

7 Complete the text with the words from the box.

amenities energy-efficient flatmates housing maintenance self-contained tenancy



Here are some basic things to check before you sign a contract. Make sure you are getting your money's worth!

- What type of place are you looking for? If you are looking for a quiet property, avoid <sup>1</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ estates next to busy roads and motorways!
- What kind of property can you afford? If you have to be careful about how much you can spend, a <sup>2</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ flat with its own entrance and all mod cons is probably more than you can afford.
- Who are you going to live with? If you have to move into shared accommodation, it's important that you choose somewhere both you and your <sup>3</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ like.
- How close is the property to local <sup>4</sup> \_\_\_\_\_, for example, shops, cafés, parks and public transport?
- What's the landlord/landlady like? Does he/she repair things quickly? Will you have to cover all <sup>5</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ costs?
- Is the place equipped with <sup>6</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ appliances? Unless you want to run up big electricity bills, make sure it is!
- How much will you pay and when? How long is the contract? Does your <sup>7</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ agreement contain all this information?

8 Match the words (1–6) with their definitions (a–f).

- 1 utility bill  
 2 rent  
 3 communal  
 4 renovated  
 5 furnished  
 6 linen
- a having beds, tables, chairs, etc.  
 b a document that requests payment for electricity, heating, water, gas, etc.  
 c shared by a group of people, especially people who live together  
 d sheets, pillowcases, etc.  
 e money that you regularly pay so that you can use a house, room, etc.  
 f repaired and decorated to look like new

9 Work in pairs. Say if you agree or disagree with the statements. Give reasons.

- 1 A self-contained flat is the best kind of accommodation for a student.
- 2 The owner of a flat should pay for any repairs or work needed on a property.

Ecologically-friendly living

10 Complete the questions (1–7) with words and phrases from the box.

compost electricity energy consumption energy-efficient heating non-recyclable waste recycling

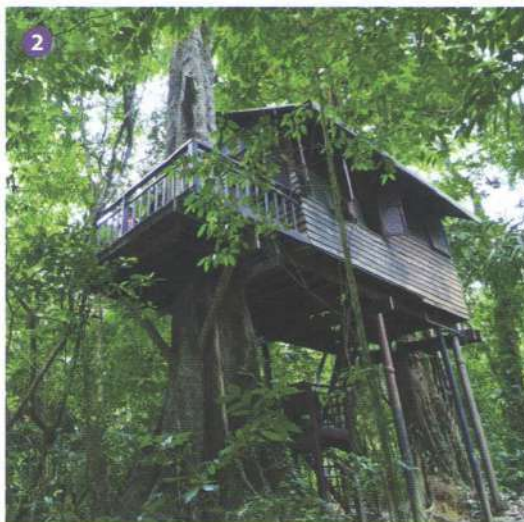
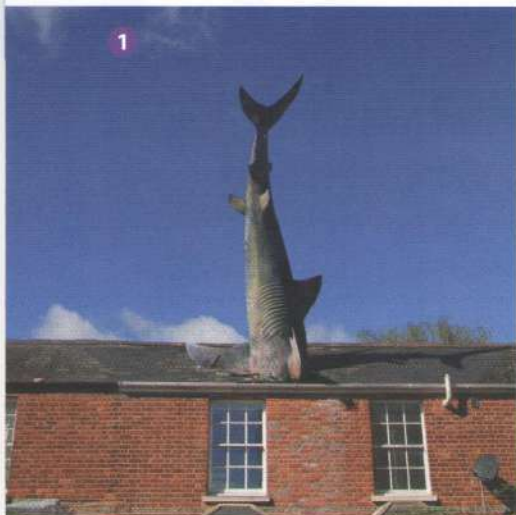
- 1 Is paper, plastic, metal and glass collected from your house, or do you take it to a \_\_\_\_\_ centre?
- 2 Does your household use \_\_\_\_\_ from the local grid or do you generate your own power? If you generate your own, how do you do this?
- 3 What type of \_\_\_\_\_ do you use in your home (e.g. central, gas, electric, coal-fired)?
- 4 On average, how much \_\_\_\_\_ does your household generate in a week?
- 5 Which types of kitchen waste is it possible to \_\_\_\_\_? Does your family do this? Why?/Why not?
- 6 In what ways can you reduce \_\_\_\_\_ in your home (e.g. turn off lights)?
- 7 What \_\_\_\_\_ appliances do you use, if any?

11 Work in pairs. Ask and answer the questions in exercise 10. How ecologically-friendly is your home?

12 Work in pairs. Take turns to answer the questions.

- 1 What would you miss most if you had to move to a different place (e.g. from the city to the countryside)? Is there anything you wouldn't miss?
- 2 How long have you and your family lived in your current home? Does your extended family live near you? If not, where do they live?
- 3 Is your home typical for your area or is it different in some way? In what kind of accommodation do people in your area usually live?

- 4 What are the advantages and disadvantages of renting a home compared to buying one?
- 5 How would you feel about having to share accommodation with someone who isn't your family?
- 6 What are the most important features that make a home comfortable to live in? Why?



Matching (specific)

1 What do you think these pictures have in common?

2 Work in pairs. Discuss the questions.

- 1 Which home appeals to you most? Why?
- 2 What things in your house could you easily live without?
- 3 What modern-day comforts couldn't you live without?

3 Read the texts quickly. Match the pictures (1–6) to the texts (A–F).

EXAM STRATEGY

- Read the questions from the exam task to see what information you are looking for in the texts.
- The questions are usually paraphrases of the information from the text - they give the same information, but use different words.
- Check that the remaining questions do not match any of the texts.

