

6.1 Magical houses, made of bamboo

TED TALKS Watch at home

1 ▶ **6.1** Look at the questions. Then watch the TED Talk and make notes. After watching, discuss your notes with a partner. What did you find most impressive about the houses in the talk?

- 1 What is special about bamboo as a building material?
- 2 What parts of a bamboo house did Elora Hardy describe in her talk?

2 ▶ **6.1** Watch the first part (0.00–1.51) of the talk again. Complete the facts about the bamboo house.

Feature	Purpose / Advantage
1 Living room on the 4th floor	_____
2 Curving roofs	_____
3 Big tall windows	_____
	Problem
4 'Basket' bathroom	_____

3 ▶ **6.1** Watch the second part (1.51–3.50) of the talk again. Make notes about the features (1–9) of bamboo, as described by Elora Hardy. Why do these features make it such a useful building material?

Features of bamboo

- | | |
|------------------------------|---------------|
| 1 Plant type | 6 Strength |
| 2 Growing conditions | 7 Portability |
| 3 Number of species | 8 Appearance |
| 4 Growing time / Growth rate | 9 Resistance |
| 5 Length at harvest | |

4 ▶ **6.1** Work in pairs. Watch the third part (3.50–7.17) of the talk again. Answer the questions.

- 1 What is 'Ibuku' and what does the organization do?
- 2 What are examples of the things Ibuku has built in the last five years?
- 3 What has been the problem with using bamboo as a building material? How has it affected local attitudes to using it?
- 4 How did Ibuku solve the physical problem and the public perception of bamboo?
- 5 What are the 'rules' for building with bamboo, according to Elora Hardy / Ibuku?

5 ▶ 6.1 Watch the fourth part (7.17 to the end) of the talk again. Complete the summary with these words.

blueprint boulder canvas ceiling countertops
 detail floor grow model pins
 weave

They make a 3D scale ¹ _____ in bamboo and then use this as a ² _____ to build the house. Elora Hardy questions every ³ _____ and explores each challenge – how can you make a ⁴ _____ without flat boards? ⁵ _____ tiny pieces of bamboo together and put a ⁶ _____ over it. How do you make kitchen ⁷ _____? Slice a ⁸ _____ like a loaf of bread. The structure is reinforced by steel joints and the ⁹ _____, made of bamboo skin, is held together by bamboo ¹⁰ _____. The result is a building with beauty and comfort in a material that will ¹¹ _____ back.

VOCABULARY IN CONTEXT

6 ▶ 6.2 Watch the clips from the TED Talk. Choose the correct meaning of the words and phrases.

7 ▶ 6.3 Watch the clips from the talk. Complete the collocations. Then discuss your answers.

8 Complete the sentences in your own words. Then compare your sentences with a partner.

- 1 My parents got me ... at a young age.
- 2 Fairtrade companies try to foster links between ... and ...
- 3 When you build a house in an historic area, there are certain constraints, like ...
- 4 My bedroom overlooks ...

CRITICAL THINKING Testing arguments

9 Work in pairs. What questions could you ask to test Elora Hardy's argument that bamboo is a promising building material for the future?

10 Read these comments* about the TED Talk. Did the viewers consider similar questions to you?

Viewers' comments

E Eusebio – Seems incredible. But can bamboo be made fire-resistant too? And if so, are the chemicals used to make it fire-resistant very harmful to the environment?

A Alan – Why stop at houses? Bamboo bikes already exist. And bamboo car bodies also have great advantages: they are strong, can easily be moulded into shape and when dropped from a height, they bounce!

A Angelica – It's unfortunate Hardy showed just these houses designed for rich people. What about bamboo transforming the lives of the poor? We didn't see any of those houses. And are they resistant to strong winds too?

*The comments were created for this activity

PRESENTATION SKILLS Persuasive techniques

11 There are certain established ways of using language to make an argument more persuasive. Work in pairs. Look at the techniques (a–c). What are they? Can you think of any other persuasive techniques?

- a rhetorical questions
- b imagery and metaphor
- c repetition of key words

12 Look at the Presentation tips box. Compare your answers from Exercise 11 with the ideas in the box. How do you think you personally would be most likely to use these persuasive techniques in a talk?

TIPS

There are various ways we can use language to make an argument more persuasive. For example:

- emotive words and phrases (e.g. powerful adjectives such as *extraordinary*)
- rhetorical questions (questions we ask without expecting an answer)
- repetition of key words or grammatical structures
- contrasts (*It may not be cheap, but it is needed.*)
- use of imagery and metaphor (*It unlocks the door to a whole world of opportunities.*)

Try to notice how experienced speakers use these techniques and try them out to see which ones you can adopt in a natural way.

13 ▶ 6.4 Watch the clips from the TED talk. Which persuasive techniques does Elora Hardy use? Which ones do you find particularly effective?

14 Prepare to give a short description about the benefits of one of the following ideas. Make notes about what you will say. Use the techniques in the Presentation tips box to persuade your partner of the benefits.

- building houses close to shops and offices
- including a lot of communal space around buildings
- using wood as a building material

15 Work in pairs. Take turns to give your presentation. Discuss which persuasive techniques you found most effective and the most natural to use.