

WARM UP

1 Tick the true sentences.

- You do not leave your home to couch surf.
- You need a home to home exchange.
- You can couch surf or home exchange at home or abroad.
- You do not have to pay anything for either service.
- You can leave your pets with your home exchange partners.

CouchSurfing and home exchanges

		FAQ		
	COUCHSURFING		HOME EXCHANGE	
A	CouchSurfing is an American expression for students staying on the sofas, or couches of other students, who they do not really know. Today it is an international social networking site with over 3 million people in over 230 countries, exchanging hospitality or joining in activities together.		Home exchange is a mutual exchange of homes, usually at the same time, for an agreed period in the same country or abroad. It enables you to step into other people's lives free of charge, making it a very economical way to travel.	
B	You can register free of charge and provide as much or as little information about yourself as you choose. When you find like-minded people, you agree on what you want to do together, where and when. It can be as simple as going to a party, or visiting somebody on the other side of the world.		All you need to start is a home to exchange, large or small; it can be in a city or in the countryside. Then you register on one of the many home exchange websites (most have a small fee) and set up a profile with a description and pictures of your home.	
C	It is an economical way to meet new people, learn about other cultures and places and try new activities, not as a tourist, but as a local. You also have the opportunity to share your experiences, interests and knowledge with others.		You can experience a different culture first-hand and meet local people, without exchanging any money. You can also feel safe that your house is not empty and that somebody is looking after your plants and even your pet.	
D	There are a number of security checks, which the site offers, but you are essentially trusting what another person chooses to share with and you might just not have the experience you are expecting. As with all social networking sites you need to be careful.		As with all transactions over the Internet, there are risks. You are allowing a stranger to live in your home, use your things; while at the same time you are hoping to find what they write about their home is true, so that you do not have a bad holiday.	



www.couchsurfing.org
www.homeexchange.com

MORE ABOUT...

Fenton, one of the co-founder of CouchSurfing, first thought of building a social travel network after a trip to Iceland in 1999. Hoping to meet locals during his trip, he emailed students for a free place to stay. He received so many offers of hospitality that he realised there was a community out there hungry for a human-centred approach to travel.

ACTIVITIES

READING COMPREHENSION

2 Read the two FAQs about CouchSurfing and home exchanges and match the following questions with the answers.

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|----------------------------|----------|-------------------------------|-----|
| 1 How does it work? | <u>B</u> | 3 What are its disadvantages? | ___ |
| 2 What are its advantages? | ___ | 4 What is it? | ___ |

LISTENING

3 Listen and order the instructions of how to couch surf.

- | | |
|--|--|
| a <input type="checkbox"/> be flexible | e <input type="checkbox"/> follow up |
| b <input type="checkbox"/> communicate clearly | f <input type="checkbox"/> learn to read a profile |
| c <input type="checkbox"/> couch surf | g <input type="checkbox"/> start connecting |
| d <input type="checkbox"/> create your profile | h <input type="checkbox"/> start couch searching |