

The image is a podcast cover for 'Culips English Podcast'. It features a teal background with a black lampshade hanging from the top. The lampshade is illuminated from within, casting a warm glow. A dark grey rectangular box is overlaid on the right side of the image, containing the text. The text is arranged vertically: 'Culips English Podcast' in a small, light-colored font, followed by 'FLUENCY FILES' in large, bold, white capital letters, and '#59' in a slightly smaller, bold, white font. At the bottom of the dark grey box, the words 'HOME IMPROVEMENT' are written in a smaller, white, all-caps font.

Culips English Podcast

**FLUENCY
FILES
#59**

HOME IMPROVEMENT

Fill in the blanks listening practice



Andrew: After getting married last spring, my wife and I moved into a new apartment. Well, new to us at least. The apartment itself was built in the 1990s, but it's still in very good condition. When we first viewed the apartment with the real estate agent, the previous _____ was still living there. And since this was during the Corona pandemic, they were working from home. So, we tried our best to look around as closely as possible, while not being too nosy or intrusive. After looking around for a few minutes and _____

some photos of the space, we ended the viewing and left. The real estate market in Seoul is hot and apartments are snatched up really quickly. So, we had to make a decision about whether we wanted to rent the apartment ASAP. We decided to rent it and a couple of months later, we moved in.

Now after we finished moving in, we noticed that something seemed to be just a little bit different than when we first viewed it with the real estate agent. And we couldn't put our finger on exactly what it was. But something in the apartment was different than before. The apartment felt just a little bit older, and more _____, and also a little darker. We decided to check the photos that we took during the viewing and that's when we noticed what had been changed, the light _____.

The previous tenant must have installed and used their own light fixtures in the living room, kitchen, and bathroom. And naturally when they left, they took them with them and replaced them with the original ones. So, the beautiful light fixtures that we first saw when we viewed the apartment were gone. Never in a _____ years did I imagine that the light fixtures would not come included with the apartment, but they didn't. The original light fixtures that were reinstalled by the previous tenants before they moved out were old, ugly, and _____. We decided to change them to something more modern, stylish, and bright.

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So, my wife and I _____ to YouTube to learn about how to remove and install _____ light fixtures, you know the ones that are attached to the _____. We also shopped around to find some lights that we liked. This was the first big design decision that we had to make as a married couple in our new place. In the end, since we aren't planning to live in this apartment for too, too long. We just decided to go with something that's simple and _____. Once the light fixtures arrived, it was time to install them, and this is where things got interesting.

We encountered our first _____ when we realized that we didn't have a drill or a screwdriver, two very essential tools for this kind of job. So, we went shopping again, picked up those tools, and then got down to business. I'm not the _____ person in the world, so fixing and building things doesn't really come naturally to me. So, I was anticipating that we would run into some roadblocks when installing the lights. But to my surprise, everything went smoothly, and we installed them without any major hiccups. We bickered a little bit when installing them. But in the end, we got the job done without too many problems. We didn't electrocute ourselves or blow any _____, so the installation was a success.

Well, almost a success. One thing we didn't account for was the size of the bottom of the light fixture where it attaches to the ceiling. So, the new fixture we installed had a smaller bottom, a smaller base, than the original fixture. So, after we installed the new light in the dining room, there was an ugly area around the fixture that used to be covered up by the original light fixture but now was exposed. We decided to fix that just by covering it up with some wallpaper. In Korea, the ceilings are usually wallpapered so we thought that would be an easy solution, right? Well, yes, technically, it was an easy _____ just to put some wallpaper over that exposed area. But the problem was we couldn't find wallpaper that was exactly the same color as the existing wallpaper on the ceiling. So now in the little area surrounding the dining room light fixture. If you look carefully, you'll notice that there is a _____ of wallpaper that doesn't exactly match the rest of the wallpaper on the ceiling.

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Anyway, when all was said and done, I was happy with our first _____ home improvement project. We didn't destroy the house or cause any damage. And the end result is that we have a brighter and more _____ living space. This project got my imagination going and I've been dreaming up some plans for future home improvement projects - new floors, windows, doors. I've been thinking about what it would be like to replace them all and who knows maybe one day soon, I might just do it.

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Transcript



Andrew: After getting married last spring, my wife and I moved into a new apartment. Well, new to us at least. The apartment itself was built in the 1990s, but it's still in very good condition. When we first viewed the apartment with the real estate agent, the previous tenant was still living there. And since this was during the Corona pandemic, they were working from home. So, we tried our best to look around as closely as possible, while not being too **nosy** or intrusive. After looking around for a few minutes and snapping some photos of the space, we ended the viewing and left. The real estate market in Seoul is hot and apartments are snatched up really quickly. So, we had to make a decision about whether we wanted to rent the apartment ASAP. We decided to rent it and a couple of months later, we moved in.

Now after we finished moving in, we noticed that something seemed to be just a little bit different than when we first viewed it with the real estate agent. And **we couldn't put our finger on** exactly what it was. But something in the apartment was different than before. The apartment felt just a little bit older, and more **dated**, and also a little darker. We decided to check the photos that we took during the viewing and that's when we noticed what had been changed, the light fixtures.

