

Reading Houses

Task 1 Describing houses

People live in lots of different places. Sometimes the type of house tells us about the people who live there and sometimes it doesn't. Different countries have different types of houses.

- Which of these features do you think are an essential part of a home? Which are not essential?

a garden	more than one bathroom	a kitchen
a dining room	a balcony	lots of space
a swimming pool	shutters	central heating
a fireplace	a garage	a beautiful view
a patio / terrace	carpeted floors	a basement / family room

- Can you match these words describing types of house to their definition?

apartment	penthouse	detached
bungalow	flat	castle
loft apartment	semi-detached	studio
cottage	palace	terraced

- a small house in the country
- a house with no stairs, on one level.
- a house which is part of a bigger building
- a house which is part of a bigger building
- a house which is not joined to another house
- a house which is joined to another house on one side
- a house which is joined to other houses on two sides/ a house which is part of a line of houses
- a house which was built to keep the inhabitants safe
- a house which was built for rich or grand people
- a house which is on the top of a tall building
- a house which was an industrial building
- a small one-roomed flat

Task 2. Describe your home

Ask and answer questions about your home.

- Number of rooms?
- Type of house?
- Features?
- Location?

Task 3 Read and find out

Read the text and answer these questions

- What type of house is being described?
- What are the key features of this type of house?
- Where can you find these homes?

Reading houses

Look at a house from the outside, and you can guess what type of people live in it. Well, perhaps this is not always true. Some people can live in unusual houses. Some people live on boats, in tree houses or in tents.

For example, imagine you are in an old part of an industrial city in the UK. Cities like London, Manchester, Liverpool or Newcastle. There is a river, or a canal, which was important for transport in the past, before the railways were built. There are a lot of enormous buildings near the water. They were built in the 19th century. They must be industrial places to store things for import or export.

But...look more closely! There are expensive cars parked outside some of these buildings. And on the corner of the street there is a French restaurant, with a wine bar opposite. And just round the corner there is a shop with beautiful furniture. And here are more shops...Who buys these things?

Answer: the people who now live in these old buildings. Old warehouses like these offer two things that are difficult to find in modern houses: space, and a view.

Over the past 10 years, more and more architects have converted buildings like this into apartments, which have big rooms, high ceilings... and often a terrace which looks onto the water.

So, the old parts of many of Britain's industrial cities now have a new life. They are not dead anymore, with empty warehouses and disused factories. You can buy factory space and make yourself a home in it. And the people who live in them can walk or cycle to work.

Or...with so much space. They work from home with a computer and a modem! Buildings don't always tell us about lifestyles immediately. So, next time you see an old station, a deserted church or a village school in Britain, look carefully for the clues. You may get a surprise. Is this true in your town too?

Are these sentences true or false?

- These buildings were built recently.
- They are very spacious.
- Britain's city centres do not have people living in them.
- Some people in Britain live and work in the same place.
- Some people in Britain live in churches.

Task 4 Houses in your country

Describe the types of housing available in your country/area.

- What are the main features?
- Do people live in the centre of cities or towns?
- Are there any unusual houses?
- Historic houses?
- Have the types of houses changed in the last 50 years?

Task 5 Your ideal home

Describe your ideal place to live.

- Would you rather live alone or with lots of people?
- In a town or a rural area?
- In a flat, a house or something more unusual like a boat?
- Do you like old buildings or modern ones?
- Is there anyone in the class with the same taste as you?

Task 6 Changing rooms: Your taste

In the UK there are a lot of very popular TV programmes about houses. One programme, called 'Changing rooms' is very popular. One family or couple take a room in another family's house and they change the look of the room. Sometimes they change it completely, changing the furniture and the style. Sometimes the people who live there are very happy with the new room, sometimes it does not suit their taste and they don't like the changes at all.

Sometimes you can guess a person's taste, their interests and even their job from looking at a photo of their living room.

- What type of taste have you got?
- What other types of things can show a person's taste?
- Describe 4 or 5 things in your bedroom which can help explain your taste:

Task 7 Discussion: Flying the nest

Discuss these questions with your partner

- At what age do people usually leave home in your country?
- What are the main reasons?
- Do young people share flats or houses?
- Do you think this is a good idea?
- What might be the advantages of leaving home at 18 to share a flat with friends?
- What are the possible disadvantages?