

- BUILDINGS AND EQUIPMENT FOR SMALL SHOPS
a learning element for staff of consumer cooperatives

international labour office, geneva

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by Urban Strand



MATCOM
Material and techniques for cooperatives management training

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In collaboration with cooperative organizations and training institutes in all regions of the world, MATCOM designs and produces material for the training of managers of cooperatives and assists in the preparation of adapted versions for use in various countries. MATCOM also provides support for improving the methodology of cooperative training and for the training of trainers.

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BUILDINGS AND EQUIPMENT FOR SMALL SHOPS

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HOW TO LEARN

- Study the Element carefully.
- Give written answers to all the questions in the Element. This will help you not only to learn, but also to apply the knowledge in your work at a later stage.
- After studying the Element on your own, discuss it with your trainer and your colleagues, then take part in the practical exercises organised by your trainer.

TRAINER'S NOTES

are available for this Element. See the Trainer's Manual.

Original script:	Urban Strand
Illustrations:	Valeria Morra, Daniela Bertino, ILO Turin Centre

INTRODUCTION

In what kind of building is your co-operative shop? Some of the best co-operatives in the world started off in just a single room in a member's house. Later on, when they were able to afford it, they built or rented better shop buildings. This generally lead to an increase in trade - provided they did not spend too much on the building and left enough money to run the shop properly.

In this MATCOM Element you will learn what is needed for a small counter-service shop, by studying the following topics:

Location

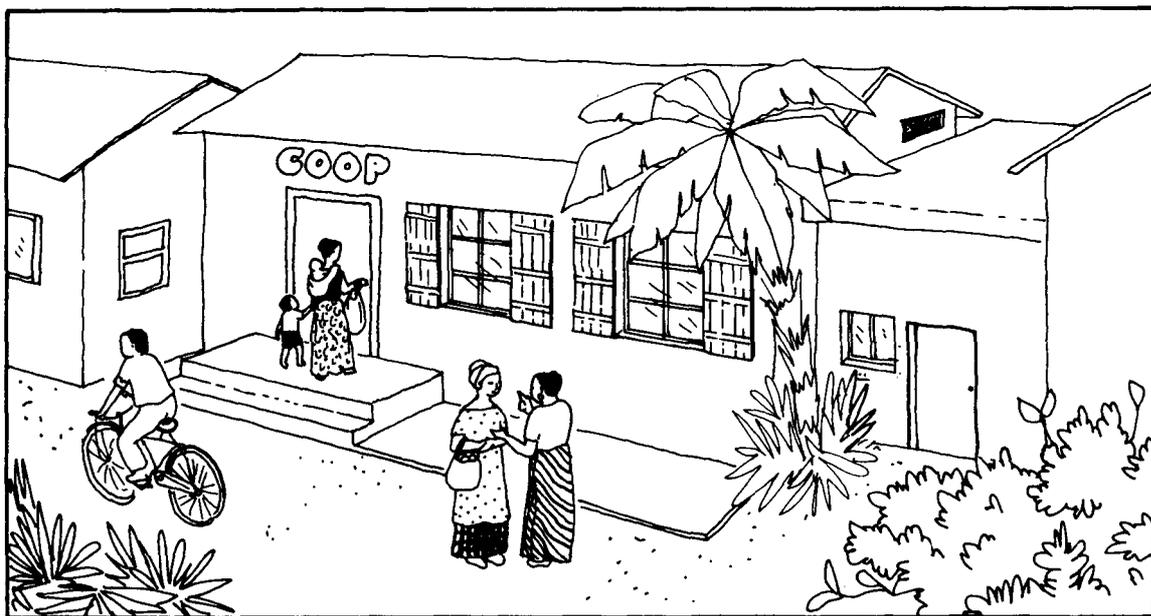
Layout and size

Building materials and-fixtures

Furniture

Equipment

The Element will help you find ways of improving your existing shop and will provide valuable hints when planning a new one.



LOCATION



Is your co-operative shop well situated? To find out, answer the following questions by placing a tick in the appropriate box.

	YES	NO
1. Do most of the members live or work near the shop?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Do many people pass the shop every day?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Do you think they will notice that there is a co-operative shop there?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Is it safe from theft? Will anybody do anything if thieves try to break in at night?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Is it easy to make deliveries to the shop?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If your shop is in a really good location, you should be able to answer "Yes" to all the questions. Now, let us see what is meant by a good location for a co-operative shop.

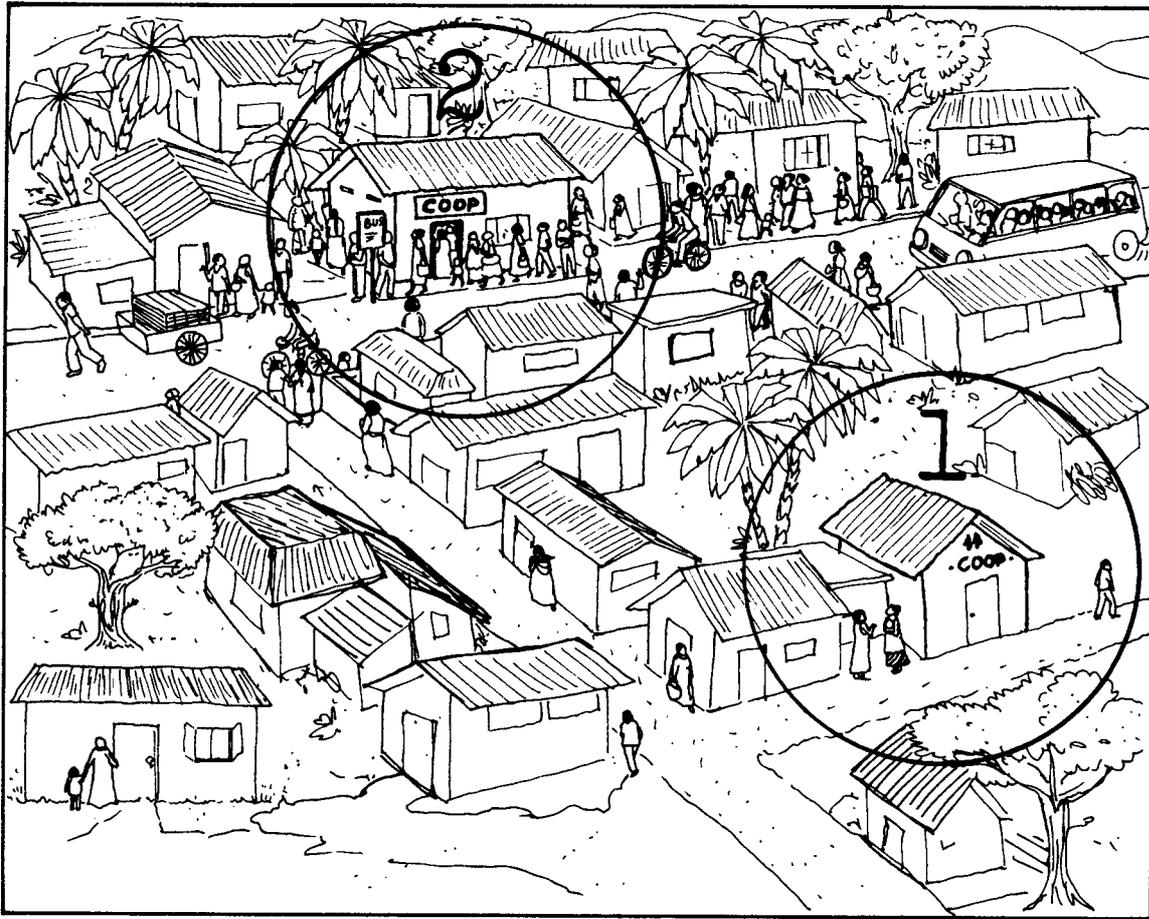
Convenience to members

First of all we must remember that a co-operative is there to give service to its members. This means, among other things, that it should be in a place which is convenient to as many members as possible, for instance:

- a village centre
- a residential area in town
- a place where people work.

A "selling" location

Increased sales usually mean a greater surplus or profit. They also make it easier to have a wide range of goods and low prices. One way of increasing sales is to attract non-members to the shop. This can be done if the shop is close to a market, a bus-stop or any other busy place.



List other good places for attracting customers.
Give the reasons for your choice.

Security

A safe place for a shop is one where there is some protection against burglary. If the shop is close to the members' houses they are likely to hear if anybody is trying to break in. It helps if it is near a building that is well lit at night or guarded by a night-watchman.

Deliveries

When deciding where a shop should be, think about how the goods are going to be delivered. If lorries are to be used, there must be easy access to the goods entrance of the shop.

Cost of the building

The cheapest place is not always the best one. To get bigger sales you may have to pay a higher rent, higher building costs or higher interest on a housing loan.

The following example shows how extra rent can be more than paid for out of extra sales (see the picture on page 5).

	Shop No. 1	Shop No. 2
Expected surplus from sales	10,000	14,000
Rent	1,000	1,500
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	9,000	12,500

 You are thinking of moving your shop to a better place, which you expect will increase the annual surplus from sales by \$7,000. In the new building the rent is \$1,000 a month, compared with \$300 in the present building. Would you recommend the move? Why?

The best location

In practice, it can be difficult to find the ideal place for a shop. There may not be any good locations available, or the best one from the selling point of view may be a long way from the members' houses.

