

READING ACTIVITY

Describing homes in the UK

TO BUY OR NOT TO BUY

A As the saying goes, 'An Englishman's home is his castle'. Buying and selling houses is a complicated business, but purchasing your own home is very common in the UK. And it doesn't stop there. Most Brits like talking about homes, looking around homes and watching TV programmes about homes! There are programmes about building houses, changing the design of houses, changing other buildings into houses and plenty of other types, too. But would you buy these houses currently for sale? Let's see how our readers voted in the 'To buy or not to buy' survey.

B This house in Liverpool is certainly a bargain! Outside, the six-bedroomed semi-detached house looks fairly ordinary. It's in excellent condition, but the owners have had to reduce its price by £50,000 because nobody wants to buy it. Why not? Well, the house's decor is not to everyone's taste. There are so many ornaments and statues that it looks more like a shop than a house. Each room has its own individual style, with old-fashioned blue porcelain in the living room for example.

C It may not look very homely right now, but this former bunker in the hills of rural Devon is up for sale. Dating from the 1950s, it was built to protect people from possible nuclear attacks. It's certainly spacious; there are 56 rooms over two floors, one of which is underground. The guide price is £400,000, but anyone who wants to buy this unique home will have to spend thousands more to make it habitable. Not one for the average buyer, then.

D Property in London is extremely expensive, but we've found an affordable one. There's a small problem though. This terraced house in east London needs to be completely renovated following a fire. Potential buyers willing to spend lots of money could turn it into a stunning home. This house also has a history. In the 1960s, the ground floor was a gym run by Charles Bennett, who lived upstairs with his family. In 1966, they invited a 19-year-old bodybuilder to live and train with them at the gym. His name? Arnold Schwarzenegger! The actor and politician lived here for two years before he became famous, adding a selling point for Arnie fans.

E Do you agree with our voters? How would you rate these houses? Our top tip: we all have our own tastes when it comes to our home, so remember to look beyond the decor. Imagine these houses with your style stamped on them, and then make your decision!

TO BUY 100%

TO BUY 75%

85%

2 Read the article again. Choose the main idea for paragraphs A-E. Then justify your choice.

- A** 1 People in Britain don't buy homes because it's difficult. They watch programmes about it instead.
2 A lot of British people like to purchase, discuss and watch programmes about houses.

- B** 1 A large, well-kept house is not selling despite a drop in price because of the decoration.
2 A large, well-kept house is cheap and people will buy it because it's like a shop.

- C** 1 This big country building will cost a lot and needs a lot of work, but it will be different.
2 This big country building will be really different and the buyer can move in straightaway.

- D** 1 A disaster at this house meant that a famous person moved out.
2 A disaster led to this house needing a lot of work, but a well-known person could help sell it.

- E** 1 You can make any house your own, so think carefully.
2 Look at the decor carefully before buying.

3 Complete the sentences with the highlighted words from the article.

- 1 There's nothing strange about the decor. It's _____.
- 2 Your room is so dirty it's not _____. Make sure you clean it!
- 3 There's a _____ view from the living room window. Everyone loves it!
- 4 Twelve people can stay in this quiet _____ cottage with only one shared wall.
- 5 The street is full of _____ houses. They are all attached.
- 6 Everyone's a _____ customer. You never know who might buy your house.

Choose the correct option.

- 1 We can hear our neighbours through the walls on either side of our house.
- 2 Following the fire, their house wasn't .
- 3 The house was transformed by an interior designer and now the decor is .
- 4 Our house is attached to another one, so it's .
- 5 To sell your house, you should tidy up before buyers come and look at it.
- 6 My dream is to live in an amazing apartment. I don't want anything .

4 Find three compound adjectives which describe the house in paragraph B. Then complete the sentences.

- 1 Sia prefers _____ furniture to modern furniture.
- 2 If you live in a _____ house, your house is joined to your neighbour's on one side.
- 3 I'm renting a _____ house with five friends this summer, so we'll all have our own room.

AVAILABLE FOR RENT IN DECEMBER

Our stunning (1 cottage with three bedrooms) is available for the month of December. The house has a living room with a new, comfortable sofa.

In the kitchen, there is a large (2 table made by hand), perfect for family meals.

The walls are (3 red like bricks) and there are lots of (4 pictures that look modern). There's a modern family bathroom, too.

- 5 Read the advert. Rewrite the words in brackets as compound adjectives. Pay attention to word order.

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_____ is available for the month of December. The house has a living room with a new, comfortable sofa. In the kitchen, there is a large (2 table made by hand)

_____, perfect for family meals. The walls are (3 red like bricks) _____ and there are lots of (4 pictures that look modern) _____.

There's a modern family bathroom, too.

Complete the text with the compound adjectives.

old-fashioned

semi-detached

hand-made

four-bedroomed

modern-looking

red-bricked

We used to live in a small, (1) _____, terraced house - the colour was very typical of the area, but we've recently moved into a large (2) _____ one. Fortunately, it's a (3) _____ house so my sister and I don't have to share a bedroom anymore. The house dates from the 1900s, so from the outside it looks (4) _____. However, it's completely different inside - every room is (5) _____ with the latest style of furniture. My mum is brilliant at sewing so there are beautiful (6) _____ curtains in every room.