

WARM UP

1 What do you already know about flooring in Britain? Try to answer the following questions, then read and check.

- 1 What kind of flooring do most homes have in Britain?
- 2 Do you think there is a difference between flooring in Italian and British homes?
- 3 Some people say carpets are dirty. Do you agree? Why/Why not?
- 4 What other problems do you think carpets can cause?

GLOSSARY

- carpeting:** *moquette*
crawling: *gattinare*
misconceptions: *idee sbagliate*
deter: *scoraggiano*
household furnishings: *arredi per la casa*
nests: *nidi*
fleas: *pulci*

MORE ABOUT...

The red carpet. No-one seems absolutely sure of the origin, but it has been suggested that it goes back to ancient Greece and the classical play 'Agamemnon'. The character, Agamemnon, is welcomed home by his wife to a grand reception with a deep red and purple carpet, the colour of the gods. Agamemnon is an arrogant character and his wife wants to show this by literally having him walk over the gods. This story passed down through the centuries and today, only the most important members of society walk on the 'red carpet'. In fact, it is used by celebrities and members of the entertainment industry and by heads of state on ceremonial occasions. The red carpet provides a feeling of importance and status.

British homes: wall-to-wall carpeting

Carpeting has been the most popular floor covering in Britain for years, where the aim is to create a cosy environment, where even lying on the floor is comfortable and relaxing. Not only do carpets feel soft (you won't catch a British baby crawling on cold, slippery tiles) but they also reduce noise and insulate rooms.



However, some common misconceptions deter people from buying carpets. Many for instance, believe that asthma and allergy sufferers should not have

carpets in the home, when instead scientists have concluded that carpets trap allergy-causing particles in their fibres and stop them circulating in the indoor environment. These allergens can then be fully removed with a powerful vacuum cleaner. Another false myth is that carpets are hard to maintain because they wear and stain easily. Like other household goods, if a carpet is looked after properly with daily vacuuming and a thorough clean with hot water extraction systems every 12 to 18 months, then the carpet will last until you get bored with it and want a different colour or pattern. As regards VOCs (Volatile Organic Compounds) the emissions from carpets are much lower compared to emissions from other household furnishings and building materials. Many carpets nowadays are also eco-friendly as they are made from recyclable materials, like a special kind of nylon, which can be broken down and remade into new carpet fibre.

So there are many reasons for choosing carpeting but be careful if you have pets: they must be utterly clean otherwise carpets will become perfect nests for fleas!



www.healthyflooring.org/alternatives.html

READING COMPREHENSION

2 **PET** Read the text again and decide if the statements below are true (T) or false (F).

- 1 Carpeting has only recently become popular in Britain.
- 2 British babies would rather crawl on carpets than tiled flooring.
- 3 Carpeted rooms retain their heat.
- 4 Carpets do not make people with asthma worse.
- 5 Carpets have to be replaced every 12 to 18 months.
- 6 The VOC emissions from carpets are very high.

T	F
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

VOCABULARY

3 Find the synonyms of these words or expressions in the text.

- 1 meticulous _____
- 2 make dirty _____
- 3 design _____
- 4 purpose _____
- 5 become threadbare _____
- 6 purchase _____

LISTENING

4 **5** Listen to an expert talking about carpets in answer to the reading text, and fill in the missing information.

(1) _____ of UK homes have wall-to-wall carpeting which on average is replaced every (2) _____ years. What most people do not realise, is that the (3) _____ from their newly-purchased carpet is due to the (4) _____ in the carpet, and represents just one of the health hazards lurking in Britain's favourite flooring. Carpets suggest luxury, comfort and (5) _____, but they retain (6) _____ and may also contain chemical residues from their (7) _____ or treatment, which can all cause (8) _____. Therefore, in my opinion, the most effective solution is to replace carpets with (9) _____ flooring or (10) _____ which can be removed for cleaning. There are a variety of healthy alternatives such as (11) _____, linoleum, (12) _____ and laminate floors. You should however avoid (13) _____ flooring, as it is a major source of (14) _____ and sometimes persistent (15) _____ in the environment.



SPEAKING

5 **PET** Talk to your partner about the advantages and disadvantages of carpeting in the home. You may wish to use some of the ideas in the text and the listening text.