As local conditions can vary so much, it is difficult to lay down any general rules for choosing a location. You will have to examine the advantages and disadvantages of the sites which are available. The following example shows how this is done:

The workers in the factory in the picture on page 8 have decided to open a co-operative shop. They have two buildings to choose from:

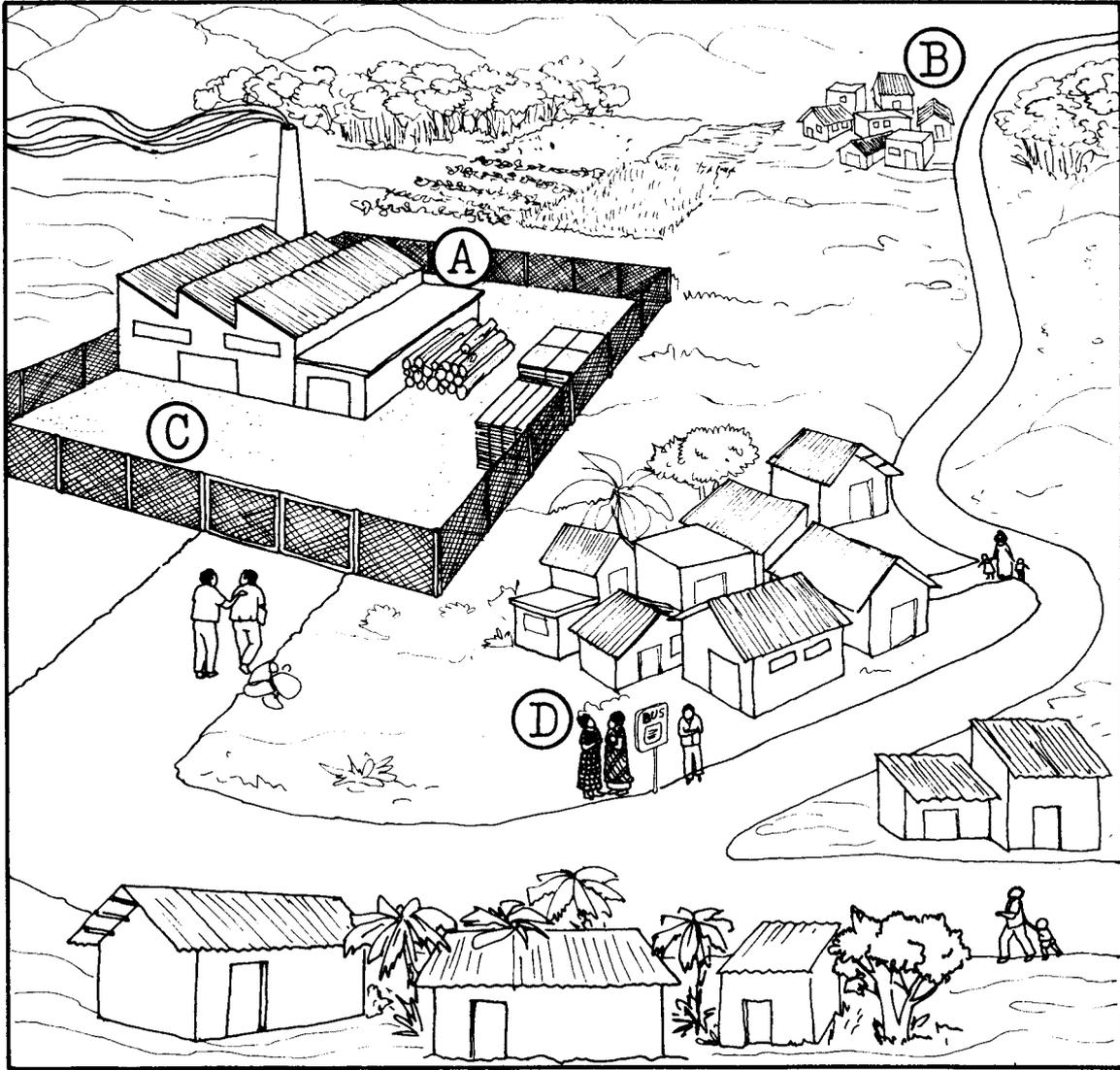
- (A), just behind the factory
- (B), in a village where some of the workers live

There are two other places where they could put up a new building:

- (C), just inside the factory gate
- (D), near the bus-stop outside.

It is more convenient if people do not have to carry their shopping very far. So it is usually better to have the shop nearer their homes than their place of work. But in this case the workers live in several different places; some of them live a long way from (B), making it unsuitable.

A store at (A) behind the factory would not be seen by the workers on their way to and from work. Many of them might forget to visit it. (C), in front of the factory, is a good place for selling, and (D) is even better. A shop near the bus-stop could sell to travellers and other people who are not allowed to enter the factory area.



The safest place is (C), where there is a watchman. (A) is in a dark place, not easily seen by the watchman. Although not as safe as (C), (D) does have people living nearby and is therefore satisfactory from the security point of view.

A lorry could easily deliver to all the places except (A), where the supplies would have to be carried in from the front of the factory building.

(A) would be provided free of charge, while (C) and (D) would require a loan to cover the construction costs. But since the sales are expected to be much higher at (D), the higher income would cover the cost of the loan, making it the most profitable place.

The different locations can be more easily compared if all these facts are set out in a table:

	<u>A</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>C</u>	<u>D</u>
Convenience to members?	Good	Not good	Good	Good
Security?	Not safe	-	Very safe	Safe
Access for deliveries?	Difficult	-	Easy	Easy
"Selling" location?	Not good	-	Good	Very good
Costs of the building?	Free	-	Loan required	Loan required

It is unlikely that the shop will be a going concern unless the location satisfies the first three requirements on the table and the better the answers to the last two questions, the greater the chances of success.



The workers have decided to build a new shop at (D). Do you agree with them? Write your comments below.

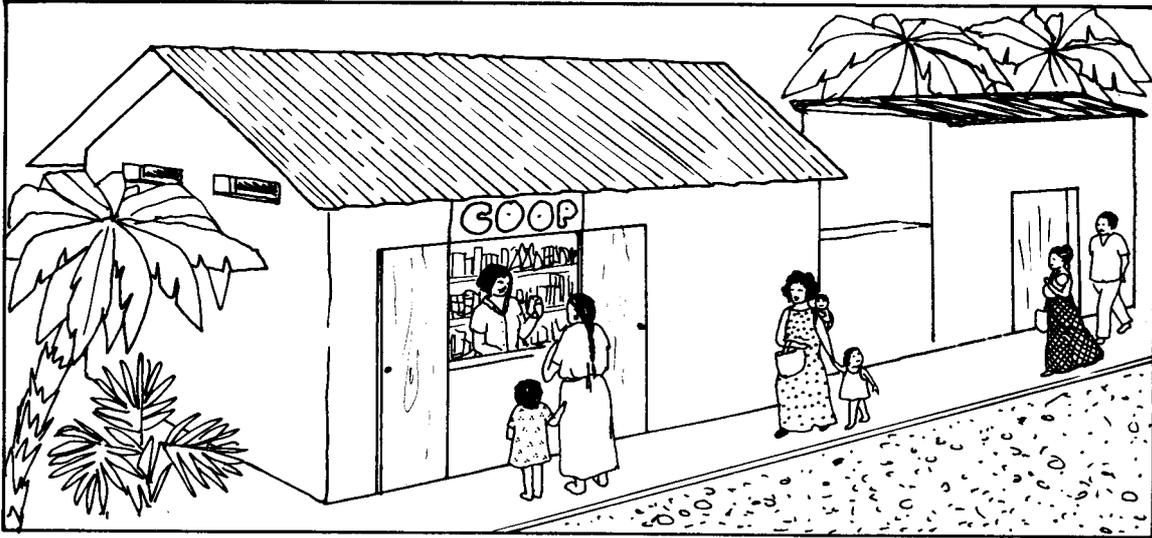


What are the advantages and disadvantages of your own shop location?

LAYOUT AND SIZE

The kiosk

The smallest type of shop is the kiosk. The customers do not enter the shop. They are served across a counter through a window.

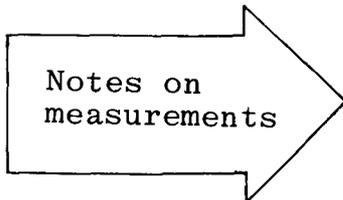
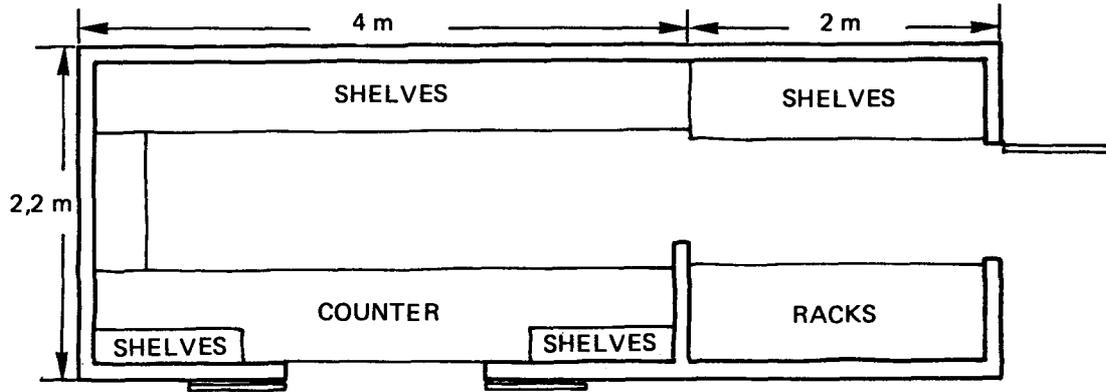


Such a shop would be suitable for a village where only a small range of goods (50 to 100 different articles) is needed.

