

OFF-GRID LIVING IN A YURT

Living in a traditional brick-and-mortar home is not the only way to build a life. Over the last few years, more young people have decided to give up urban apartments in favour of off-grid alternatives like yurts—round, wooden-framed tents historically used by Central Asian nomads.

For 24-year-old Clara, the decision was both financial and personal. "Renting a flat in the city centre was costing me almost 70% of my monthly salary," she explains. **1** _____ So, with a bit of savings and help from friends, she purchased a second-hand yurt, insulated it with heavy felt, and set it up on a rented patch of woodland.

Living in a yurt requires a complete shift in daily habits. There is no central heating or running water on demand. Clara has to chop wood every afternoon to keep her stove burning through the cold winter nights. **2** _____ "At first, taking a shower involved heating water over a fire and using a solar-powered camping pump," Clara laughs. "It was hard work, but adjusting to this routine quickly **became second nature to me.**"

Despite the physical challenge, Clara enjoys the peace and quiet. She works remotely as a graphic designer, relying on a small solar panel system to charge her laptop and mobile phone. **3** _____ She spends her evenings listening to the sound of the wind or reading under the warm light of an oil lamp.

Of course, living off-grid isn't without its dramatic moments. Last winter, a heavy storm damaged part of her canvas roof during the night. **4** _____ "I had a few **hairy moments** trying to secure the outer cover while freezing winds were blowing," she recalls. "In situations like that, you have to **keep a cool head** and act fast. But I wouldn't trade this freedom for any luxury apartment."

Task 1: Gapped Text

Read the article. Complete gaps 1–4 with sentences A–E. There is one extra sentence.

- **A.** I realised I was spending all my time working just to pay for a place where I barely spent any daylight hours.
- **B.** She also prefers to travel abroad every summer rather than stay in one place.
- **C.** Keeping food fresh is another challenge, as she relies on a cool chest buried slightly underground.
- **D.** It was a terrifying experience, but she managed to fix the leak before her electronics were damaged.
- **E.** Without a television or noisy traffic, she can focus entirely on her creative projects.

Task 2: Vocabulary & Idioms

Match the bold words/phrases in the text with their meanings below:

1. Became an automatic habit that feels natural: _____
2. A situation or experience that is dangerous, frightening, or stressful: _____
3. To remain calm and stay in control during an emergency: _____

THE TREEHOUSE LIFE

When Mark retired from his job as an engineer, he decided to build something he had dreamed about since childhood: a fully functional treehouse situated eight metres above the ground in an oak forest.

While many people view treehouses as mere play areas for children, Mark's home is a fully insulated, two-story structure built around three sturdy trees. **1** _____ It includes a compact kitchen, a wood-burning fireplace, and a small balcony overlooking the valley.

Building a house suspended in the air brought unique engineering challenges. Mark had to make sure the foundation would allow the trees to grow and move naturally in high winds without damaging the house. **2** _____ "You can't just build rigidly; you have to work *with* nature, not against it," Mark says.

Living high in the canopy offers a lifestyle that isn't for everyone. **3** _____ However, Mark thrives in this environment. He enjoys being surrounded by wildlife and starting his morning with a panoramic view of the forest mist.

"Living up here keeps me grounded in a strange way," Mark reflects. "It isn't **everyone's cup of tea**, but for me, waking up to birdsong every morning makes all the effort worth it."

Task 1: Gapped Text

Read the article. Complete gaps 1–3 with sentences A–D. There is one extra sentence.

- **A.** Access to the house is via a wooden spiral staircase, which makes bringing heavy groceries upstairs quite a workout.
- **B.** High winds during autumn storms can cause the whole structure to sway gently, which can be unsettling for visitors.
- **C.** He used lightweight, recycled timber to reduce the stress on the supporting tree trunks.
- **D.** Most modern apartments offer much better soundproofing against outdoor noise.

Task 2: Comprehension (True / False / Not Given)

Decide if the sentences are True (T), False (F), or Not Given (NG):

1. Mark built the treehouse primarily as a play area for his grandchildren. [T / F / NG]
2. The treehouse moves slightly when there are strong winds. [T / F / NG]
3. Mark finds it easy to carry heavy items up to his treehouse. [T / F / NG]
4. Mark believes that treehouse living appeals to every type of person. [T / F / NG]