



Unit 7 Office . . . or living room?

Before you read

Many newspapers and magazines include advice columns where people ask experts questions. Think about these questions. Do you ever read advice columns in newspapers or magazines? What kinds of questions do people ask?

Read the advice column

Dear Decorating Doctor,

I just moved into a new house. The house is great, but the living room is very small. How can I make this room look bigger? I have a few pieces of big furniture from my old apartment: a sofa, armchair, and bookshelf. Can I arrange the furniture to make the room look bigger? Or do I need to buy new furniture?

Help!

Helen

Dear Helen,

There are many ways to make a small room look larger. Here are some tips.

- Choose light colors for a small room. You can use white, cream, yellow, or even light blue, light green, or light pink. Don't use dark colors like brown or red because they make a room feel smaller. Light colors make a room feel more open and make a space look bigger.
- Choose the same color for the walls, the ceiling, the floor, and the curtains. When everything is the same color, the room will look bigger.
- You can use your old furniture, even if it is big. Try to follow the color rule, and make it the same color as, or a similar color to, your walls. For example, if your bookshelf isn't a light color, paint it. You can also buy furniture covers to change the look and color of your sofa and armchair.
- Bookshelves are great for small rooms, especially if they are tall. Tall furniture makes the eyes look up and makes a space feel more open.
- Don't put anything in the middle of the room. Put sofas, chairs, and tables against the walls, and leave as much open space as possible in the middle area.

Before you make any changes, get organized. Make a floor plan and try different positions for the furniture. Then choose the best plan. Also, look at samples of the colors you may want to use for several days during the day and at night before you decide. It's easier to change your mind about a color before you paint. Good luck!

Sincerely,

The Decorating Doctor



Build your reading skills: Drawing conclusions

Read the advice column again. Identify the sentences that follow the Decorating Doctor's suggestions for making a room look bigger. Circle the letter of the correct answer.

1. a. Paint the room light yellow.
b. Paint the room black.
2. a. If the ceiling is white, then white is a good color for the walls and curtains.
b. If the ceiling is white, then the walls and curtains should be dark colors.
3. a. Put the table in front of the sofa.
b. Put the table next to the sofa.
4. a. If your bookshelf is brown, paint it a light color to match the walls.
b. Paint your walls dark brown and paint the furniture dark brown to match them.
5. a. Move the furniture to different places in the room before you paint.
b. Use a floor plan to try different places for the furniture before you paint.

Check your comprehension

Circle the letter of the answer that completes each sentence.

1. Helen wants her room to look _____.
a. lighter
b. more colorful
 c. larger
2. Use light colors to make a room feel _____.
a. smaller
b. more organized
c. more open
3. If everything is the same color, _____.
a. the furniture looks larger
b. the room feels smaller
c. the room looks bigger
4. It's a good idea to use _____ in small rooms.
a. tall furniture
b. small furniture
c. old furniture
5. Before you choose a color for your room you should _____.
a. look at samples
b. paint the room
c. decorate the room