



“Houses Around the World”

Reading Comprehension – Informational Passages

Directions: Read the passage. Then answer questions about the passage below.



Do you live in a house? You might be surprised to learn that there are many, many kinds of houses. Most people in the United States are used to houses made of wood or bricks. But many people around the world live in houses made of grass, dirt, or cloth.

In the Great Rift Valley of Eritrea, the nomadic people who are in the Atr tribe build their houses of straw. Their houses are shaped like domes – half spheres. The homes are small and cool. The people can move their houses when they want to move. Since the people are **nomads**, they move often. They take their animals to new places in order to find food.

People who belong to the Uros tribe of Lake Titicaca, Peru build their houses of reeds. Not only that — they also live on islands that are made of reeds! Their boats are made of reeds too! About 2,000 people live on these man-made islands. They started to build their own islands about 500 years ago.

In Andalusia, in the south of Spain, some people live in underground houses. This kind of house is called a *cueba*. During the winter, the houses stay warm. During the summer, the houses stay cool.

In Sana’a, Yemen, some people live in tall houses made of bricks. These bricks are made of clay, straw, and soil. The bricks last many years — maybe as long as 500 years. The modern houses in Sana’a are made to look like the older, **traditional** houses, but they are made of concrete instead of bricks.

In Mindanao in the Philippines, some people still live in tree houses. The tree houses are made of bamboo with grass roofs. The houses are good lookouts for snakes and wild animals. The air is cool and the houses stay dry. Now, most people use these tree houses as meeting places.

The fishermen of Sabah, Malaysia build their houses on the water. They use wood from mangrove trees. This wood stays strong in the water. The houses receive official addresses from the government.

Fujian, China has many townhouses that are made of hard-packed **soil**. The dirt becomes as strong as brick when it is packed hard. One large family group lives in a townhouse. The townhouses were built around 300 years ago. A group of townhouses is protected by a thick dirt-packed wall.

In the Gobi Desert in Mongolia, some nomadic people live in homes called *gels*. These homes are made of cloth. The cloth is filled with animal hair. Two poles in the center of the house hold the house up. The people move often to find food for their animals. The houses are easy to move and set up.

Some American Indians live in teepees. These homes are made of cloth or buffalo hide. There are wooden poles used to hold the teepee up. Now some people use teepees only for special ceremonies, but people used to live in them all the time.

The traditional houses of Chitos, Greece, are made of stone. They have arched doorways and indoor courtyards. They have outdoor dining rooms which are **decorated** with tile and rock. This means they are ornamented, and made to look more beautiful.

The Dayak people of Indonesia build some of their houses on stilts, several feet above the ground. The frame of the house is made of iron. The walls are made of tree bark. The floors are made of wooden planks which are placed side by side. The houses are decorated with pictures of water snakes and rhinoceros birds. These animals are part of the people’s story of **creation**, or how the world was made.

People build their houses to fit the needs of their lives. The houses are different, but one thing is the same wherever you go. There’s no place like home!

Questions:

1) How are the islands and the houses of the Uros tribe the same?

- A. They are both made by machines.
- B. They are both made of reeds.
- C. They are both made of soil.
- D. They are both built on land.
- E. They are both very modern.

2) Why did people live in tree houses?

- A. So they could see far.
- B. So they could stay cool.
- C. So they could stay safe.
- D. All of the above.
- E. None of the above.

3) Which groups have cloth houses?

- A. The Atr and the Uros people.
- B. The Dayak and the Greek people.
- C. Mongolians and American Indians.
- D. Andalusians and the Dayak people.
- E. The Greek and the Malaysian people.

4) Where do houses have outdoor rooms?

- A. In Greece.
- B. In Malaysia.
- C. In Indonesia.
- D. In the Philippines.
- E. In the Gobi Desert.

5) Why are Dayak houses decorated with pictures of snakes??

- A. The Dayak people are afraid of snakes.
- B. The snake pictures scare away other animals.
- C. The snakes are part of the Dayak creation story.
- D. Both B and C are correct.
- E. None of the above

Vocabulary:

1) **Nomads** are people who...

- A. live on small farms.
- B. move from place to place.
- C. build their homes of stone.
- D. live in underground houses.
- E. build their homes on the water.

2) **Traditional** houses are houses that have been built...

- A. to be easy to move.
- B. of clay, straw, and soil.
- C. the same way for a long time.
- D. with the dining rooms outdoors.
- E. with decorations of tile and rock.

3) What is another word for **soil**?

- A. Tile
- B. Dirt
- C. Cloth
- D. Brick
- E. Concrete

4) When something is **decorated**, it is...

- A. made larger.
- B. made stronger.
- C. made to look more beautiful.
- D. made to look more frightening.
- E. None of the above.

5) **Creation** is the process of...

- A. making something.
- B. moving something.
- C. living in something.
- D. decorating something.
- E. holding something up.