

# Accidents in the Home

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The expression "domestic accidents" does not normally evoke feelings of fear or tragedy, since most people only think about the concept on a superficial level: a slip here; a slight burn there; a fall from a ladder which may even provoke a moment of mirth for the onlooking partner, etc. Millions of such banal-sounding mishaps occur every year, however, and the majority involve children and old folk.

## 1. Advance Organiser

Students relate an incident which has happened to them in the home.

## 2. What You Would do in the Event of ...

- ...a pan on fire.
- ...an open tap flooding the bathroom.
- ...a child drinking a chemical product.
- ...cutting your finger while preparing a vegetable stew.

## 3. Focal Points of Danger in the Home

- Students name theirs first:
- My examples:
  - Pan
  - Iron
  - Bath
  - Bunk bed
  - Medicines
  - Gas on, no flame
  - Small carpet on polished floor
  - TV
  - Knife
  - Hairdrier
  - Balcony
  - Window
- Further activity:
  - Students discuss which of the above is the most common-and why.

## Real Life Stories

(From my students here in the Basque country.)

"My mother was speaking on the phone while a piece of meat was cooking on a pan in the kitchen. As my mother spoke the meat got hotter and hotter, until it caught fire-while my mother spoke. She spoke, and spoke and the flames coming from the meat got taller and taller. A neighbour who happened to look out his window saw the flames and ran to the door of my mother's flat-my mother was still on the phone. The neighbour banged on the door and alerted the son of the speaking mother-he had been watching TV. It must have been a very interesting programme because the son had not smelled anything or seen any smoke; only the

neighbour. Anyway, the son filled a bucket with water and ... yes!, threw it on the burning mass!! The whole kitchen was black; the mother shocked and crying; the TV deserted; the person at the end of the line ...?

Another incident occurred in Zarautz, Basque country, on the morning of the 6th of January, the day of the kings-the three wise men. This pupil was slowly waking up, at about 9am. She and her family were opening their presents amid much joy, love and affection. As the paper crackled and the eyes shone brightly, shouts of what seemed to be happiness floated through the air from distant houses. The atmosphere was great, everyone was concentrated on their work. Then the shouts of happiness became sharper, a tone of panic pervaded the cries: it appeared that the people making these noises were not so happy after all-an argument, perhaps?

Our pupil looked out a window and immediately saw why the shouts of happiness had in fact turned into screams of anguish-a house opposite was on fire. Its occupants were running and screaming, the neighbours too. Our pupil called the firemen/women, who told her to tell the victims to get out of their house. The latter ran into the burning abode and took money and other valuables-the presents too, I think-and came out again. Their faces were black, their house burnt down; the neighbours panicked-our pupil too.

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