From the inside the shop would look like this:

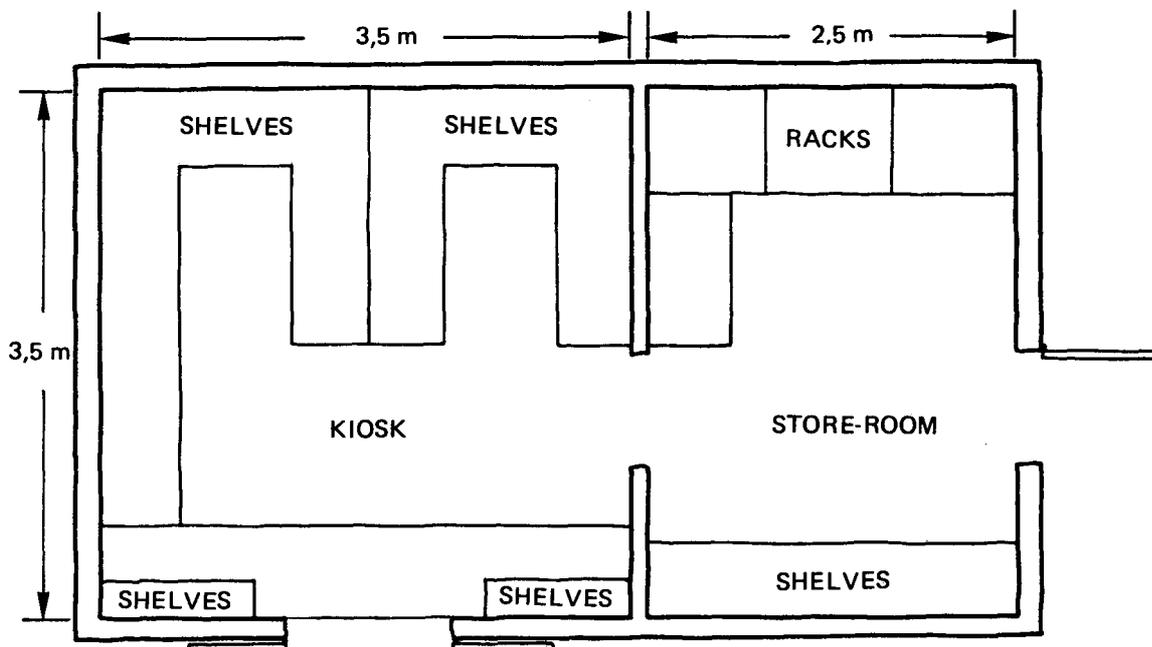


Below is a sketch of a suitable layout. The kiosk is connected to a small storeroom. The shop is narrow, making it easy for the shop assistant to reach all the goods. Make sure that goods can easily be delivered to the entrance.

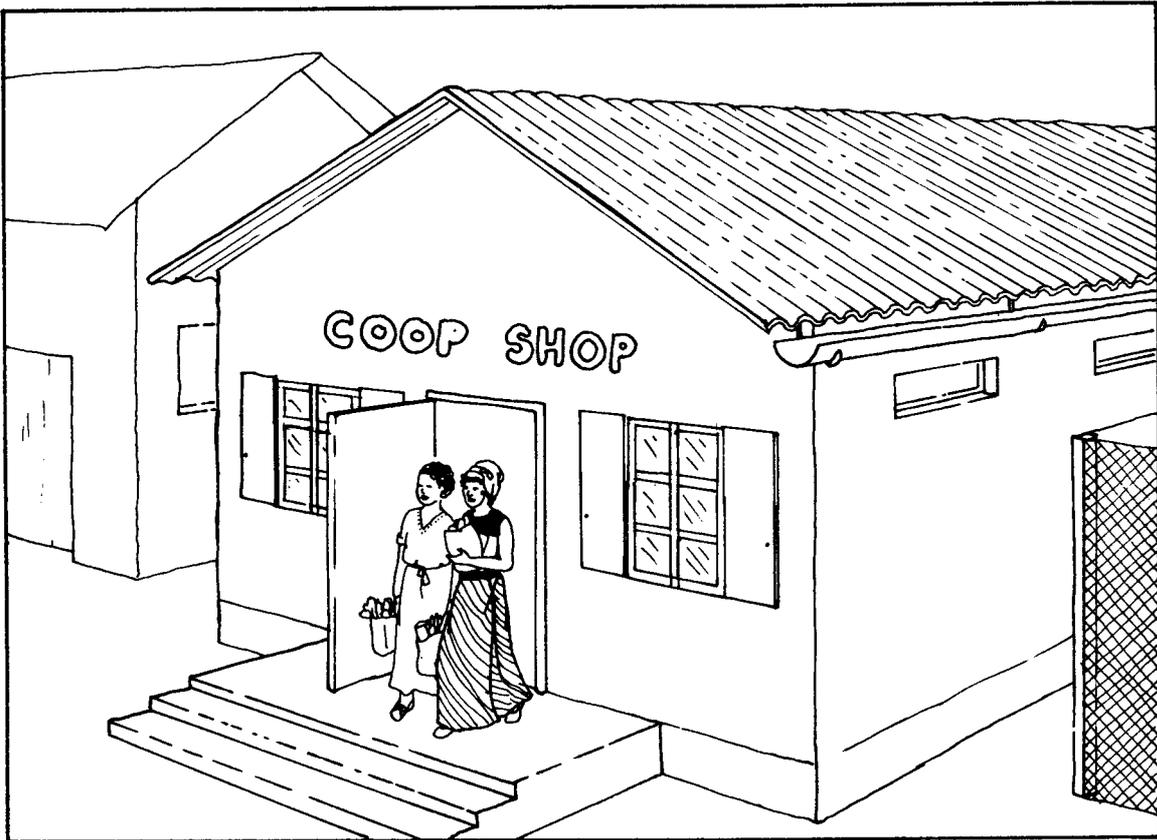


In the next part of this Element, measurements will be given in metres and centimetres. In case you are not used to this way of measuring, note that one centimetre is also written as 1 cm. There are about 21 cm in one inch. One metre is also written as 1 m. It is a little longer than one yard. There are 100 cm in 1 m.

This is another kiosk layout. It is a little wider and can accommodate more goods than the first one.



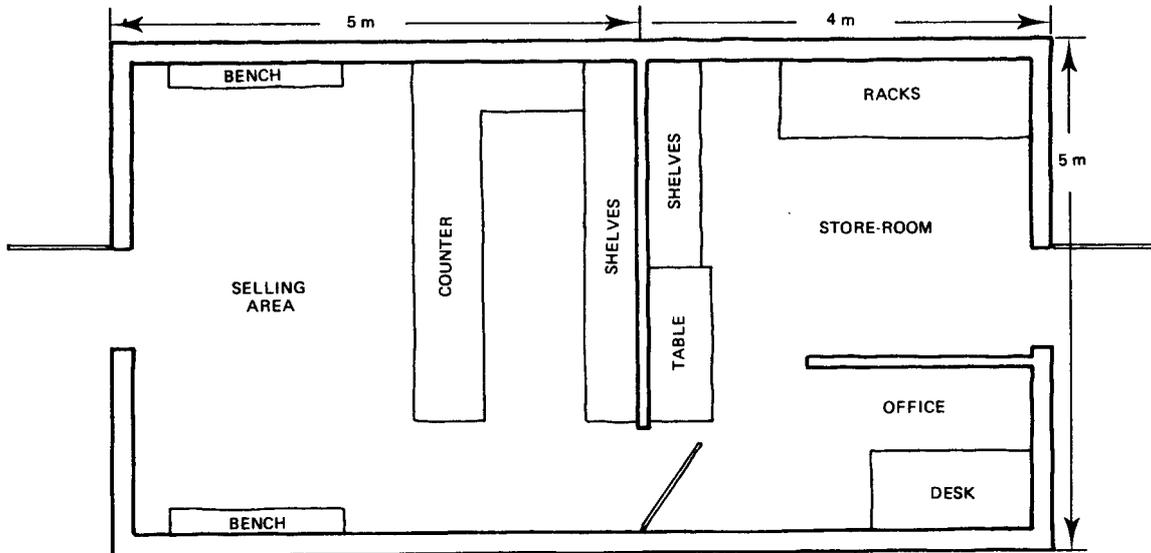
The small shop



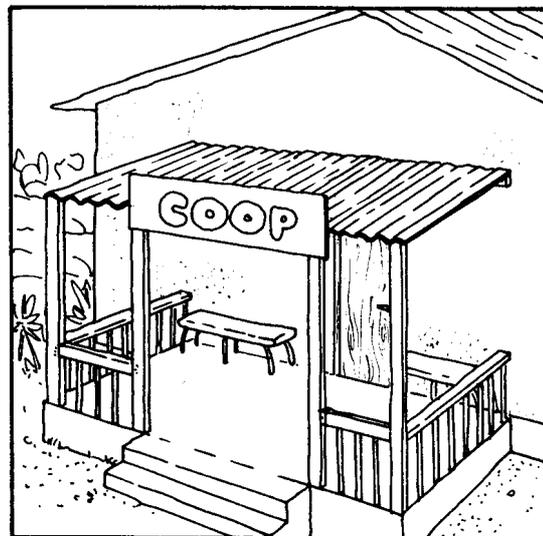
More space is needed if the customers come inside the shop. The building should be at least 9 metres long. A width of 5 metres is recommended. It should be about 2.5 metres from floor to ceiling. A building of this size does not require a complicated roof structure.