The previous tenant must have installed and used their own light fixtures in the living room, kitchen, and bathroom. And naturally when they left, they took them with them and replaced them with the original ones. So, the beautiful light fixtures that we first saw when we viewed the apartment were gone. Never in a million years did I imagine that the light fixtures would not come included with the apartment, but they didn't. The original light fixtures that were reinstalled by the previous tenants before they moved out were old, ugly, and **dim**. We decided to change them to something more modern, stylish, and bright.

So, my wife and I turned to YouTube to learn about how to remove and install ceiling light fixtures, you know the ones that are attached to the ceiling. We also shopped around to

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find some lights that we liked. This was the first big design decision that we had to make as a married couple in our new place. In the end, since we aren't planning to live in this apartment for too, too long. We just decided to go with something that's simple and affordable. Once the light fixtures arrived, it was time to install them, and this is where things got interesting.

We encountered our first setback when we realized that we didn't have a drill or a screwdriver, two very essential tools for this kind of job. So, we went shopping again, picked up those tools, and then **got down to business**. I'm not the **handiest** person in the world, so fixing and building things doesn't really come naturally to me. So, I was anticipating that we would run into some **roadblocks** when installing the lights. But to my surprise, everything went smoothly, and we installed them without any major **hiccups**. We **bickered** a little bit when installing them. But in the end, we got the job done without too many problems. We didn't **electrocute** ourselves or **blow any circuits**, so the installation was a success.

Well, almost a success. One thing we didn't account for was the size of the bottom of the light fixture where it attaches to the ceiling. So, the new fixture we installed had a smaller bottom, a smaller base, than the original fixture. So, after we installed the new light in the dining room, there was an ugly area around the fixture that used to be covered up by the original light fixture but now was exposed. We decided to fix that just by covering it up with some wallpaper. In Korea, the ceilings are usually wallpapered so we thought that would be an easy solution, right? Well, yes, technically, it was an easy fix just to put some wallpaper over that exposed area. But the problem was we couldn't find wallpaper that was exactly the same color as the existing wallpaper on the ceiling. So now in the little area surrounding the dining room light fixture. If you look carefully, you'll notice that there is a patch of wallpaper that doesn't exactly match the rest of the wallpaper on the ceiling.

Anyway, when all was said and done, I was happy with our first DIY home improvement project. We didn't destroy the house or cause any damage. And the end result is that we have a brighter and more modern living space. This project got my imagination going and I've been dreaming up some plans for future home improvement projects - new floors,

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windows, doors. I've been thinking about what it would be like to replace them all and who knows maybe one day soon, I might just do it.

Glossary

1. **Nosy** - Too interested in other peoples' lives
2. **Can't put your finger on something** - Unable to notice a difference or a problem
3. **Dated** - Old-fashioned; not modern
4. **Dim** - Not bright; dark
5. **Get down to business** - Start doing the important work
6. **Handy** - Good at fixing, building, repairing, or making things
7. **A roadblock** - Something that prevents you from accomplishing your goal
8. **Bicker** - To lightly argue about unimportant things
9. **Electrocute** - To get injured or die because of electricity running through the body
10. **Blow a circuit** - Damage the power connections in your house so that the electricity doesn't work and needs to be repaired

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Key Expressions

1. Snatch up

The real estate market in Seoul is hot and apartments are snatched up really quickly

Meaning:

If you buy, take, grab, or get something very quickly, before anyone else has an opportunity to do so, then you **snatch** that thing **up**. To **snatch up** means to be the first person to be able to quickly grab, get, or buy something. In this episode, Andrew mentions that apartments in Seoul are quickly **snatched up**. This means that people buy or rent them extremely quickly, before others have an opportunity to do so. This is a separable phrasal verb, so both the forms **snatch [something] up** and **snatch up [something]** are possible.

Example sentences:

- a. All the concert tickets were **snatched up** within two minutes! I didn't even get the chance to buy one.
- b. My brother usually **snatches up** all the mashed potatoes during our family dinners. If you want to eat some, you have to do so quickly!
- c. On Black Friday, shoppers lined up for 12 hours to try and **snatch up** the discounted iPhones.

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2. A hiccup

Everything went smoothly, and we installed them without any major hiccups

Meaning:

A **hiccup** is a minor problem, set back, or difficulty. Andrew mentions that he was able to install the lights without any **hiccups**. This means he completed the installation without any problems.

This expression is related to the medical condition **hiccuping**. Hiccups occur when your diaphragm involuntarily contracts. This causes you to stop breathing for a moment and to make a *hic* sound. People sometimes get **the hiccups** after drinking soda or alcohol.

Just like **the hiccups** are a minor medical condition that usually go away after a few moments, **a hiccup** is a minor problem or set back that isn't difficult to overcome.

Example sentences:

- a. We had **a few hiccups** while working on the project, but we still finished before the deadline.
- b. Jason can speak Japanese, so he was able to travel there without any **hiccups**.
- c. I had **a little hiccup** this morning and couldn't find my wallet anywhere. Turns out, it was just in my jacket pocket. Good thing I found it quickly, or I would have been late for work.