Unit 10 Building design

Reading

Multiple choice

1 You are going to read a passage about a famous architect called Le Corbusier. Read the passage quickly then match the words (1–10), in bold in the passage, with their correct definition (a-j).

Word	Definition
1 brand-new	a completely different from what was done before
2 followers	b to be made to experience something (often something unpleasant)
3 enthusiastic	c uncovered or unprotected, and able to be seen by people
4 exposed	d stopped following a plan, idea, etc.
5 exaggeration	e very ugly
6 revolutionary	f showing a lot of interest in something
7 significant	g important because it is a reason why changes happened
8 abandoned	h completely new
9 hideous	i people who believe in a particular person or set of ideas
10 subjected to	j when you describe something as larger, better, worse, etc., than it actually is



The man who tried to destroy Paris

Le Corbusier was one of the most influential architects of the 20th century. But many may wish he had never built anything

Born Charles-Edouard Jeanneret in Switzerland in 1887, the architect Le Corbusier used his grandfather's name when he went to Paris at the age of 29. As Jeanneret, he had been a fairly successful small town architect; as Le Corbusier, he had bigger ideas. He disliked the architectural styles that were popular at the time, and considered them to be out of date in an industrial age. He believed that the 20th century deserved a **brand-new** style of architecture. "We must start again from zero," he said.

The new style of architecture was called the International Style, and it attracted many **followers** in the architectural world. However, nobody was as **enthusiastic** about it as Le Corbusier at the beginning. He worked hard to promote his ideas at exhibitions, at talks, in books and in his own magazine. He loved machines, and believed that, like a machine, a building should have a function. He is famous for saying: "A house is a machine for living in."

The machines he admired the most were ships, and his early buildings tried to capture the spirit of the sea with their white walls, **exposed** rooms, shining glass and flat roofs. He called this style of architecture 'purism'. The first building to embrace this style was the Villa Savoye in France. Le Corbusier believed that it was one of the best, most functional houses ever built. Unfortunately, this turned out to be an **exaggeration**. The flat roof was a particular problem, as water poured in every time it rained, and it needed constant repairs. Nevertheless, its design was **revolutionary**, and it should be considered a **significant** piece of early 20th-century architecture.

In 1935, Le Corbusier visited New York City. He loved the city, and especially its tall buildings. He had only one reservation, which he explained to a journalist for the *Herald Tribune* newspaper. American skyscrapers were the biggest, tallest buildings in the world at that time, but Le Corbusier was a man who always thought big, and as far as he was concerned, they were "just too small". Le Corbusier had always admired tall buildings. Now, inspired by his visit, he **abandoned** purism. It is doubtful that he could have created anything as grand as the skyscrapers he had seen in the city, but from now on Le Corbusier started designing buildings that sent out a more powerful message.

He first started using bright colours, and then experimented with concrete. Le Corbusier loved the look and flexibility of concrete, and found it hard to hide it behind brick or paint, preferring to leave it on full view. At a time when concrete was seen as modern and exciting, his designs made him world famous, and he was asked to design several important buildings around the world. Altogether, he designed about 60 major buildings worldwide, in a style that became known as 'modernism'.

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However, while many admired and copied his new style of architecture, many more hated it. They turned against him, and tried to block his plans. Buildings should inspire people and make them feel good, they said, and Le Corbusier's ugly, depressing buildings often had the opposite effect. In this respect, the people of Paris had a lucky escape. Early in his career, Le Corbusier had wanted to knock down the centre of Paris and replace the old buildings with huge towers. Fortunately, his plan was rejected. Justifiably, in view of his plans to transform one of the world's most beautiful cities into a **hideous** concrete jungle, Le Corbusier is still known as 'the man who tried to destroy Paris'.

Despite the criticism, he had an enormous effect on the world of architecture, and attracted a large number of followers. As a result, many places were **subjected to** his style. In the Paris suburbs of Robigny, for example, huge towers were built to house some of the city's poorer inhabitants. Other European cities such as London, Berlin and Dublin also felt his influence.

Apart from the buildings that were directly influenced by Le Corbusier, something else happened that the architect never planned: there was a return to older styles of architecture. Today, many people live in modern houses that look like they are much older. This look may represent a return to traditional tastes and values. More likely, however, it represents a reaction against modernist architecture.

❷ Underline the key ideas in Questions 1–4. Then answer the questions.

Questions 1–4

Choose the correct letter, A, B, C or D.

1 What does the writer say about Le Corbusier in the first paragraph?
- **A** He had a relative who was also an architect.
- **B** He became successful when he went to Paris.
- **C** He thought that there were too many industrial buildings.
- **D** He wanted to do something different from everyone else.