A larger building could be useful, but for a small village co-operative this size is sufficient.

The main part of the building is used as a "selling area", but there is also a storeroom and a small office.



Members may like a verandah in front of the main entrance.

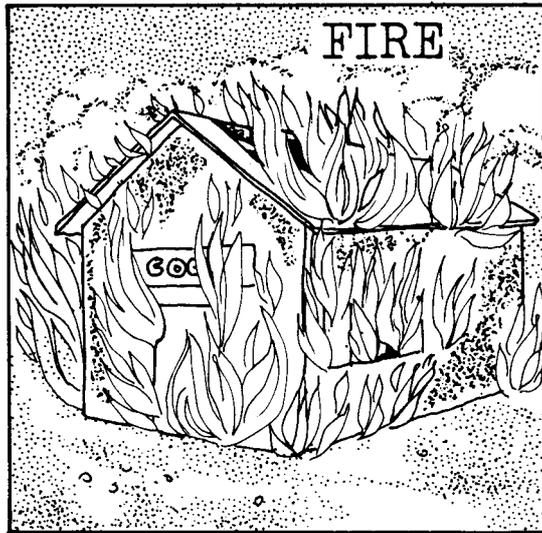
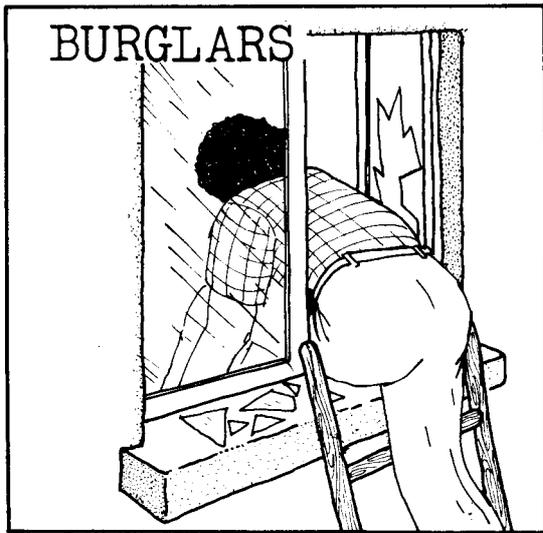
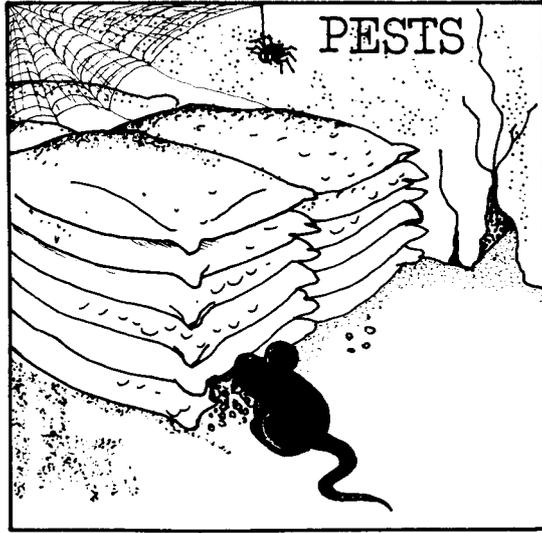
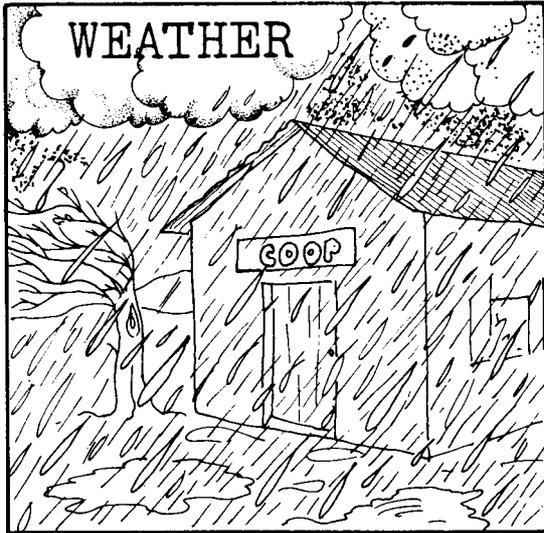


Officials to be consulted

If you are going to erect a new building for your shop, you may be able to get advice and assistance from the Co-operative Union, the Co-operative Ministry or your bank. You may need permission from one or more government departments before you can build on the site you have chosen. For example, the local council and the health authorities may need to approve your plans.

BUILDING MATERIALS AND FIXTURES

The shop building must be sufficiently well built to protect everything inside. In other words, the shop building must give protection against:



Does your shop building provide sufficient protection against these risks? What problems do you have?

Reinforced concrete is a very good building material. It is strong and resistant. But it is quite expensive and sometimes difficult to get. Specially skilled builders are needed to use it. When choosing building materials you will have to consider:

- what is available
- prices
- the funds available
- local building skills

Even without a lot of money it can be possible to put up a good building by using local materials. The following notes on the different parts of a shop will give you some hints on planning a new building or on making improvements to your existing shop.

Floor

To control pests, the shop must be kept clean. In a shop, the floor tends to become dirty very quickly. It should therefore be swept every day and scrubbed as often as possible. The floor will be easier to keep clean and dry if it has a strong, smooth and even surface. No puddles should form when you wash the floor. If you cannot afford cement for the whole building, you should at least try to get enough to make a concrete floor.

To make the floor even stronger, you should re-inforce the concrete, preferably with iron cross-grating.

If the concrete is scraped before it gets hard, you will get a smooth and even surface.



Walls

Walls made from manufactured or locally burnt bricks will be as good as those made from concrete. Sun-dried bricks, or mud plastered on to sticks are less effective and do not give enough protection to the goods.

Have you ever got into a car which had been parked in the sun with all the windows closed? If so, you will know that it can become very hot. The same can happen to a building made of corrugated iron, so this material is not suitable for walls in hot climates.

Walls made of straw and sticks give very poor protection and are therefore not suitable for a shop.



Suppose your shop has walls made of burnt bricks. What treatment do you suggest to make them nice to look at and easy to clean?



Roof

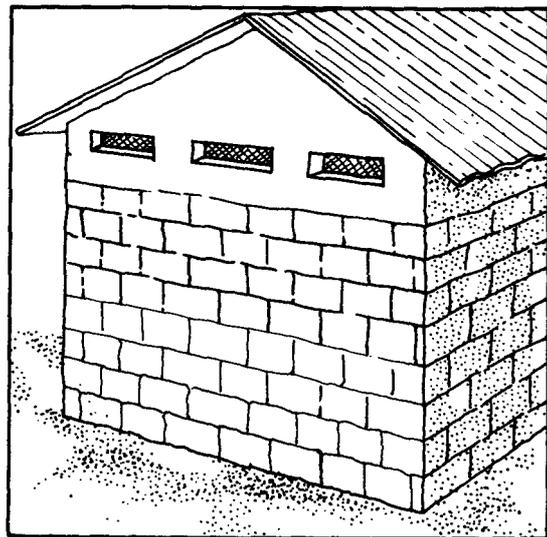
Tiles, slates and concrete are all good materials for a roof. Flattened paraffin tins may be cheap but do not last long. Thatch is not good.



Why is a thatched roof dangerous for a shop?

You learned earlier on that corrugated iron can make a shop too hot. Yet it is often the best material available for the roof. The problem is that when the roof becomes hot, the air under the roof becomes hot too. The hot air must be let out through holes - ventilators - in the walls. These should be.

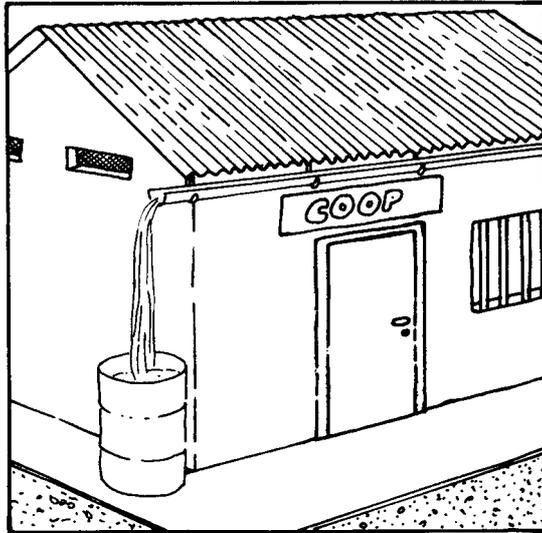
- high up on the walls;
- on opposite walls, preferably the north and south walls;
- small;
- covered with mosquito nets.



