

ARE NEW HOMES A BETTER BUY ?

More people are choosing to buy new homes, but Adam Walker asks whether they offer a better deal than older property.

Judged purely on a cost-per-square-basis, new homes appear to offer poor value for money, yet they are winning an ever-increasing share of the market. In 1995 new-house sales represented about 10% of all house sales. By 1997, this had risen to almost 12%. How can this be ? The reason lies in a combination of convenience and clever packaging.

For many people the greatest attraction of a new home is that it will be freshly decorated and virtually maintenance-free for the first few years. Most people simply do not have the time to refurbish an older property. And whereas the cost of refurbishment would have to be paid in cash or funded by a short-term loan, a new home comes fully equipped with carpets, kitchen, bathroom and all appliances, which can all be paid for over the term of the mortgage.

Another big attraction of buying a new home is that most developers now offer some sort of part-exchange package for your current property.

A third attraction of buying a new home is the sophisticated mortgage and financial packages that are on offer from many developers. Indeed several developers are currently offering to pay the 10% deposit on a mortgage. Some developers will go further still and pay your legal fees and survey fees. Such schemes are attractive to people who have little or no equity in their current property and to first-time buyers with a limited deposit.

But all the incentives in the world do not change the fact that most new homes are smaller than most secondhand ones in the same price range, and developers try to disguise this fact. For example, most show homes do not have a television set in the living room. It is surprising how much space a TV takes up in a small room.

Another common trick is to leave the doors off to make the rooms look bigger and brighter. Many show homes put the sales office in the garage. This makes it seem as though the property has an extra room.

It is also quite usual to spend two or three times more on furnishing the show home than the typical owner would. The overall ambiance that is created by expensive fabrics and furniture can be an important part of the decision to buy.

So are new homes good value ? The short answer is that they are probably not, but then again nor is a ready prepared Marks & Spencer salad.

A new house is convenient to buy and convenient to own and in an age where time is at a premium, it seems likely that the popularity of new homes will continue to grow. The only question is where we will find the land to build them.

Adapted from *The Sunday Times*, July 12 1998

CODE EPREUVE : PILVEAGL		EXAMEN : BREVET DE TECHNICIEN SUPERIEUR	SPECIALITE : PROFESSIONS IMMOBILIERES	
SESSION 1999	SUJET	EPREUVE : ANGLAIS		
Durée : 2h	Coefficient : 1		Code sujet : 99KB421	Page : 1/2

QUESTIONS

I - COMPREHENSION.

(10 points)

Rédiger **en français** un compte rendu du texte

- 200 à 220 mots au maximum.
- indiquer le nombre de mots utilisés.

II - EXPRESSION

(10 points)

Traiter **en anglais** un des deux sujets **au choix**. (250 mots)

1°) As an estate agent, would you recommend having a new house built, buying an "off-the-peg" house (= *a standard house which is already built*) or a second-hand house ?
You may consider the pros and cons of each solution to justify your answer.

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2°) Why do you think more and more people are leaving town centres to buy a standard house in the suburbs ?

Votre développement sera évalué en prenant en compte les éléments suivants :

- le respect des consignes ;
- la pertinence et la cohérence des idées ;
- la qualité de l'expression :
 - * précision du lexique, notamment du lexique technique,
 - * emploi de structures complexes et variées,
 - * correction grammaticale.

<p>L'usage d'un dictionnaire bilingue est autorisé pour l'ensemble de l'épreuve.</p>
