

# HOUSING CULTURE

## US homes



duplex

Where do you live? And what do you live in? Basically, you either live in a house or an apartment. An apartment is a home in a large building with many other homes. We call these apartment buildings. There's also a difference between America and Europe when it comes to saying which floor you are on. In the US, the floor you enter from the outside is the first floor and



apartment building

then you go up to the second, etc. In many parts of Europe, it's called the ground floor and then you go up to the first floor. Sometimes I still have to think about which floor I live on!

In the US, apartments are always rented, you don't own them like you can own a house. You do, however, own



townhouse

a **condominium**. It is a part of an apartment building or other complex in which each person owns their own home and pays a fee to take care of the property.

Other types of joined housing are townhouses and duplexes. A **townhouse** is a string of houses attached together, but with individual entrances to each home. A **duplex** is just two homes side-by-side.

Houses come in all shapes, sizes and colors and they can have a garden. In the US, a garden is a place to grow plants and vegetables whereas the grassy area around a house is called a yard. Most houses in the US have a front yard and a back yard.



two-storey house

If your house has two floors, we call it a **two-storey house**. The space under the roof of the house (usually for storing old clothes and stuff) is the **attic**. The underground part of the house (also for storing stuff!) is called the **basement**. Not all houses have these areas.

We have **cottages** in America, too. If you have a really nice one, it can be called a **cabin**. A really **run-down** one that needs a lot of work is called a **shack**. These are usually vacation or weekend homes and most people like them to be on a lake.



cabin



shack

**Real estate agents** always have **fancy terms** to describe houses. Most Americans, however, just say: "I have a house."

Jacy Meyer (USA)

### Br × Am English

**flat** (BrE) - **apartment** (AmE)  
**block of flats** (BrE) - **apartment building** (AmE)  
**ground floor** (BrE) - **first floor** (AmE)  
**terraced house** (BrE) - **townhouse** (AmE)  
**semi-detached house** (BrE)  
 - **duplex** (AmE)

## OTHER TYPES OF US HOUSES



**Bungalow** - a single floor family home. In the US, this term is used mostly in the North, Midwest and West, and almost not at all in the South.



**Ranch house** - a single floor family home with a low roof and attached garage is extremely popular in the South and West of the US.



**Trailer** - also known as a mobile home, these are factory-made homes that are transported to the buyer's site. Quite often they are grouped together in a community called a trailer park. They are an inexpensive alternative to buying a home or renting an apartment.

## British house types

Before you talk to anyone in Britain about housing, you need to know a few phrases. The first is that most young people who are working want to 'get their foot on the bottom of the ladder'. This means that they want to buy a house and start paying off the loan (**mortgage**) over the

next twenty-five years. **When they get promoted** and have more money, they will sell the house and buy a larger, more expensive one (and have a bigger mortgage).

House prices have risen astronomically over the last few years and even the cheapest house is **more than an average** teacher, policeman, nurse or office worker **can afford**. More

young working people are living at home and continue to be supported by their parents because they cannot afford a **deposit to even start** the buying process.

If you have lots of money, there are plenty of different houses to choose from.

## COTTAGES

The smallest traditional house in Britain is the cottage. The **cottage idyll** is picturesque and romantic; the garden will be full of roses and **herbs** and it will have a beautiful lawn. Many will have a **thatched, tile or slate** roof depending on where they are. The bedrooms (one or two) will be upstairs; the living room and kitchen downstairs.

## TERRACED HOUSES

Long lines of terraced houses were built in industrial cities during the 19<sup>th</sup> century for the factory workers. They were typically quite basic with two bedrooms upstairs, a living room that you entered **straight from** the street and a kitchen at the back. The toilet was outside. These days, these terraces have been renovated and are nice places to live. **They have room extensions built out into** the yard for bathrooms and toilets.

## DETACHED AND SEMI-DETACHED HOUSES

In the suburbs of towns, houses are mainly of two types: detached and semi-detached. The detached ones stand alone surrounded by gardens. They have an entrance hall with stairs up to the first floor. On the ground floor there will often be a large kitchen and **dining area**, a toilet, **cloakroom**, utility room, a couple of reception rooms and a living room. Upstairs there are four, maybe five, bedrooms, some with bathrooms *en suite*, and a separate family bathroom and toilet. The attic may have been **converted into** a study, a studio or is used just for **storage**.