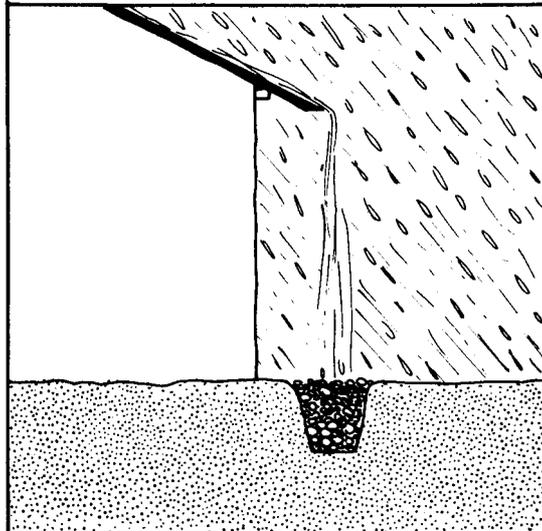
If rain just runs off the roof on to the ground, the soil becomes muddy. That is bad for the customers and for the person who has to clean the shop.

Therefore, the shop should have gutters, at least over the entrances.

It may be a good idea to collect the rainwater in a drum.

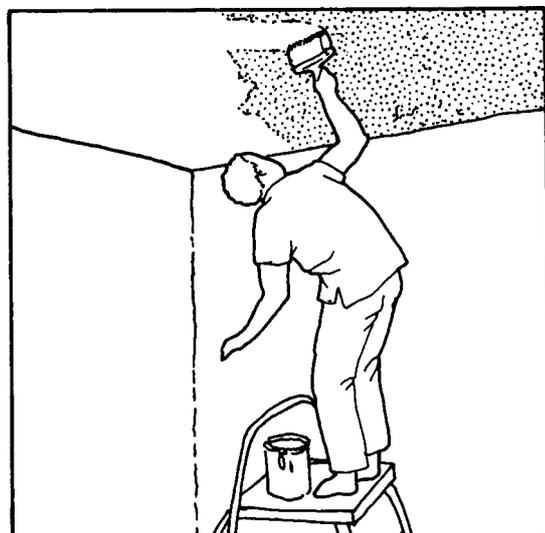


On the ground, there should be trenches or holes filled with stones, through which the water can drain away.



Ceiling

A good ceiling makes any shop look better. It should be possible to have one in your shop. A good craftsman can easily make one with boards and white paint.

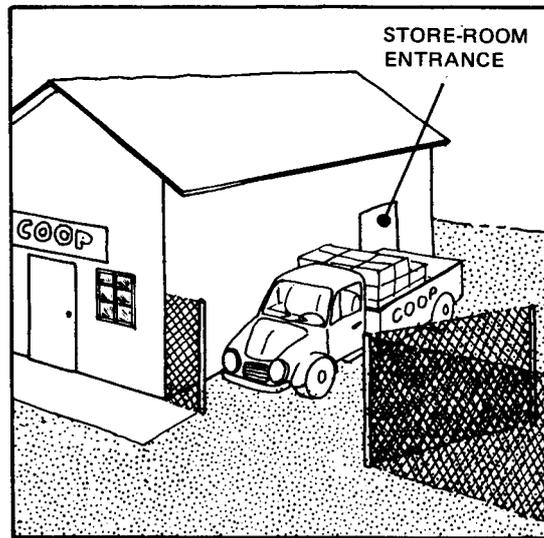


Doors

For small- and medium-sized shops, two outer doors are enough. Do not make life easy for thieves by having too many doors. There should be just one entrance for customers and one for staff and goods.

The entrance for customers must look attractive. Use stones or concrete to prevent the ground in front of the door from becoming muddy.

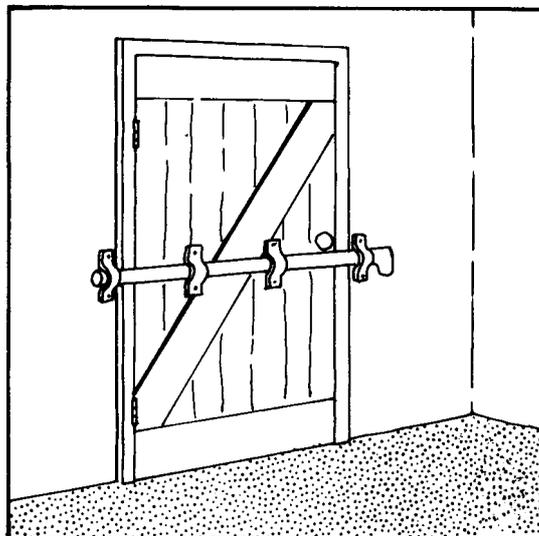
It must be easy to carry goods from a lorry to the store. Make sure a lorry can come close to the goods entrance. This door must be wide enough for easy access and it must lead straight into the storeroom - not through the selling area. If you forget these rules you will waste a lot of time and energy carrying goods in.



Locking up

There must be strong locks on the doors and a set of rules as to who should handle the keys, as in the following example:

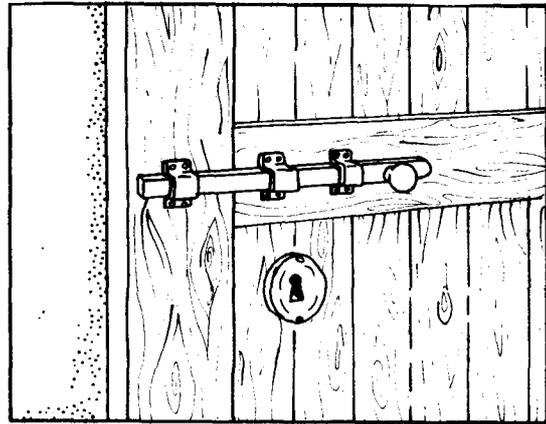
The Turina Co-operative shop has two outer doors only. The front door, which is the customers' entrance, is locked from the inside with an iron bar.



The only door that can be unlocked from the outside is the back door. Joe, the manager, is responsible for the key to that door. He opens the shop in the mornings and closes it in the evenings. If he is off duty, the key is handed over to his assistant.

The only copy of the key is kept in a sealed envelope by the secretary, who lives near the shop. It must be used only in an emergency. The envelope must be sealed in such a way that it will be easy to see if somebody has opened it and resealed it.

During opening hours, the staff are usually busy in the selling area. There is no one in the storeroom, so they keep the back door bolted from the inside.



Why can only one of the doors be unlocked from outside?

Why is only one key used for that door?

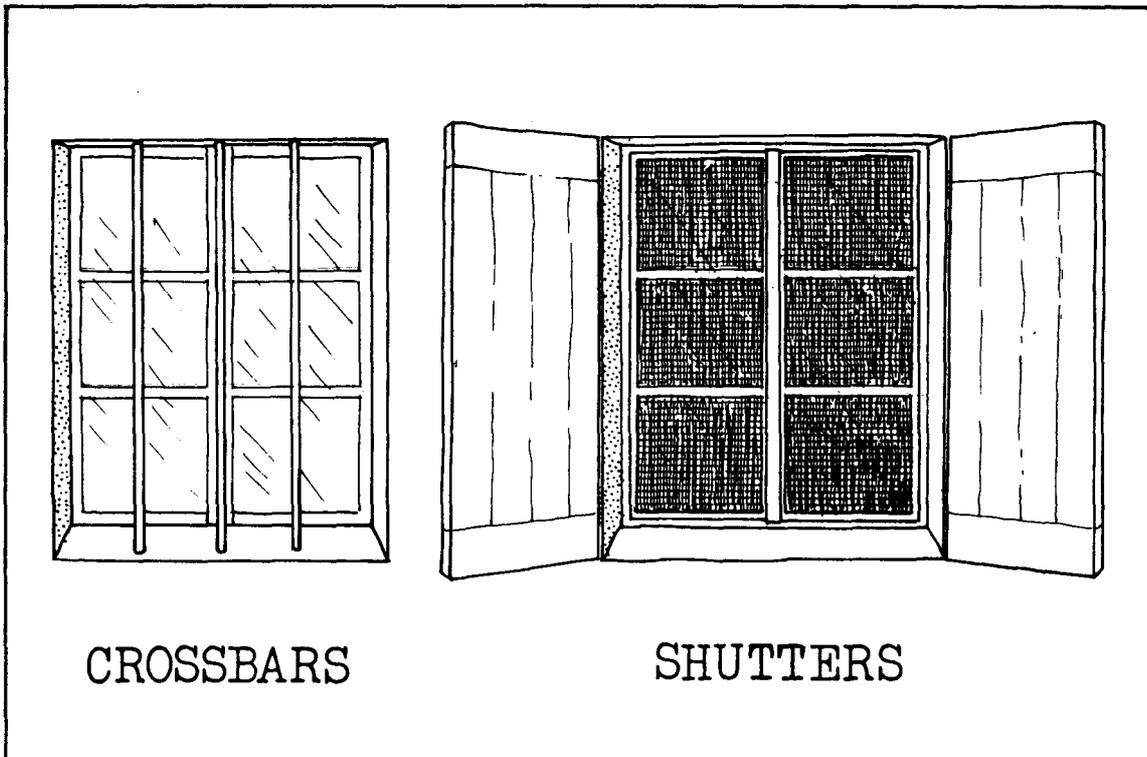
How could the arrangements for handling the keys in your shop be improved?

