



Chapter 2, Home and neighbourhood

Answer the following questions in details.

GB: flat
US: apartment

1. Do you live in a house or a flat?
2. How many rooms are there? What makes your room special?
3. What pieces of furniture do you have?
4. What amenities do you have? What appliances help you in household chores?
5. What are the costs of maintenance?
6. What are the neighbours like?
7. What makes a home ideal?
8. Is it better to own a property or is it better to rent accommodation?
9. Have you ever lived in a hostel? If so, what was it like?
10. Do you or would you like to have a holiday home? Where?
11. Have you or any of your family members had to take out a mortgage?
12. What are the challenges with a long term loan like a mortgage?
13. Do you think that a property is a good investment?
14. Are there taxes that homeowners have to pay?
15. Is there any government support for buying a home?
16. How does property ownership influence mobility – for work or studies?
17. Should the government provide free homes to poor people?
19. Is it right when foreign investors buy property and push up prices?
20. What problems arise when migrants settle down?

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Give detailed reasons why you agree or disagree with the following statements.

1. Everybody wants to have a "home sweet home".
2. A spacious house is better than a small flat.
3. When people look at houses they should look at the neighbourhood very carefully.
4. Buying a home is very easy.
5. A burglar alarm system is very important.
6. A city centre is a quite place.
7. Country life has lots of advantages.
8. If I had enough money I would live in a hotel.
9. There are advantages of living in a caravan.
10. Homeless people should be given homes.
11. It's the government's job to keep the streets clean.
12. Schools should teach students how to take better care of their environment.
13. People on low income can't afford housing.
14. Vandalism is a major problem in cities.
15. Graffiti should be allowed.
16. Noisy neighbours should be fined.
17. To reduce carbon footprint, only "green homes" should be allowed.
18. People should live in communes.

GB: neighbourhood
US: neighborhood

GB: caravan
US: trailer home





Writing

1. Your pen-friend wants to know more about your home. Give him information about the size, the neighbourhood and about what makes it the best home ever.
GB: neighbourhood
US: neighborhood
2. What are the typical forms of residence in your area? Do most people own or do they rent their house? What are the advantages and disadvantages of renting vs. owning a property? Are there government subsidies for owners?
3. You saw a blog entry on the internet about living in the country vs. living in a city. You decided to write your own article. What are the benefits of each? What are the disadvantages? What is your personal preference? Why?
4. A magazine asked readers to write about the issue of homelessness. Are there homeless people in your area? What may be the reasons if there are? How could they be helped? Should the government provide free homes?
5. Your aunt decided to buy a holiday home at the seaside. How should she get information? Should she look at ads on the internet or should she contact real estate agents? What could be the hidden costs she should find out in advance?
6. You were on a package holiday in Italy. To your shock, the hotel was overbooked and you couldn't stay there. You could hardly find accommodation and had to live in a tent at a camp site by the sea. Write a letter of complaint to the travel agency who organized the tour and ask for reimbursement.
7. Your friend wants to buy a home. He can't decide whether to buy a detached house or a flat. Write him an e-mail with detailed information about the advantages and disadvantages of both.
GB: flat
US: apartment
8. Many people think that buying a home is a great investment. Do you agree? Write an essay about it. Give detailed pro and con reasons.
9. In many large cities around the world there are violent neighbourhoods and ghettos. What could governments do to decrease the number of such areas? Should they intervene at all? What precautions would you consider before entering such premises?
10. Very often immigrants are not willing to settle in when they get into a new country. There are often whole districts in which only people from mostly one country or one geographical area live, like Chinatown in New York. Argue that it is normal that those people are not willing to settle in and that they create an environment that resembles to their home country.
11. Is it right that high ranking officers live in luxurious mansions paid by the taxpayers? What are the pros and cons? Would you live in such a place if you became your country's president or would you stay in your own home? 