

Get it built.

I volunteered this year to build my mother an arbor in her back garden. She has a small patio at the back of her house with three borders(1) for planting. Because it gets so hot from late spring to the middle of autumn, she decided that she'd like a cover of some kind. Parasols are not big enough to cover the whole area, and the housing rules(2) do not allow her to attach anything to the house itself for extra shade. So, the only option is to build a 'free standing' arbor, or one that stands alone. Now, I actually like building things, believe it or not. I have slowly accumulated some experience of cutting and shaping wood, using power tools, digging holes, measuring and leveling(3), and mixing and pouring concrete. It's hard work, but it's so satisfying to see the finished product. To make my mum's arbor safe, I have to use 10 ft poles(4) that go into 2ft holes, and sit in concrete(5). Then, the lateral beams(6) will be screwed across the length and width(7) of the patio on both sides of the poles. It'll be a very strong structure; well it has to be. I can't have anything falling on my mother's head! Then, when the basic frame has been made, I will attach a lattice in between the beams. A lattice is a criss-cross pattern of wood. This will create shade with a pretty pattern. I'm almost half way finished, and I need to hurry up and get it built(8), because the days are getting hotter. Shade is what we're after.

1. 'A border' is an area of land, usually in the shape of a strip. It is here that you can plant. This word is also used to represent the line of separation between two countries.

a. The border is full of flowers all year long.

b. We'll cross the border to Mexico next week.

2. 'Housing rules' are usually called 'covenants'. The limit what you can and cannot do with the outside of your house. Notice the word 'housing' sounds like it has a 'z' instead of an 's'.

a. The housing covenants don't let us paint the doors anything but brown.

b. I'll have to read the housing covenants to see if I can build an attached arbor.

3. 'Measuring and leveling' could be one of the most important parts of building. You have to get the lengths correct. Making a pole or piece of structure level, means that it is either exactly 90 degrees, 0 degrees, or 180 degrees. A 'level' is the device which has liquid and a bubble to show if something is level.

a. Make sure the pole is level; that way it'll be strong and safe.

b. The bubble in the level is not in the middle; it shows that the shelf is not level.

4. A 'pole' is a long, piece of wood used as a support.

a. The pole that holds up the raspberries is rotten.

b. We need lots of poles to build a tree house for the kids.

5. 'Concrete' is the white, pasty, rocky substance that we use to make side walks and floors.

a. The concrete will take all day to dry; then we can walk on it.

b. Mix the concrete with water, but don't breathe in the dust!

6. 'Lateral' is the same as saying 'side'.

a. She'll hang baskets of flowers from the lateral beams.

b. Side beams will make the structure even stronger.

7. The 'length and width' are the two most basic measurements. They measure how long something is and how wide it is.

- a. She can swim a width of the pool, but not a length.
- b. Check the length of the sofa before you buy it.
- 8. 'Get it built' is a command using the past participle. Most verbs can be used this way.
 - a. Hurry up and get the bathroom painted; you're taking too long.
 - b. Get the essay written and handed in as soon as possible.