

Homes: Teachers' notes and tips – upper intermediate

1 Pre-reading tasks

- a Write on the board: *An Englishman's home is his castle**. Can the students decide what this means, and does it apply to other cultures too?
- b Also ask students how important it is to own their own home, (rather than renting) and do they spend a lot of money and effort making it look nice? If cash were no problem what kind of home would they live in? (If you're teaching in the UK you can elicit the names of some of the many home-improvement programmes on TV).

Tip: ask students to be creative

If you have time, why not ask students to do a simple drawing of their ideal home. They can explain this to a partner.

- b Sketch on the board a narrowboat (sometimes called a barge but this is larger and mainly used for carrying goods) and lighthouse (there is an example of each with the texts) and tell students that they're going to read about two people who each live in one of these.
- c Put the students in pairs and ask them to ask and answer the questions that are in part one (speaking only).
- d Ask for a quick feedback but if any student has had an experience of living on a boat for a while they can talk about that.

Tip: try to relate the topic to the students' lives

Even if students have never been in a lighthouse or on a boat they can still imagine what they may be like. Don't let students just say '*I don't know*' – pictures could help at this stage.

2 First reading tasks

- a Divide the class in half. Those on the left are lighthouse people and those on the right are narrowboat people.
- b Give each student their appropriate reading. They need to read fairly quickly and decide whether or not they would like to live in that place. They can tell another student (in their half) what they think.

Tip: always remind students that they can read the text again more slowly

Students only need to read to decide if they would like to live there, so they should not be worrying about unknown vocabulary or any details at this stage.

3 Second reading tasks

- a Students then read the text again more slowly and complete the table. They should be writing in note form rather than in sentences.
- b Once they've finished they compare their answers with another student (from their half again). Ask stronger students to help those who are struggling.
- c No feedback but monitor well while students are working to make sure they're on the right track. Everyone should have written something for each question. (Suggested answers at the end of these notes.)

*A person's home is a place where they can be private and safe and do as they like.

4 Post-reading tasks – speaking

- a Tell students to put away the text but to keep the completed worksheet.
- b Pair up the students and have them, if possible, sitting face-to-face so that a lighthouse person is sitting opposite a narrowboat person.
- c One student asks a question from the worksheet. (Perhaps suggest they can do this in any order so that all the students are not doing the same thing at the same time.) The student answering should not be looking at the text (which should've been put away) but they can look at their notes to remind them of the answers. Once finished the student says 'And what about you?' so that student who asked the question gives their answer too. This allows both students to speak about the same question together which is a more natural task.

Tip: jigsaw readings combine all four skills
After reading and note-taking students are now listening and speaking so this is always a great activity. Do get them to ask more questions, especially if they don't understand – the students should be really *listening* and responding to the replies!

Tip: have a task for early finishers
Remind students that the aim of this task is not to do this as quickly as possible – perhaps tell them there is 10 or 15 minutes for this so there's no need to rush. However, you could ask those who finish a little earlier to swap their texts and read. (Make sure they don't start the next task.)

5 Post-reading tasks – speaking

- a Once most students have finished speaking, ask for a few reactions. Students are usually interested in what others in the class think.
- b The next speaking task gets students to talk about their own opinions. Change the pairs or put students back to their original seating so that they are talking to a different person this time.

Tip: allow students to give their own opinions and personalize the topic
Students are more likely to talk freely if they can relate the topic to their own lives. The prioritizing question is an authentic task, especially for those thinking about moving.

What does the person do?	writer	painter
What is their main reason for choosing this type of home?	far away from people, privacy	travelling while being at home
How does their choice of home affect their work?	works better, is inspired by the views	always has her equipment, easy to find a nice place
What adjectives are used to describe the place?	remote, inspirational, old, comfortable, circular, small	20m long, narrow, cold in winter, small, tiny, light
What does he/she do for companionship?	not much, likes own company	has dog, friendly with other boaters
Which aspect of the weather causes most problems?	the wind	the cold
What is/are the solutions to this?	thick walls and windows	good heating
What words would you use to describe the person's personality?	independent, a loner, nature-lover...	loves travelling, independent...
What examples of self-reliance are given?	makes own bread, fishes, has car	makes own jam, cooks, cycles