4F Reading

Alternative living

I can understand an article about alternative houses.

1 **SPEAKING** **Look at the photos and the titles of texts A–D. What do you think the texts are about?**

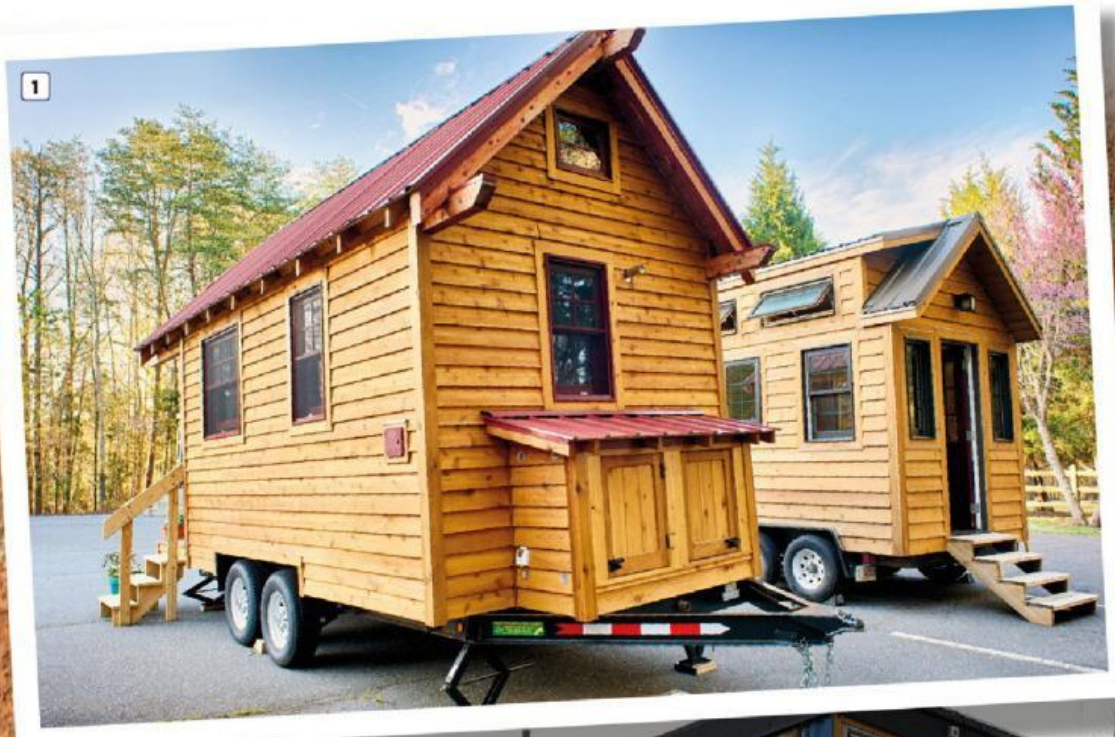
2 **Quickly read texts A–D and check your ideas.**

> **Reading Strategy**
> When you find evidence in the text that supports an answer, underline it and note which question it refers to. If you do that, you can find it again easily when you are checking all your answers at the end.

3 **Read the Reading Strategy. Match two of the texts with the photos below. Say what evidence you found to support your answers.**

4 **Match the texts (A–D) with the sentences (1–7) below. Three texts match with two sentences. Make a note of the evidence you found to support your answers.**

1 There is information on the internet to show people how to build these homes. ___
2 The builder of these homes uses only recycled parts. ___
3 The builder of these homes was inspired by a historical figure. ___
4 The designer gives practical help to people who want to build homes like these. ___
5 These homes are powered by renewable energy. ___
6 These homes can be found in two European countries. ___
7 These homes can be put together to make a block of flats. ___



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5 Work in pairs. Tell each other where you found the evidence for each answer in exercise 4. Do you agree?

6 **VOCABULARY** Match a–j with 1–10 to make compound nouns. They are all in the texts. Which two are written as one word?

Compound nouns

1 rubbish	a bed
2 sofa	b scraper
3 front	c containers
4 sky	d door
5 dining	e dump
6 solar	f estate
7 rain	g flat
8 shipping	h table
9 housing	i panels
10 studio	j water

7 Read the text again. Answer the questions.

1 Where does Gregory Kloehn find the parts to make his houses?
2 What does Gregory sometimes use as a front door?
3 How long has Dee Williams been living in her tiny house?
4 What is the architect of the micro-house famous for?
5 In what way is the micro-house energy-efficient?
6 Apart from the UK, in which country have containers been made into flats?

8 **SPEAKING** Work in pairs. Discuss these questions.

1 Which home is the most original and clever, do you think? Why?
2 Which is the most useful from a social point of view? Why?
3 Which of the homes would you like to live in? Why?
4 Which of the homes would you not like to live in? Why not?

2.11

A Living sculptures

Gregory Kloehn is a sculptor with a difference. Not only are his sculptures created from bits of rubbish, but each of his unique creations offers a homeless person somewhere to live.

Gregory works in California, where there are a lot of people living on the streets. Each of his sculptures is no bigger than the average sofa, but the tiny, one-roomed shelters are as wonderful as mansions for a person who is sleeping rough.

Gregory searches on rubbish dumps to find pieces to use. A washing machine door is as good as a normal window. A fridge door can make a fine front door, and has useful shelves on the inside. And each home is on wheels so that it can be pushed around easily.

Gregory used to make sculptures for rich people. Now he knows that his creations really make a difference to people's lives. And he has also inspired other people to start building.

B Build your own tiny home

If you wanted your own house, would you build it yourself? Some Americans are now building miniature homes for themselves in order to live more cheaply and in a more ecological way than usual. And with wheels on their home, they can go anywhere! Part of the fun is making it yourself – even if you don't know how.

'Most people who are interested in tiny houses don't have any building experience,' says Ryan Mitchell, founder of TheTinyLife.com website, who organises conferences for interested people, and one of the conference speakers is Dee Williams, who has been living in her cosy wooden home since 2004. She wishes that more help had been available then. 'I didn't know anyone else who was building a little house at the time, anywhere,' she says. Now you can find thousands of instructional videos on YouTube, if you want to make your own!

C The designer micro-house

Italian architect Renzo Piano is famous for designing Europe's tallest skyscraper, the Shard in London. Now he has gone to the other extreme: he's designed the smallest house possible. It's just two and a half by three metres and can be carried on a lorry.

The interior is divided into two halves. There's a living room in the front with a sofa and folding table. At the back of the house, there's a small kitchen with a cooker and fridge, a shower and a toilet. It's really energy-efficient, with solar panels on the roof and a container to collect rainwater, so the house is incredibly cheap to run. The house is called 'Diogene', named after the Greek philosopher Diogenes who rejected luxury by living in a large ceramic jar! The Diogene is currently on display in Germany. And at just £17,000, this designer house isn't as expensive as many family cars, so a lot of people are interested in it.

D Well-contained housing

If you heard that they were putting homeless people into shipping containers, you might be shocked. But that's exactly what is happening in Brighton, England.

The Brighton Housing Trust has been inspired by a similar housing estate in the Netherlands. It is developing 36 studio flats in the town centre, using old shipping containers. The flats will have a window at each end and a toilet and shower room in the middle. On one side there'll be a kitchen and small dining table, and on the other side a living room with a sofa bed.

At 24 square metres, they are smaller than a shared room in a homeless hostel. But they are much more desirable and certainly spacious enough for one person. They are also stackable. The containers will sit on top of one another with stairs connecting them. And in future, if somebody wants to move them, they can simply pick them up and take them to another site.

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