Semi-detached houses are simply two houses joined side by side as a mirror image. These have fewer rooms and typically smaller gardens than detached houses. Some of them can be **very grand** while others are more **modest**.

## BUNGALOWS

Another classic British house is the bungalow, which is a cheaper version of the detached house. They only have a ground floor, possibly with a **conservatory** at the back. They are seen as ideal **retirement dwellings as there are no stairs for the elderly to climb**.

## FLATS

In Britain we also have flats in houses or in blocks of flats and their character is much the same as in the Czech Republic. Many beautiful Victorian and Georgian town houses in cities have been converted into flats but these are not cheap either to rent or buy.

**Nigel Haward**  
(Great Britain)



A **cottage** in Britain is an old romantic house in the country with thick walls made of local stone or brick and small, quaint (= attractive in an old-fashioned way) windows.



A **terraced house** is a house that is one of a row of houses that are joined together on each side with no garden.



A house that is **semi-detached** is one that is joined to another similar house on only one side.



**Bungalows** come in many variations; they may have two or three bedrooms, extra study space, etc.



**Detached houses** stand alone, surrounded by their own garden.

## HOUSES FOR SALE

Every town in the UK has a number of real estate agents who offer houses for sale. Individual houses also have signs so that you can see they are for sale as you drive by.

The price of a house is determined by the number of rooms, location, the view, the garden and proximity (= how far it is) to shops, schools, etc. Buyers are most often concerned about the number of bedrooms so each family member can have their own. An extra bedroom will put thousands of pounds on the price.



## Glossary

**utility room** - a room in a private house with a washing machine, freezer, etc.  
**reception room** (BrE) - a room in a private house where people can sit, for example a living room; the term is used mostly by people who sell houses  
**bathroom en suite** (from French) - bathroom that is joined onto a bedroom and used only by people in that bedroom

**studio**; also used as **studio flat** (BrE) or **studio apartment** (AmE) - a small apartment, usually with one large room for sleeping and living in

## Br X Am English

**cloakroom** (BrE) - **closet** (AmE)  
**reception room** (BrE) - **parlour** (AmE)

## → Vocabulary

**when it comes to saying** - když přijde řeč na

**a string of houses attached together** [striŋ ə'tætʃtɪd] - řada k sobě přiléhajících domů

**whereas** [we:'ræz] - zatímco

**attic** ['ætik] - podkrovní

**run-down** [rʌn'daʊn] - zchátralý

**real estate agent** [ri'reɪstet 'eɪdʒ(ə)nt] - realitní makléř

**fancy terms** ['fænsi] - speciální terminologii

### UK HOUSING

**mortgage** ['mɔ:ɡɪdʒ] - hypotéka

**when they get promoted**

[prə'məʊtɪd] - když se dočkají povýšení

**is more than an average... can afford**

['æv(ə)rɪdʒ ə'fɔ:d] - stojí víc, než si může průměrný... dovolit

**deposit to even start** [dɪ'pɒzɪt] - ani zaplatit zálohu, která podmiňuje koupi

**cottage idyll** ['ɪdɪl] - typická idylická chalupa

**herbs** [hɜ:bz] - bylinky

**thatched** [θætʃtɪd] - doškový

**tile** [taɪl] - pokrytý taškami (na střeche)

**slate** [sleɪt] - břidlicový

**straight from** [streɪt] - přímo z

**they have room extensions built out into**

[ɪk'stenʃ(ə)nz] - mají zvenku přistavěnou malou místnost

**dining area** [daɪnɪŋ 'e:riə] - jídelna

**cloakroom** ['kləʊkrʊ:m] - šatna

**to convert sth into sth** [kən'vɔ:t]

- přestavět, upravit

**storage** ['stɔ:ɪdʒ] - sklad

**very grand** [grænd] - veliký, velkolepý

**modest** ['mɒdɪst] - skromný

**conservatory** [kən'sə:vət(ə)rɪ]

- skleník

**retirement dwelling** [ri'taɪəmənt]

['dwellɪŋ] - bydlení na důchod

**as there are no stairs for the elderly**

**to climb** [ste:z 'eldəli klɑɪm]

- protože nemá schody, po kterých by staří lidé museli chodit nahoru