2 What does the writer say about the International Style in the second paragraph?
- **A** A lot of other architects liked it.
- **B** At first, people did not like it very much.
- **C** It took a lot of hard work to get people to accept it.
- **D** The buildings looked like machines.

3 Why does the writer describe the Villa Savoye as 'revolutionary' in the third paragraph?
- **A** It looked more like a ship than a building.
- **B** Nobody had built anything like it before.
- **C** It looked nice, but had too many faults.
- **D** It was more functional than any other building of the time.

4 What is the writer's main purpose in the fourth paragraph?
- **A** to explain why Le Corbusier visited New York
- **B** to show that Le Corbusier was not impressed by New York's skyscrapers
- **C** to describe Le Corbusier's reaction to New York
- **D** to explain why Le Corbusier changed his style of architecture

Matching sentence endings

❸ Read Questions 5–8 and the endings A–F.

1 Underline the key words in the questions and use these to find the right place in the passage.
2 Read that part of the passage carefully and match the information to the key words in the endings.

Questions 5–8

Complete each sentence with the correct ending, A–F, below.

5 Le Corbusier's Villa Savoye
6 The concrete in Le Corbusier's later buildings
7 Le Corbusier's style of architecture
8 Le Corbusier had a large following which

- **A** copied the style that he had invented.
- **B** is a classic example of modernist architecture.
- **C** made him friends and enemies.
- **D** was not as good as he claimed.
- **E** was covered in bright colours.
- **F** was left exposed so that people could see it.

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Yes / No / Not Given

4 Underline the key words in Questions 9–14 and use them to find the right place in the passage. Then read each part of the passage carefully in order to answer the questions.

Questions 9–14

Do the following statements agree with the views of the writer in the reading passage?

Write

YES *if the statement agrees with the views of the writer.*

NO *if the statement contradicts the views of the writer.*

NOT GIVEN *if it is impossible to say what the writer thinks about this.*

9 At first, people were not as enthusiastic about the International Style as Le Corbusier was.

10 The Villa Savoye is an important building.

11 Le Corbusier could have designed buildings that were as big and as impressive as those in New York.

12 Le Corbusier found concrete a difficult material to work with.

13 Le Corbusier's plans for Paris would have ruined the city.

14 Many people show they reject Le Corbusier's style of architecture by living in old houses.

Vocabulary

Word choice

1 Replace the words in bold in the newspaper article with words which have a similar meaning. You will find these words in the grid.

E	W	T	I	M	B	E	R	Q	A	W
N	F	E	R	T	Y	U	C	I	T	O
J	A	P	A	R	T	M	E	N	T	S
O	L	P	A	S	D	F	N	G	R	H
Y	T	E	S	S	E	N	T	I	A	L
A	H	J	K	L	Z	X	R	C	C	V
B	Y	B	N	M	C	R	E	A	T	E
L	Q	A	R	E	A	W	E	R	I	T
E	Y	U	I	O	P	A	S	D	V	F
A	P	P	E	A	R	A	N	C	E	G

New residential development fails to impress.



Report by our architecture correspondent

The town council has described Victory Mansions, the new block of **flats** (1 .....) in the **middle** (2 *centre*) of the town as 'an **important** (3 .....) addition to the town's residential facilities'. Your correspondent was invited to attend the opening ceremony, which promised to be a really **fun** (4 .....) event.

The ceremony itself was a rather downbeat affair. Nobody present was impressed by the building, which didn't look particularly **nice** (5 .....), with its grey concrete façade and rather dated **look** (6 .....). Unfortunately, the initial impression didn't change when we were shown the inside. The rooms were not only small but, thanks to the 'environmentally-friendly sound-proofing' **wood** (7 .....) on the walls, rather dark. The architects had tried to **make** (8 .....) a garden **place** (9 .....) on the roof, but it was so small that it could probably only comfortably accommodate five or six residents at any one time.

All in all, a big disappointment. And with prices starting at £500,000 for a two-room flat, you would have to be very **rich** (10 .....) to even consider living there.

Key vocabulary

2 Complete this passage with the words and phrases from the box.

affordable	construct	construction	~~demand~~
design	engineers	foundations	housing
improve	knock down	steel	tower blocks

A few years ago, to satisfy the increasing **1** *demand* for practical and **2** ..... **3** ..... in my city, the local government decided the best solution would be to **4** ..... a lot of the old terraced houses and build **5** ..... in their place. At the same time, they decided to **6** ..... the city by replacing many of the old-fashioned brick office blocks with modern **7** ..... and glass skyscrapers. At great expense, a team of architects and **8** ..... were hired to **9** ..... and **10** ..... a new residential and business estate, and a huge **11** ..... programme began. However, as soon as the **12** ..... had been laid, the government suddenly announced there was no more money, and the programme stopped.

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