4 EXAM TASK Read the texts. Match the choices (1–8) to the texts (A–F). There are two choices you do not need to use.

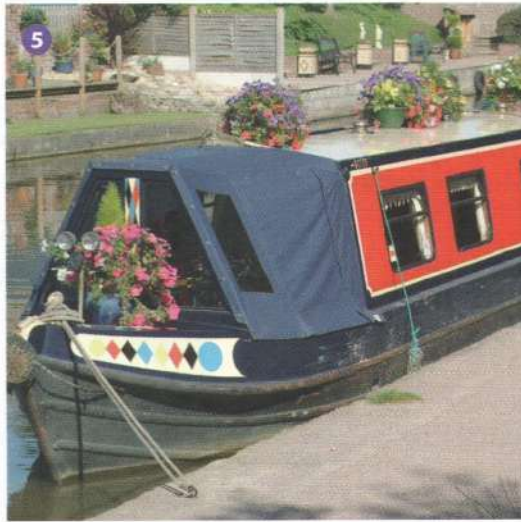
Which home ...

- 1 had its roof removed? \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 isn't what the owner intended to buy? \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 only has space for essential items? \_\_\_\_\_
- 4 lacks natural light inside? \_\_\_\_\_
- 5 has plenty of facilities, despite being unusual? \_\_\_\_\_
- 6 isn't suitable for small children? \_\_\_\_\_
- 7 helped the owner escape an urban environment? \_\_\_\_\_
- 8 is popular with tourists? \_\_\_\_\_

**A** Gina can only get to her home by cautiously walking across a narrow wooden plank. She's been living with her partner Tom and 18-month-old daughter Kyra on a 15-metre canal boat for just over a year. Living on a boat is an exercise in making the most of every centimetre of space. 'It's really hard to keep it tidy,' says Gina. 'The space is just enough at the moment, but there's no room for stuff you don't need. And I can't imagine how it's going to be as Kyra gets bigger.' At the moment, Kyra seems to love it, most of all because she's surrounded by ducks!

**B** Have you ever thought of getting away from it all – escaping from conventional ways of living? That's exactly what Nick Weston did when he moved out of London. He spent £170 on wood, and built a tree house in West Sussex. Constructing the house was hard. Due to the limited budget, Nick and his friends had to cut down nearby trees to make support posts for the house. Nick managed to live off the land for six months, eating mainly the things that he could grow in his vegetable garden, or find in the countryside. The practical advice on how he did it is an inspiration to anyone considering this way of life.

**C** If you'd asked me what kind of property I wanted to buy with an eighteen-month-old and a three-month-old baby, I would have said, 'something that I can just move straight into.' So why, oh why, did I buy a house that an old lady and her ten cats had just vacated – a house that needed the electrics and central heating replacing as well as a new kitchen and new bathroom? That's not to mention the flooring, decorating, fences, etc. The list goes on and on. But, although it certainly wasn't what I had in mind when I first started looking, now that we've done all the work, it's absolutely perfect!



**D** If you're looking for a cool property to live in, then why not consider a double-decker bus? There's a double bedroom, bathroom, kitchen, lounge and toilet. It also has a 200-litre water tank and has been fully wired by its electrician owner, so there are all the modern-day comforts on board that you'd expect from a normal home, such as a television, a microwave and a coffee machine. The bus is currently located in the town of Horsham, but the beauty of living on a bus is that if you need a change of scenery, you can just start up the engine and drive your property somewhere else. There are plenty of caravan sites in the UK that will be happy to have you on site!

**E** It's easy to see how the so-called 'shark house' in Oxford got its name. It was in 1986 that a local journalist, Bill Heine, decided it would be a good idea to have a giant shark installed on the roof of his house. The shark is 7.5 metres long and made of fibreglass. Heine's modest red-brick terraced property soon became a major attraction with many people posting comments and photos of it online. Oxford City Council ordered Heine to remove the shark, saying he did not have the necessary building permission to put it there. However, it is still there today.

**F** This home is similar to the traditional Mongolian tent called a yurt. Freddie and Maya Stark wanted to feel more closely connected to nature. The interior of the yurt is dark because the windows are small, and the only heating comes from a central wood-burning stove. 'We don't mind the darkness – it's cosy – and with the countryside right outside, we see the seasons and the weather change. We can't imagine living anywhere else.' We asked them whether living together in one small room was a problem. 'Sometimes,' Maya said. 'But it's easy to get some personal space – by going out for a long walk!'

**5** Which of the homes described in the extracts would you choose to live in? Why? Which would you least want to live in? Why?

**6** Work in pairs. Discuss the questions.

- 1 Why do you think some people are looking for alternative places to live?
- 2 Can you think of any other advantages or disadvantages of living in alternative homes that aren't mentioned in the extracts?

### Words in context

**7** Complete the sentences (1–10) with words and phrases from the box.

change of scenery live off the land located narrow on board support posts surrounded vacate wood-burning stove wooden plank

- 1 The old buildings of central Amsterdam rest on \_\_\_\_\_ embedded in the bottom of the canals.
- 2 More than one million UK households use a \_\_\_\_\_ to heat their homes during the winter.
- 3 When I graduated, I was asked to \_\_\_\_\_ my university flat.
- 4 I was able to make a new bookshelf for my living room by recycling an old \_\_\_\_\_.
- 5 My parents retired to the countryside because they wanted a \_\_\_\_\_.
- 6 You can find a range of accommodation \_\_\_\_\_ our cruise liners.
- 7 It's our dream to \_\_\_\_\_: keeping chickens and sheep, and growing our own vegetables.
- 8 The roads in this old town are extremely \_\_\_\_\_: it's impossible for two cars to pass each other.
- 9 We're going to have a picnic in a beautiful spot – it's a lake that's completely \_\_\_\_\_ by trees.
- 10 Our offices are conveniently \_\_\_\_\_ a few minutes from the station.