

READING 2**Happiness and the Home**

Read each paragraph (B, C & D) from the article, **Happiness and the Home**. Write the topic and the main idea of each paragraph.

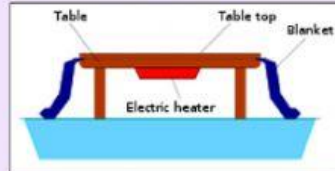


B Our idea of home comes partly from geography because the land determines the building materials and the design. In the forested areas of Europe and North America, traditional houses are built of wood. In central Africa, Pygmies build *lobembe* from plant materials. These temporary structures are appropriate for nomadic people who frequently move from place to place. In Mongolia, which has few trees, the traditional house is the *gher* – wooden poles covered with skins and textiles. The Mongols, too, are nomadic and need portable houses, but their *gher* must also protect them from the harsh winter weather. The white color of the *gher* is important to the people because in their language, *tsagaan* means both “white” and “happy.” In the Cycladic islands in the south of Greece, too, traditional houses are always white, and they usually have blue elements that symbolize the blue of the sea. As with most Mediterranean people, when Greeks move to cities or other countries, into modern apartment buildings, their idea of “home” is often the traditional village of their grandparents, which they might visit only at holiday time.

Topic:

Main idea:

C There is an almost universal association of home with the hearth – the fireplace or area in front of the fireplace. Fire is essential in all cultures; it brings security and comfort and allows us to cook our food. On a cold winter night in Japan, a family in a traditional house gathers around the *kotatsu*, a heater under a low table. There is a blanket over the table, and the family sits with the blanket over their legs. Here, they talk, drink tea, read, do homework, and keep warm. This is also true in some parts of Spain. However, even in central Africa, where the weather is not so cold, the Pygmy people see fire as essential to their survival. Although they have a deep knowledge of the forest around them, they have a terrible fear of elephants and believe that fire keeps these animals away. In *all* cultures, though, people associate the hearth with food, and this usually means the kitchen. This room is often seen as the emotional center of the house. Is this why, at a party in a New York apartment, people begin in the living room but often end up gathering in the kitchen? Clearly, a *hearth* is more than it might seem. Interestingly, in English, the word hearth has an additional symbolic meaning: “home.”



Topic:

Main idea:

D Home can also be an expression of personal identity. The choice of colors, furniture, art, photos, carpets, and *chotchkie*s – those small items that many of us collect – is unique to each person. These days, the idea of home can even include spaces on the Internet, where people can create a “home” online. This is expanding the concept, making home not just a physical and emotional place but also a virtual one. Wherever it is, whatever it is, home is the place where many people are the most secure, comfortable, relaxed and, possibly, the happiest.



Topic:

Main idea: