

**A** Read this article about home exchanges and then read the sentences (1-8) following it. Mark a sentence A if it is true according to the article. Mark it B if it is false. Mark it C if there isn't enough information in the text to decide if the sentence is true or not. Write your answers in the white boxes next to the numbers as in the example (0).

A = TRUE B = FALSE C = THE TEXT DOES NOT SAY

## Make yourself at home

Looking for a different holiday? Fed up with package tours packing you into impersonal hotels with food you can't eat and entertainment you can't stand? If you miss your home comforts, then go home for a holiday – not yours, but someone else's. By swapping your home, there are very few places in the world that are out of reach, even if you have only a little money.

How do you go about it? Well, just contact Homelink International, a home exchange company, and become a member. The exchange procedure is relatively simple. Each member's home is listed in a directory with a description and a photograph, including local attractions, distance from important cities and other relevant details. Members give preferred dates and destinations, but many want to go anytime, anywhere. Most visitors simply want a base, and a warm comfortable home is more personal and practical than the most luxurious hotel.

Apart from the directories, the Internet has opened up a quick way of seeing what is on offer – 50% of Homelink's members use it for their initial exploration. Many Americans and Australians have their own websites describing their homes and families, together with photographs. Homelink UK members can now have their own home page with unlimited text and five photographs.

The home exchange companies give complete guidelines for a successful exchange, e.g. details on how to prepare your home-cupboard space, instructions for kitchen appliances and leaving a spare key.

Household insurance companies need to be informed that you will have non-paying guests staying, but there should be no extra charge – most will be pleased to hear that your home will be occupied. But you will not be paid for theft if the house hasn't



been broken into. This has to be a matter of trust, but none of the major home exchange companies has so far had any reports of theft or serious damage. Most members will treat your home as they would want you to treat theirs.

The greatest fear for most home exchangers is not leaving their home in the care of virtual strangers, but the chance of the exchange partners changing their minds at the last minute, leaving them with airline tickets and no accommodation. However, such cases can be covered by travel insurance. Homelink offers detailed and competitive insurance to its members.

Home exchangers can swap not only their homes, but cars, pets, golf club memberships, baby sitters – even dinner guests. So, which of your overseas homes will you go to this year?

0. Exchanging homes might be a good idea for people who are not very rich. 0  A
1. The Homelink directory provides details about places worth seeing in the area. 1
2. Many Homelink members are very careful about when and where they want to go. 2
3. All home exchangers search the Internet to see what is on offer. 3
4. Homelink allows its UK members to write as much information as they want on their homepage. 4
5. Household insurance companies ask their clients to pay extra money if they let strangers into their house. 5
6. Home exchange companies frequently receive reports of theft. 6
7. Home exchangers often change their mind at the last minute. 7
8. It is common for home exchangers to also exchange cars. 8

if it is  
decide  
(O).

**B** Read this article about floating homes and then read the half sentences that follow the text. Match the half sentences based on the information in the story. Write the letters (A-J) in the white boxes next to the numbers (1-8) as in the example (O). Remember that there is one extra letter that you will not need.

# Getting our houses in order

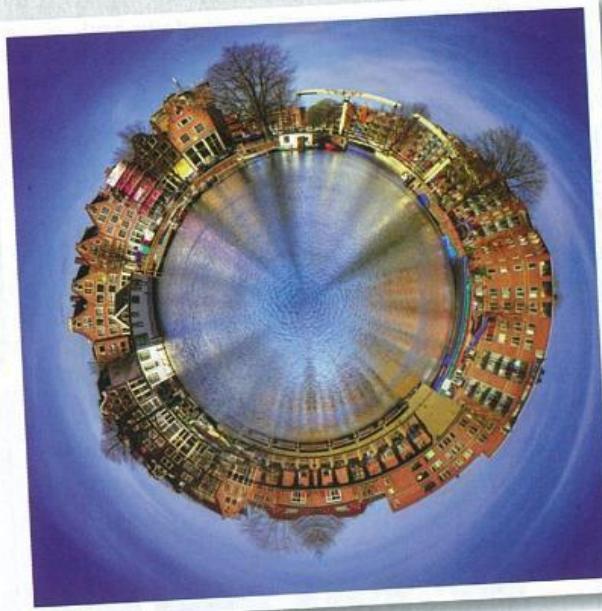
Nowadays, more and more countries are facing a shortage of housing. The main reasons for this are a growing population and a lack of land which can be built on. Increases in sea level have not helped matters, and some countries are actually fighting hard to hold on to areas which are next to the sea.

One city that has decided to give up the fight and go with the flow is Amsterdam. Authorities from the Dutch city are currently building a floating suburb called IJburg, which is located to the east of the city centre. IJburg consists of three man-made islands in IJssel Lake. The first stage of the plan is for one hundred floating houses to be built, but others will follow as long as there is enough interest from people looking to move to the area.

Possible inhabitants of the suburb can rent an area of water for fifty years at a price of around €120,000. They then order their floating house and state any preferences they may have, such as the number of rooms or the layout of the interior. The house is built in a factory and when it is complete, it is towed along the river to the area that the owner has rented.

Inhabitants of the floating homes need never worry about floods or rising waters again. The buildings are fixed at the side of the lake, but are free to move upwards or downwards depending on the level of the water.

A number of families have already started living in their floating homes and, so far, their opinions have been very positive. Rik Bos, who is a resident of IJburg, enjoys admiring the beautiful view from his new house. 'It was always an ambition of mine to live next to a lake, and now I'm actually living on a lake!' he says. 'It really is a dream come true.'



0. There are not enough houses
1. It is becoming difficult
2. The people in charge of Amsterdam have decided
3. IJburg will have more than 100 houses
4. A place on the water can
5. The floating houses are
6. The houses have the ability to
7. The inhabitants are
8. Rik Bos has

- 0 **D**  
1   
2   
3   
4   
5   
6   
7   
8

- A. made in a factory.
- B. to keep areas of land by the sea.
- C. providing there is enough demand.
- D. because there are too many people and not enough space for building.
- E. achieved his ambition.
- F. due to the rise in the sea level.
- G. be rented for fifty years.
- H. to create an area of housing that floats.
- I. pleased with their new homes.
- J. go up and down in the water.