Windows

In hot climates to prevent strong sunshine from entering the shop, the windows should not be on the east or the west side of the building, where the sun is low in the morning and in the evening.



The windows should be barred or cross-barrred, or there should be shutters that are locked when the shop is closed. Mosquito nets may also be needed.



Lighting

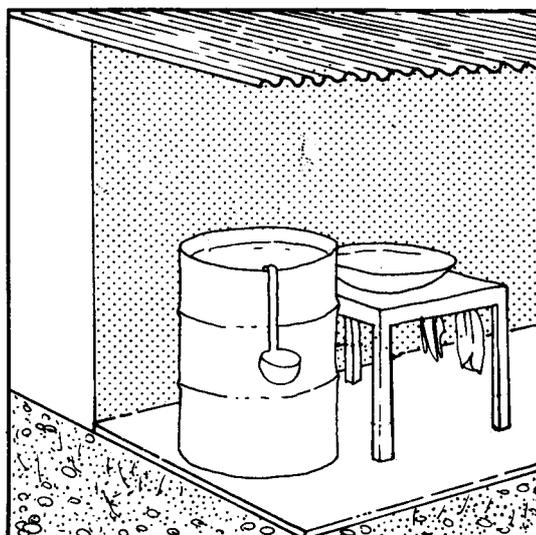
Sometimes the light from the windows is not sufficient. A lamp is needed. If there is no electricity, use a pressure lamp. Be careful not to hang it too close to the goods or to the ceiling, as the heat could cause a fire.

Water supply and toilet

People who handle food must be very careful about hygiene, or they may spread diseases. It is for this reason that shop staff must wash their hands often.

The washroom/toilet should be well separated from the goods in the shop.

Very small shops may not need a tap or toilet if these are available nearby. However, you should at least have a washstand at the back of the shop. If the water tap is far away, a drum of water should be kept at the washstand.



Are the fixtures in your shop satisfactory? Suggest any improvements to doors, windows, the water supply, washstands, etc., that are needed.

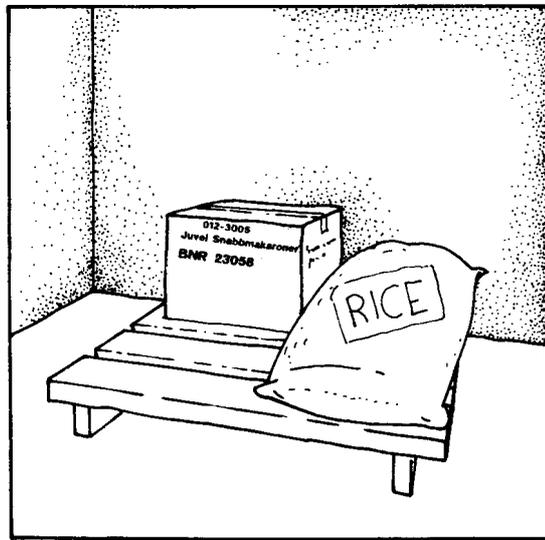
FURNITURE

Racks, shelves and a counter are the basic pieces of furniture of a small shop. Tables, chairs and cupboards are also useful.

Racks

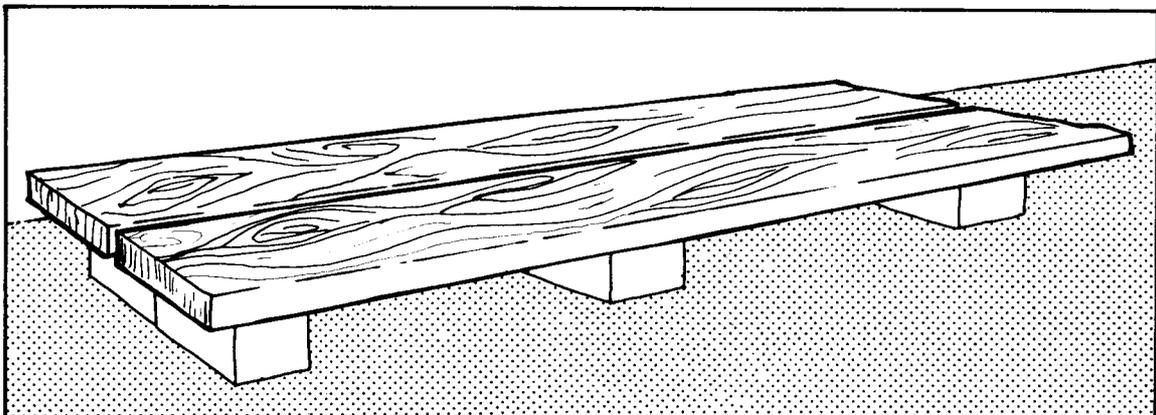
Goods placed directly on the floor can easily be damaged by moisture and pests. To avoid this, wooden platforms (low racks) are needed.

Make the platforms high enough so that the floor below them can be swept.



It is usually better to have several short platforms instead of a few long ones. They can then be moved more easily without having to take down the goods on them.

A temporary rack can easily be made by resting boards on some bricks.



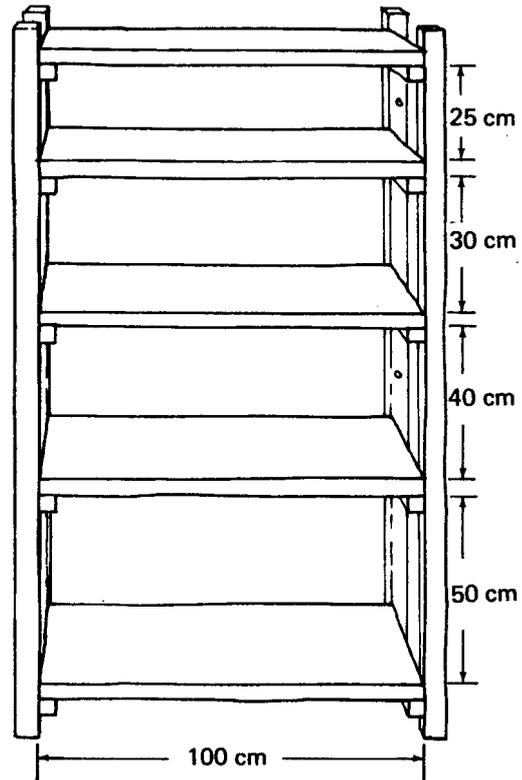
Shelves

A small shop will need about 15 to 25 metres of shelving.

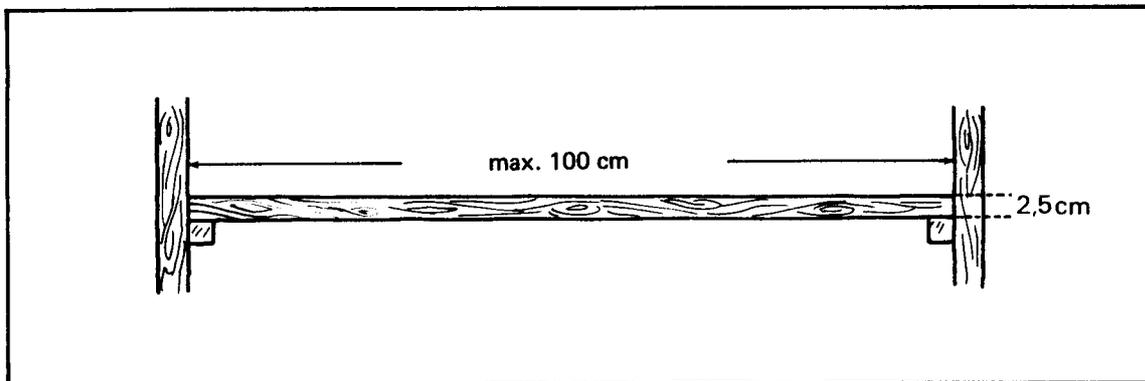
This means that four or five sets of shelves are needed, each with five shelves not more than one metre long.

The shelves should be about 40 centimetres deep.

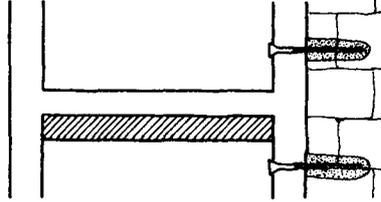
The space between the shelves may vary from 25 to 50 cm. Leave the bigger spaces between the lower shelves, since the biggest and heaviest goods are displayed on the bottom shelf.



The shelves must be strong and steady. They should be made of thick boards (2j cm is sufficient). The distance between the supports should not be more than one metre. Shelves which are too long may sag under a heavy weight.

