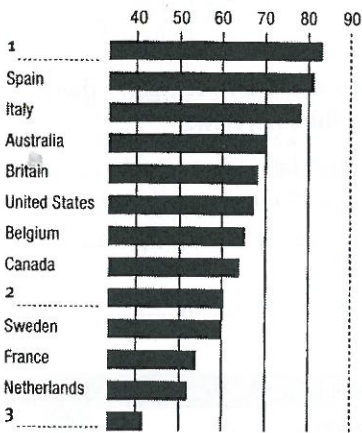


- 1 a What are the advantages and disadvantages of buying and renting a home?
- b Look at this chart. What information does it show?

% of households owning their home



Sources: European Mortgage Federation; IUF; national statistics

- c Work with a partner. Can you fill in the missing countries on the chart?

Japan Germany Ireland

- 2 a Fill in the gaps in the article with the correct tense of the verbs.

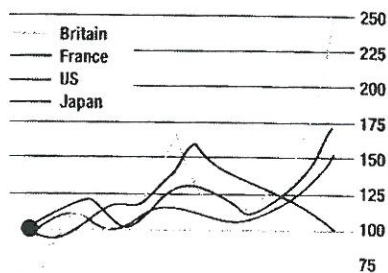
# UK property prices

## REALITY TV AND ECONOMIC REALITY

Today, it seems half of the programmes on UK television <sup>1</sup> *are* (be) about houses. It all <sup>2</sup> (start) in 2000, with the first reality TV show from the Big Brother house. But now it seems most programmes <sup>3</sup> (be) about buying and selling homes. One reason for all the interest is the high price of property. House prices in the UK <sup>4</sup> (increase) by about 75% in the last five years and by over 100% in the last ten.

Last year, a documentary series <sup>5</sup> (follow) Britons who <sup>6</sup> (sell) their houses and <sup>7</sup> (move) to the continent. Most <sup>8</sup> (decide) to move for better weather and less stress. But there was also the small question of money. In most parts of Europe property prices <sup>9</sup> (rise) at the moment, but not as fast as in the UK. The price of a two-bedroom flat in London, for example, <sup>10</sup> (be)

Real house prices, 1975=100



Sources: Japan Real Estate Institute; ODPM; OFHEO; government offices

currently equivalent to €600,000 – enough to buy a property ten times bigger in most parts of Europe. TV and reality are usually very different, of course, and some economists think prices <sup>11</sup> (go) down in the near future. If house prices <sup>12</sup> (fall) suddenly, the UK economy <sup>13</sup> (be) in serious trouble. But other economists think prices <sup>14</sup> (stay) high, for a number of reasons.

