

16 Damage and Conditions

blocked: (for sinks or toilets) sth is stopping the water from leaving it
The kitchen sink is blocked.

blunt: not sharp
blunt pencils, scissors/knives
You should sharpen these knives. They're all blunt.

to break/cut in half: to break/cut sth into two pieces
He broke the bar of chocolate in half and gave Jo one piece.

bruised: (for a piece of fruit) with brown marks on it (under which the flesh of the fruit is soft and tastes unpleasant)
There were only two bruised pears in the cupboard.

to burst: to explode, letting water or air escape
I stepped on the balloon and it burst with a loud noise.

chipped: with a small piece broken off
I chipped a tooth while biting into an apple.

to come off: to fall from/become separated from
The top came off in my hand.

cracked: slightly damaged, with lines appearing on the surface
She dropped the mirror and it cracked.

to be crumbling off: (for plaster) small pieces of plaster are falling off because it is very old and very dry
Lumps of plaster were crumbling off the wall.

to crush: to press or squeeze sth hard so as to change its shape or completely destroy it
Be careful with these ornaments when you pack them. I don't want you to crush them.

dented: with a hollow in the surface caused by hitting or pressing (for metals)
The car was badly dented in the accident.

(sth is) falling to pieces: sth is very old and in very bad condition

We've got to get rid of this car. It's falling to pieces.

filthy: very dirty
filthy clothes/car/room/hands, etc

flat: (i) (of a fizzy drink) having lost its bubbles and tasting unpleasant
(ii) (of a tyre) without enough air
That flat tyre needs to be seen to.

frayed/fraying: with loose threads at the edges
fraying jeans/rugs/a frayed carpet

grimy: very dirty
Cities were grimy, squalid places to live in during the Industrial Revolution.

grubby: dirty
His hands were grubby from working in the garden.

sth has seen better days: sth (a television, a car, etc) is now old and not in very good condition
The TV doesn't work and the fridge is on its last legs. Even the beds have seen better days.

moth-eaten: old, in poor condition and with holes (for material)
a moth-eaten tablecloth

mouldy: with mould on it (i.e. a soft growth which looks like green/blue fur and grows on old food)
The bread was mouldy.

sth is on its last legs: sth is in very bad condition and very soon it will stop working
This television is on its last legs. It's time we got rid of it and bought a new one.

to be peeling off: (for wallpaper/paint) to be falling off a surface
Strips of yellowing wallpaper were peeling off the walls.

rickety: (for furniture) old, weak and unstable
He entered a dark, gloomy room, full of rickety furniture.

to rip: to tear sth badly/to get badly torn
She caught her skirt in the car door, and it ripped.

to rip sth to shreds: to tear paper or material into little pieces
The dog ripped the paper to shreds.

rusty: with rust on it (i.e. a red-brown substance that covers some metals when they get wet)
The problem with this particular make of car is that it goes rusty very quickly.

to scrape: to scratch
Dad won't be amused when he finds out that you have scraped his car.

to shatter (into a thousand/million pieces): to break into many tiny pieces (generally used for things made of glass or china)
A rock hit the windscreen of the car causing it to shatter into a million pieces.

to smash to smithereens/into tiny pieces: to break into very small pieces
The vase fell to the floor and smashed to smithereens.

to snap sth in two: to break sth (made of a hard material) in two pieces
He took the little boy's ruler and snapped it in two.

to split: to separate (not necessarily completely) into two pieces, often along a straight line
Seeing a large tear in my sleeve, I realised that the seam had split.

sth is still in one piece: if you drop sth (a cup, glass, etc) and it is still in one piece, it has not broken
Amazingly, the bowl I dropped was still in one piece.

stained: with a mark that is difficult to remove
You can't wear that shirt to work. Look at it! It's stained!

stale: not fresh
stale bread/cake/biscuits

threadbare: the material sth is made of has become very old, weak and thin
threadbare carpet/sofa/chair

Practice

1. Each adjective is followed by two nouns. Cross out the noun which does not go with it. Then use the correct combinations to complete the sentences below.

- | | |
|--|--|
| a a rickety fork /chair | j a bruised ceiling /
peach |
| b a chipped cup /tyre | k a cracked ceiling /
cheese |
| c fraying curtains /bread | l a blunt mirror /knife |
| d a blocked sink /carpet | m moth-eaten clothing /
bread |
| e a rusty banana /fork | n a threadbare carpet /
knife |
| f flat cola /scissors | o stale bread /curtains |
| g a flat tyre /sink | |
| h mouldy cheese /pens | |
| i a dented peach /
bumper | |

- He gave us a piece of and a glass of
- On the way home the car stopped. He had a
- I nearly slipped on the
- Don't sit on that
- Well, if you keep putting tea bags down it, no wonder you've got a
- He lay on the bed and looked up at the
- They were drinking tea out of
- The only fruit in the house was a single
- I tore what was in the wardrobe up for dusters, as it was only a bundle of
- That he wasn't very good at driving could be seen from his
- You'll never be able to cut anything with that
- She went to the window and drew the
- Even a mouse wouldn't eat that
- Haven't you got any better cutlery than this? There's only a

2. Choose the correct item.

- The vase slipped from his hands and, on hitting the floor, it into a thousand pieces.
A split B crumbled C cracked D shattered
- The kitchen is flooded. One of the water pipes must have
A ripped B burst C torn D parted
- The doors were hanging off their hinges and the paint was off the walls.
A splitting B scraping C peeling D snapping
- She's even broken the door! Look, the handle has off.
A come B parted C gone D split

- Pulling the contract out of the envelope, she ripped it to
A smithereens C tiny pieces
B shreds D half

- It's time we bought some new furniture. Look at these chairs. They're to pieces.
A battered B crumbling C falling D going
- You dropped it down the stairs? You're lucky it is still in one!
A piece B whole C entirety D unit
- Grabbing the twig, he it in two.
A crumbled B crushed C snapped D tore

3. Read the following passage and decide if the words in bold have been used correctly. If not, replace each word with (a) more appropriate one(s). All the words in bold and the possible replacements can be found in this unit.



Unshaven and smelling of cat food, he stood in the doorway and beckoned me straight into the living room. "This is the living room," he said. I had never seen anything like it. The wallpaper was **1) scraping** off the walls and the **2) stained** and **3) bruised** carpet was littered with old newspapers and ageing sandwiches. A single **4) crumbling**, **5) moth-eaten** curtain hung like a dirty handkerchief at the **6) grimy** window. "This is my chair," he said. "Take a seat, and I'll make you a coffee." I sat down. The chair was unusually uncomfortable. On the table next to me there was an overflowing ashtray and a **7) stale** piece of cheese. I wanted to leave. He came back and handed me a cup. The cup was not only **8) filthy** but it was also **9) shattered**. I said "thank you." "Oh," he said. "Here's your spoon." He pulled a **10) rusty** spoon out of his trouser pocket and handed it to me. "Of course, there are one or two problems with the flat. The pipes **11) burst** in the kitchen last winter, so it's a bit smelly in there and I'm afraid in the bathroom the sink and the toilet are both **12) blunt**, so you can't really use them." I smiled. He smiled back. "Oh, and the cooker is on its last **13) feet**, the central heating doesn't work and there is a hole in the roof... The rent's cheap, though." I put my cup down. "Well," I said, "I think..." He interrupted. "Just one other thing," he said. I looked at him. "Yes?" I replied. He pointed at his chair. "You're sitting on my sandwiches."