

### **IELTS Reading Section 3: *The Architecture of Belonging***

Buildings are more than bricks and mortar—they are reflections of our values, aspirations, and identities. From ancient temples to modern skyscrapers, architecture has always played a role in shaping how we feel about the places we inhabit. In recent years, urban planners and architects have begun to focus on how buildings foster a sense of belonging.

Residential buildings, for example, are designed not only for shelter but also for emotional comfort. A well-designed home can promote mental well-being, encourage social interaction, and even influence behavior. Open-plan kitchens, communal gardens, and shared courtyards are architectural features that promote community engagement.

Civic buildings such as libraries, town halls, and museums serve as anchors of public life. Their design often reflects democratic values—transparency, accessibility, and inclusivity. Glass facades and open atriums symbolize openness, while ramps and wide entrances ensure access for all.

Cultural buildings, including theaters and galleries, are spaces where collective identity is expressed. Their architecture often incorporates local materials, motifs, and historical references. This not only preserves heritage but also strengthens community pride.

Commercial buildings, on the other hand, are increasingly designed to be more than just functional. Offices now include breakout spaces, wellness rooms, and biophilic elements like indoor plants and natural light. These features aim to improve employee satisfaction and productivity.

The concept of “placemaking” has gained traction—an approach that emphasizes designing spaces that people feel connected to. It involves community input, local context, and a focus on human experience. Architects are no longer just creators; they are collaborators in shaping environments that nurture belonging.

## Questions

### 1–4: Multiple Choice

1. What is the main idea of the passage?
  - A) Architecture is primarily about aesthetics.
  - B) Buildings are designed to maximize profit.
  - C) Architecture influences identity and belonging.
  - D) Urban planning is a recent trend.
2. Which feature is commonly used in civic buildings to symbolize openness?
  - A) Courtyards
  - B) Glass facades
  - C) Indoor plants
  - D) Breakout spaces
3. What is one goal of biophilic design in commercial buildings?
  - A) To reduce construction costs
  - B) To preserve historical motifs
  - C) To improve employee well-being
  - D) To increase public access
4. What does “placemaking” emphasize?
  - A) Profit-driven design
  - B) Community connection
  - C) Historical preservation
  - D) Government regulation

### **5–7: Matching Headings**

Match the correct heading to each paragraph (A–C):

A. Residential buildings B. Civic buildings C. Cultural buildings

Headings:

- i. Expressing collective identity
- ii. Promoting emotional comfort
- iii. Reflecting democratic values

### **8–10: True / False / Not Given**

8. Open-plan kitchens are designed to reduce cooking time.
9. Museums are considered civic buildings.
10. Architects now work more collaboratively with communities.

### **11–13: Sentence Completion**

Complete the sentences using words from the passage.

11. Shared courtyards and communal gardens help promote \_\_\_\_\_.
12. The use of local materials in cultural buildings helps preserve \_\_\_\_\_.
13. Offices now include wellness rooms and \_\_\_\_\_ spaces.

## Answer Key

### Multiple Choice

1. **C** (The passage focuses on how architecture shapes identity and belonging.)
2. **B** (Glass facades are mentioned as symbols of openness in civic buildings.)
3. **C** (Biophilic design aims to improve employee satisfaction and productivity.)
4. **B** (“Placemaking” emphasizes designing spaces people feel connected to.)

### Matching Headings

A → **ii** (Residential buildings promote emotional comfort.) B → **iii** (Civic buildings reflect democratic values.) C → **i** (Cultural buildings express collective identity.)

### True / False / Not Given

8. **False** (Open-plan kitchens are mentioned, but not in relation to cooking time.)
9. **True** (Museums are listed among civic buildings.)
10. **True** (Architects are described as collaborators with communities.)

### Sentence Completion

11. **community engagement**
12. **heritage**
13. **breakout**