect an alarm which keeps going off.

If your neighbours have the builders in, you may have to put up with drills and cement mixers. There is bound to be some disturbance; but if you cannot bear the noise, or it is taking place at night, then you can take them to court to make them stop work. This is called taking out an injunction.

If your neighbour's dog has bitten you, or frightens you,

you will want to take action. Contact the local dog warden or the police. A court can order that a dog is muzzled and kept on a lead. If a dog continually enters and fouls your garden, the easiest thing to do is to put up a fence!

The parking place right outside your house is not part of your property. You have no legal right to park there. However, you have a legal right to enter your driveway or garage. Some local councils now operate parking schemes for residents. If your neighbours are always parking so you can't get out, contact the Highways Department of your local council. It is in charge of traffic management and control.



Call the police if you think your neighbour's parking habits are illegal.

If your neighbour fences off some of your land or starts growing plants in what you think is your garden then you have a problem. Arguments over land ownership are hard to solve. They can be sorted out in court but this could cost you a lot of money. You have to decide just how much time and money you are prepared to spend.

Some disputes are about party walls. These are walls built right on the boundary between homes. You and your neighbour are both responsible for these. You have to carry out repairs to your side of the wall. You cannot force your neighbour to repair his side.

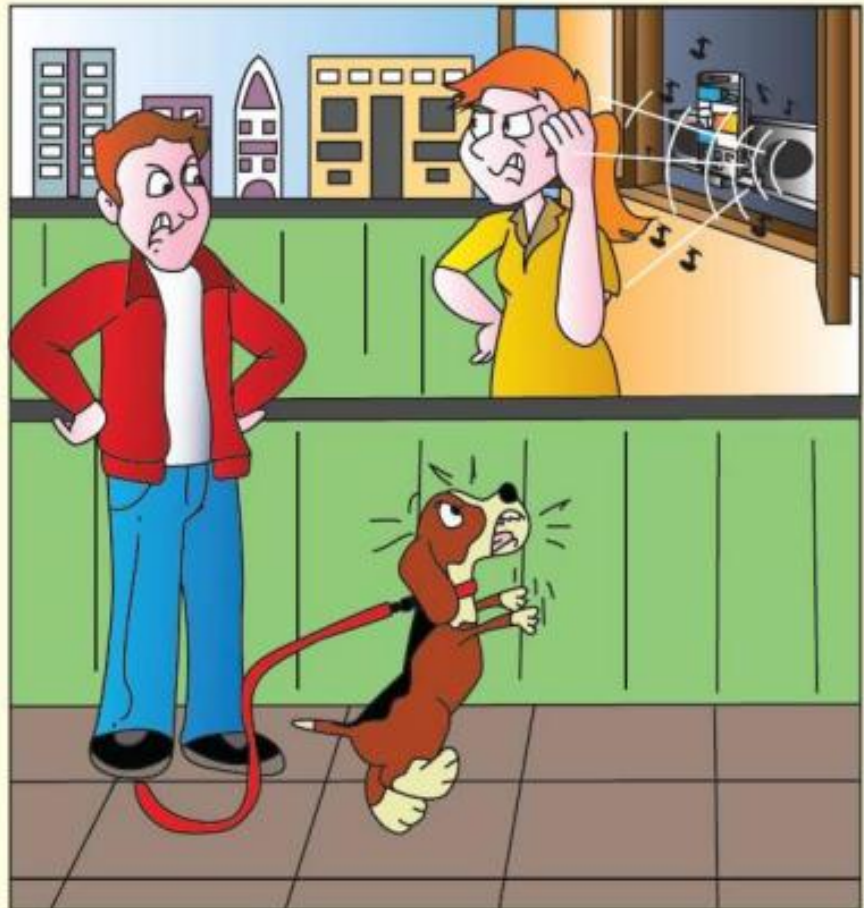
If your neighbour's hedge or tree is hanging over your property, you can prune it back to the boundary but no further. You are not allowed to take fruit from a neighbour's tree just because the branches hang over your fence.

Many complaints are about neighbours' building extensions. People who wish to build extensions must have planning permission. The council must put up a notice at the site or write to all those who may be affected. You have 21 days

to object to the proposal. Put your objection in writing and try to get other people to do so, too.

We hope that the information above will be useful. Good luck!

Adapted from *Which?* magazine



Exercise 2

Read carefully the following article and then summarise:

- what you learn about ancient Pompeii
- the work of archaeologists after the remains of the city were discovered
- the display in the National Museum of Singapore.

Pompeii exhibition opens at the National Museum of Singapore

The National Museum of Singapore transports visitors back 2000 years in time to experience life and death in the ancient Roman Empire. A new exhibition, Pompeii: Life in a Roman Village 79 CE reveals daily life in a city steeped in legend and mystery.

Pompeii and its neighbouring cities were buried – and frozen in time – after the fateful eruption of Mt. Vesuvius on August 24, 79 CE. After being forgotten for nearly 1700 years, the city was accidentally rediscovered by well-digging shepherds in 1748. Since then, its excavation has yielded extraordinary artifacts – from beds, lanterns, hairpins to an exquisitely preserved 15-foot-long garden fresco from the House of the Gold Bracelet—and provided a comprehensive portrait of the life of a city at the height of the Roman Empire.

Amazingly, archaeologists have also been able to piece together the final moments of the people of Pompeii. By pouring plaster into cavities in the volcanic ash left by the victims' bodies, archaeologists were able to create moulds of the final moments of life in this once-thriving seaport. The exhibition features more than 250 artifacts uncovered from beneath 30 feet of volcanic material in this once-cosmopolitan city. The exhibition brings these priceless artifacts, along with body casts of eight of the victims of Vesuvius' fury, to Singapore.

Many of the artifacts have never been on public display before 2007, including a stunning large-scale garden fresco, gold coins, jewellery, marble and bronze statuary, and other dazzling examples of ancient Rome's artistry and craftsmanship.

The exhibition takes visitors through an average day in Pompeii; visitors walk a Pompeian street complete with storefronts and ambient sound, see samples of food items carbonized by the eruption, explore a home and garden setting from Pompeii, and see how the people of Pompeii expressed their spirituality.

The showpieces of the exhibition are the body casts, made from the cavities left in the ash after the bodies of those buried decomposed. These figures are caught in their last moments, shielding their faces, clinging to each other. Even a dog impression was preserved.



Many objects buried beneath Pompeii were well-preserved for nearly 2000 years.

From Archaeology News Network, Art Daily, 18 October 2010