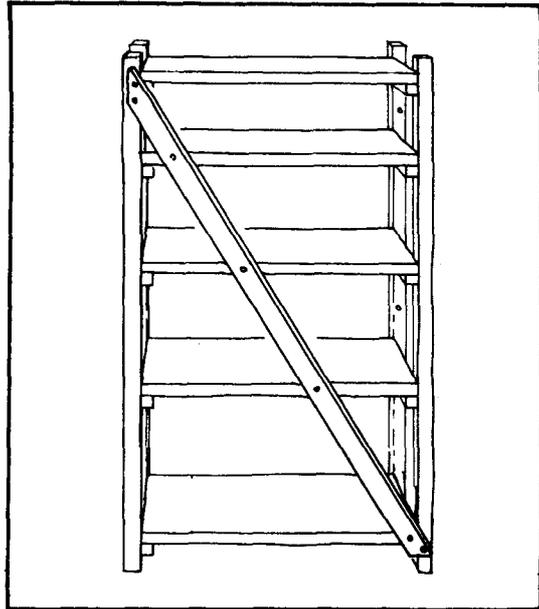


If possible, the shelves should be fixed to the wall.



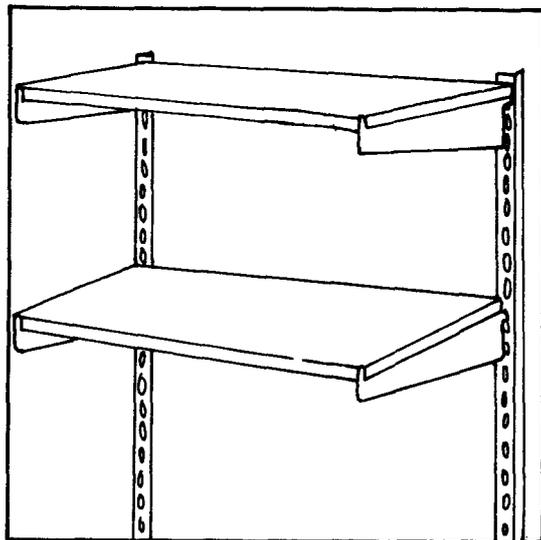
Where this is difficult to arrange, the sets of shelves should be joined to each other.

If the shelves are not fastened to a wall, it may be necessary to strengthen the back, and perhaps the sides. One way to do this is to use a crosspiece, as in the picture.



A large number of sets of shelves placed next to each other are better than a few very high ones. The work is made easier as you do not have to climb up and down so often and customers can have the goods at eye level.

Modern sets of shelves that are fixed to the walls by metal uprights and brackets are very good. They are very strong and have the advantage of adjustable shelves, but they are usually expensive.



Counter

The table or shelf between shop assistants and customers is called a COUNTER. An ordinary big table can be used but it is much better to have a counter that has been specially made for a shop. To make a good counter, you need to know about the work that is going to be done at it.



Write below the main jobs carried out at the counter:

Your list of jobs carried out at the counter should be rather long. Customers are served, goods are weighed and wrapped, money is received, receipts are given and so on.

There should be enough space to serve several customers, for a set of scales and perhaps a cash register or an adding machine. You see that a big counter is needed, and it must be stable.

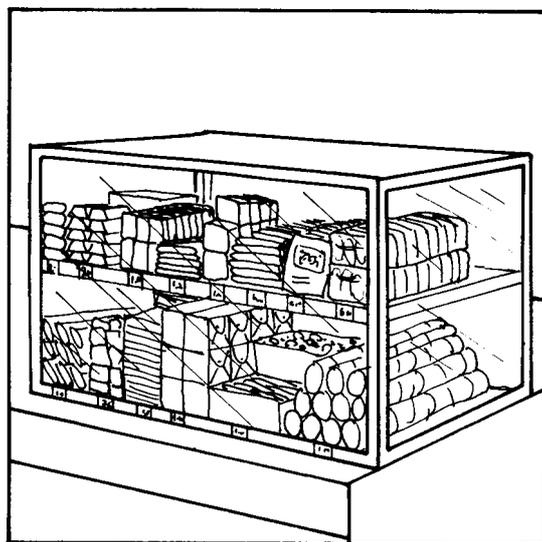
Because the assistants stand when working at the counter, it should be higher than an ordinary table. If it is between 80 cm and 90 cm high they will not have to bend too much.

A wooden top should be covered with a hard, smooth plastic material which will not scratch and will be easy to clean. Formica is an excellent material for this purpose, but the edges can become loose, leaving a dangerous dirt trap. To avoid this, try to get a skilled carpenter to glue the material to the counter and get the best advice available on how to fasten down the edges.

The counter also forms a barrier between the customers' area and the area reserved for the staff. This means that the counter should be rather long. It should go from one wall to the one opposite, just leaving a passage on one side. Usually it looks nicer if the front of the counter, and preferably also the sides, are covered. This also helps to make the counter steady.

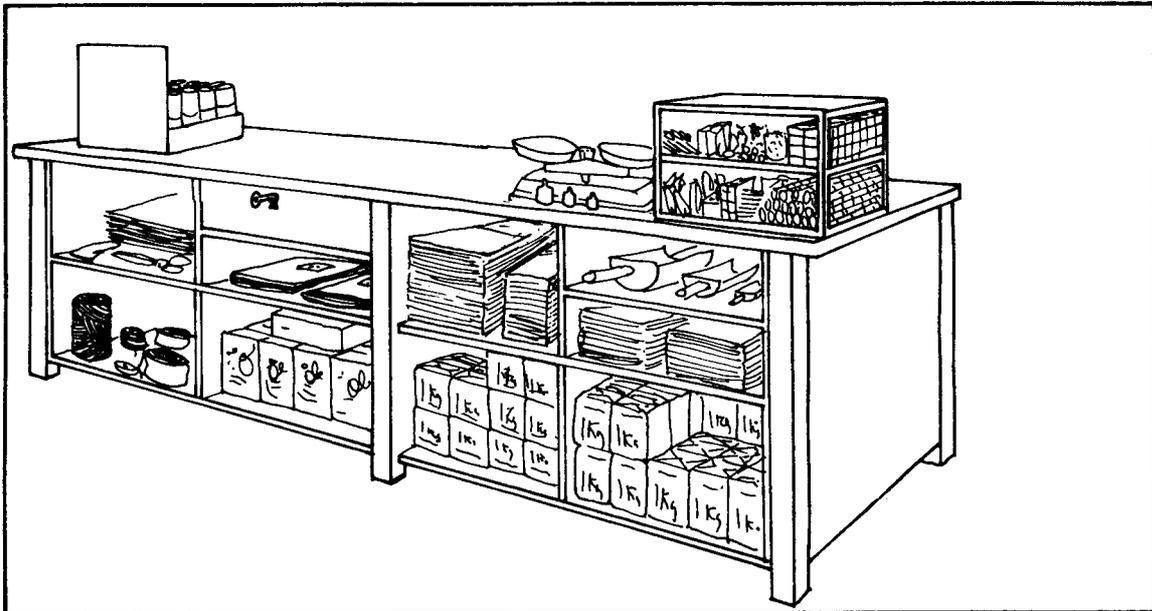


If the counter is big enough, part of it can be used for displaying commodities which you particularly want the customers to see. You can place bowls or a small glass cabinet on it. In these you can display small items, which would be difficult to see if placed on the ordinary shelves.



The space under the counter can be used for keeping tools, wrapping material and stationery. Shelves are needed for these purposes. If you do not have enough space on the other shelves for common goods like rice, sugar and flour, you can keep an extra stock under the counter. But always put as much as possible on display.

If there is no cash register, the counter should have a lockable drawer for keeping cash.



Is the furniture in your shop satisfactory?
List below any improvements that are needed.

EQUIPMENT

To decide what equipment is needed in a shop, think of the work that is done in it.

Every week you receive new supplies of goods. Most of it is immediately brought into the selling area, unpacked, checked, price-marked and displayed. Some cartons are kept in the storeroom. Sugar, which is supplied in 50 kg bags, is pre-packed in smaller quantities. Meanwhile, customers are served; goods are sold and paid for. In the evening the shop is tidied up. You take care of the cash and write the records in the small office.

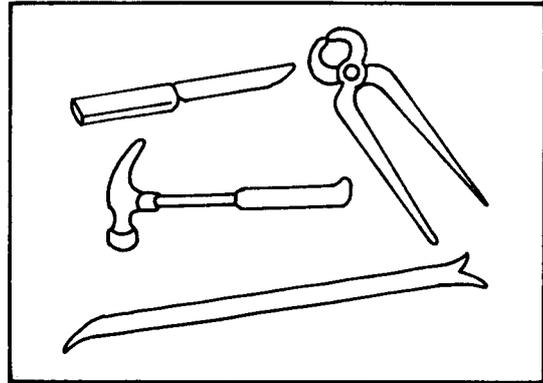


What equipment is needed for the work in your shop?

Now, you may compare your list with the following.

For opening boxes and cartons
a set of tools is needed:

- a knife
- a lever
- a hammer
- pincers

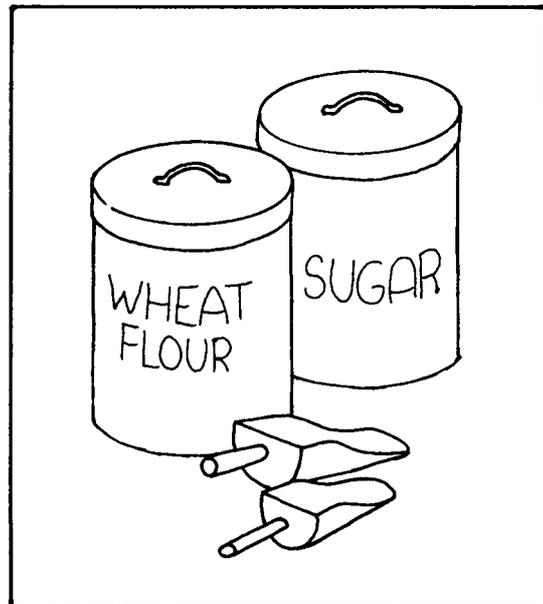


For goods delivered in bags,
such as sugar and flour:

- containers
- scoops

It is better not to sell things like flour directly from a big bag. You may spill some and have problems with pests.

