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Intermediate Student’s Book

Life

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**1** As an architect, I’m interested in all aspects of house design. But we can learn so much from traditional constructions and designs. They’re usually the ones that are much better in bad weather conditions, and they are much more appropriate to people’s needs. If you live in flood zone, it makes sense to build your house on stilts, doesn’t it?

**2** Well, a shelter is something less permanent and more basic than a house. Things like the ice igloos that people build in the Arctic region, or brush huts in tropical areas, are perfect for specific needs – like when you are hunting, for example – because you can put them up quickly. The purpose of a shelter is to protect you from the elements, whereas a home has several spaces with different functions.

**3** Ah yes, a ger combines elements of both a shelter and a home. It has a fireplace and maybe a chimney or at least a smoke-hole, and separate areas for men and women. It isn’t as solid as a brick or stone house but it’s certainly easier to take down and put up, which is what nomadic people in Mongolia need.

**4** Usually the most important thing is the local climate. You know, if you live in Turkey, why build a house under the glare of the hot sun if you can adapt a cool cave? Cave houses are some of the oldest homes known, and they’re a lot less basic than you might imagine. They’re the best solution in really hot climates. Of course, the colder the climate, the warmer your house needs to be. Central heating, especially when combined with double-glazing, heats buildings more efficiently than open fires.

**5** Well, modern homes are fairly similar wherever they are in the world, which doesn’t necessarily mean that they are the best design for every situation. And in our crowded cities they’re getting smaller and smaller. I think, even with a modern home, you should make sure the design is the most appropriate for your climate and your needs.