



Unit 33 – The joy of woodworking

Task 08

Announcer: Listen to the conversation between Raphael and Lisa at the beach in Spain.

Raphael: Hi Lisa, nice to see you again, how are you?

Lisa: Hi Raphael, nice to see you too. I'm fine, thanks. Hey, you wanted to tell me more about your job. I'm really curious.

Raphael: Well yes, I'm in the third year of my apprenticeship to be a carpenter.

Lisa: Okay, so you're making furniture?

Raphael: No, my company makes interior walling of solid wood, staircase construction, outside doors and gates, wall and ceiling panelling, wooden floors ... well, all kinds of above-ground timber constructions.

Lisa: Oh wow, that sounds interesting. Is it a big company?

Raphael: Not too big. It's a family business. The owner is a carpenter himself and sometimes works with us on the building site. We are fifteen people in total. There are two other apprentices.

Lisa: Do you like your job?

Raphael: Oh yes, I've always wanted to work with wood. Since I was a little boy, I've always enjoyed making wooden things – boxes, bird houses or toys for my smaller brother. So I was really happy when I got the chance to start my apprenticeship.

Lisa: It's great to do something you really enjoy. Why do you like wood so much?

Raphael: I like the feel of wood. It's a warm material and it's good for your well-being. I think it's much more comfortable to be in a wooden house than in a concrete one. It's also an environmentally-friendly, sustainable material that can even be recycled easily. You can be very creative with it and it's also much stronger than bricks or even steel.

Lisa: What kind of wood are you working with?

Raphael: It depends on the job. Inside the house we use a lot of pine and spruce. For the outside we mainly use larch because it is much more weather-resistant.

Lisa: So what is the most exciting project you have ever done?

Raphael: Last year, we built a very modern detached house for a family with three children completely out of wood. You know, in Austria we have a lot of old traditional



wooden houses, but in recent years, too, modern wooden houses have become more and more popular.

Lisa: Oh really? Building with wood has a long tradition in Canada, too. You probably know the traditional log cabins, but we also have more and more modern buildings made of wood. You know, we really have a lot of forests.

Raphael: That sounds really interesting. What kind of trees do you have?

Lisa: Well, it depends on the area. In the south-east, where the climate is warmer, there are a lot of deciduous trees – the most famous tree is the maple, of course, which is in our flag – they have spectacular colours in autumn. We call a part of that season “Indian summer” because there’s usually a warm and sunny period, then. Further north and on the west coast, there are mainly conifers, different kinds of fir and spruce, but also cedars, pines, and junipers ... Also, the American larch is quite common, we call it the tamarack [*tam-uh-rak*], which is the Algonquian [*al-gong-kee-uh n*] name for it and means “wood used for snowshoes.”

Raphael: Wow, you know a lot about trees.

Lisa: Well, thanks. That’s not difficult if you grow up in Canada. You’ll have to come and visit me some day. Then I can show you all our trees ...

Raphael: I’d love to do that!