

Discussion Topic: The Home

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Activity A

Brainstorm on this:

- Home is ...

Get your students to say the first thing that comes into their heads (or the second) when they are asked to define the concept of "home" and what it means to them. My students gave these answers:

(Do not show them yet).

- Family.
- My refuge.
- Where I switch off.
- Where the people I love live.
- Privacy.
- Where the heart is.
- Your castle.
- A place to relax.
- Home is the centre of your life.
- A base.
- A symbol of independence-and dependence.
- Where I meet my family.
- Fun & Funny.
- A married couple wants their own home.(Spanish saying)

You can discuss the opinions that are given, and then show the students my contributions. Get them to comment, and maybe even see if the definitions of "home" vary from culture to culture. Do American students, for example, think that their home is the centre of their life?

Activity B

Why do we have a house? What is the function of a house?

- Sleep
- Shower
- Eat
- Meet family
- To avoid the cold
- Feel protected

Get your students to give their comments as well, and also have them justify anything they suggest. (A teacher's best friend is the word "WHY?")

Activity C

Brainstorming:

- Things you would do at home and not elsewhere:

Some examples:

- Yawn very openly.
- Sit slumped in a chair, lie on a sofa.
- Take off your shoes!
- Use impolite language.
- Wear little clothing, at times.
- Walk around in your pyjamas.
- Watch 3 hours of TV.
- Shout at your family members.

Activity D

Favourite place at home:

- Your bedroom.
- Your bed.
- The kitchen.
- The refrigerator.
- The sofa.
- The balcony (Do you have one?).

Activity E

Household chores:

- Brainstorm on types of chores
 - Dishes
 - Bathroom
 - Carpet
 - Windows
 - Shopping
- Most hated chore?
- Who does most of the chores in your house?
- How do you typically avoid doing chores?
 - Your excuses:
 - Studying?
 - Going out?
 - It is not your turn? ...
- Do you recycle your rubbish?
 - What do you do if the container is full?
- Who does the odd jobs around your house?
 - Electrical
 - Hammering
 - Painting
- Who buys the paper?
- Who gets up at night to investigate a noise?
- Who does the shopping?
- Who cuts the grass?

- Who washes the dishes?
- Who cooks?
- Who makes sure the bills are paid?
- Who is usually first to answer the door/the phone?

Discussion Topic: My New Home

Activity A

Your students are going to buy a new home, get them to list off their priorities. For example, I got the following:

- It must face South (Why?)
- It must have a lot of natural light
- It should have nice views/Nice location
- It must be near the countryside
- I prefer a house to a flat (Why?)
- It must have amenities nearby (parks, mountains, culture centres, sports centres ...)
- I want my privacy
- I would not live in a tough area (Why not?)
- My flat has to be in the city centre (Why?)

You can even give your students these comments and ask them to rate them in importance (for them).

You could also get them to debate the needs/priorities of single people as opposed to married couples with children, for example.

Tastes and priorities differ from country to country so the English might emphasise the importance of the house as an investment, while the Spanish could underline the necessity to have a comfortable home with a good kitchen, for example.

Activity B

- Inside the house, the most important thing for me is ...

Some answers I got:

- A balcony (Why?)
- Two bathrooms! (If you have sisters ...)
- A big TV
- An enormous bed
- A really comfortable sofa
- Book shelves
- Big kitchen
- A fire place (Why?)
- A big bath
- Distribution of the house (the lay-out), ie having the bedroom far from the kitchen or living room (Why?)

As always, anything they say must be supported by explanations/elaboration. No short answers. You could also mention the word "facilities" here, letting them see how it differs from "amenities".

Activity C

Name two or three amenities you consider essential for you. The most common answers I got were:

- Sports centre
- Public transport
- Mountains
- Open country
- Shopping centre

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