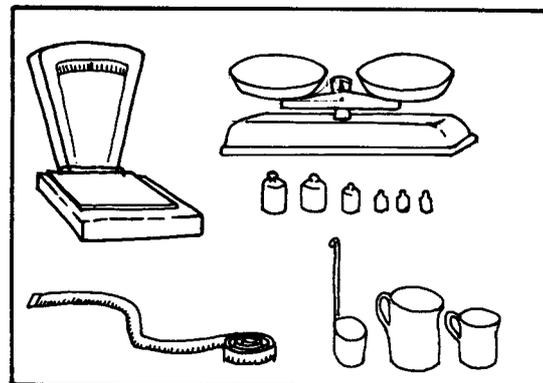
Metal or plastic containers with lids are better than wooden ones.



Why are wooden containers not suitable?

For weighing and measuring:

For weighing you need either a balance with weights or a set of scales. The scales are better, though more expensive. You also need measures for liquids and a tape measure or measuring rod.



Scales, weights and measures have to be inspected by Government officials. The shop manager should make sure that this is done.



Try to find out how often scales, weights and measures should be inspected and write the answer below.

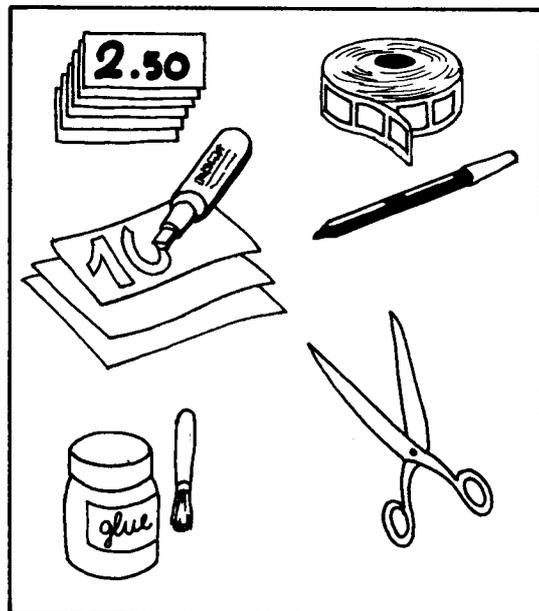
For price-marking:

- labels
- tags
- marker pens

If labels and tags are not available or too expensive, you can easily make your own. For this you need:

- paper
- glue or tape
- a pair of scissors

Prices can also be marked with special price-marking tools.



For display and marketing:

It is important that the shop look attractive to the customers, and that the goods be easy to find.

You will need:

- signs
- notice boards

In order to arrange special displays you will need:

- baskets
- small tables



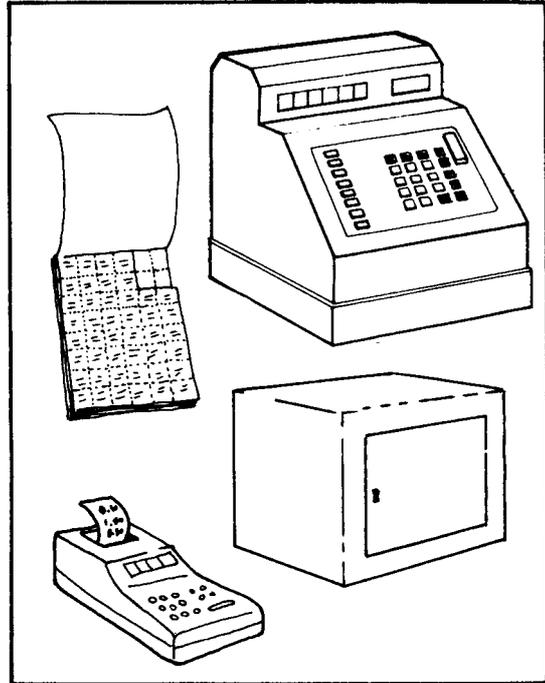
For handling cash :

- cash receipt tickets
- a cash register
- a safe

A cash register is the best way to record sales accurately. However, it is rather expensive and difficult to maintain, so many small shops do not have one.

It is easier to add sales if there is:

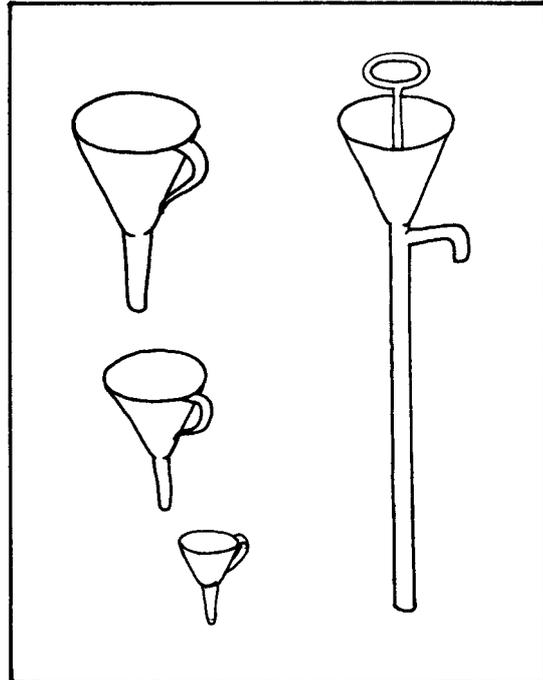
- an adding machine, or
- a calculator.



For oils and kerosene :

- funnels
- a kerosene pump

Never use the same funnels for kerosene and cooking oil!



Finally, you must not forget the equipment needed for keeping the shop clean :

- a basin
- a bucket
- a dustbin
- a broom
- dusters
- a scrubbing-brush
- floorcloths



You will agree that quite a lot of things are needed in a shop, not to mention the office equipment!



Did you include anything else in the list you prepared on page 29? What was it?

What equipment is missing in your shop?

"CHECK-OUT"

To prove to yourself that you have fully understood this Element, you should now go through the following questions. Mark what you think is the right answer to each question. The first question is answered as an example. If you have problems with a particular question, go back and read the corresponding chapter again. Your teacher will later check your answers.



- 1 A good reason for building a shop close to a market is that:
 - a many members live there;
 - b many people go there;
 - c few thieves go there.

- 2 The most economical location of a shop is where:
 - a sales are highest;
 - b the rent is lowest;
 - c the difference between income from sales and the rent is greatest.

- 3 A kiosk is a type of shop where the customers:
 - a serve themselves;
 - b are served in the storeroom;
 - c are served through a door or a window.

- 4 The biggest room in the shop should be:
 - a the selling area;
 - b the storeroom;
 - c the office.

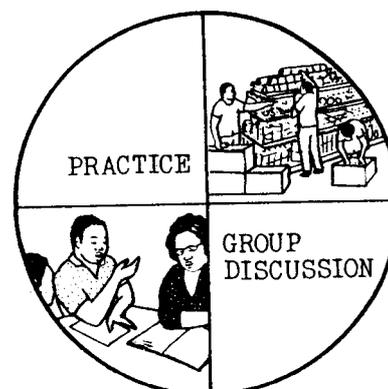
- 5 If only a limited amount of cement is available, it is best to use it for the construction of the:
 - a walls;
 - b floor;
 - c roof.

- 6 Which of the following is the greatest disadvantage of corrugated iron sheets in a shop building?
 - a They offer little protection against burglars.
 - b They are very noisy when it rains heavily.
 - c They make the shop hot in strong sun.

- 7 Small holes high up on the walls are needed to:
- a allow insects to escape from the shop;
 - b allow daylight into the roof area of the shop;
 - c prevent the air in the shop from becoming too hot.
- 8 On which of the following sides of the shop should you avoid having windows?
- a North.
 - b West.
 - c South.
- 9 Which is the best way to protect a 50 kg bag of flour from damp and pests?
- a Place it on a high shelf.
 - b Place it firmly on the floor.
 - c Place it on a platform.
- 10 In the storeroom, it is better to place goods:
- a on the floor;
 - b on racks;
 - c in cupboards.
- 11 More space is needed between the bottom shelves, because:
- a the bulky goods are placed there;
 - b it makes the shelves more stable;
 - c it is easier to see the goods.
- 12 Which of the following will help to make the shelves more stable?
- a Making them adjustable.
 - b Making them as long as possible.
 - c Fixing them to the wall.
- 13 Which of the following is a good height for a counter?
- a Between 90 cm and 1 m.
 - b Between 80 cm and 90 cm.
 - c Between 70 cm and 80 cm.
- 14 Which of the following statements about a counter is true?
- a It should not have any shelves.
 - b It should always be short.
 - c It should have a hard, smooth surface.
- 15 Which are the best containers for flour?
- a Cotton bags.
 - b Wooden containers.
 - c Plastic containers.

COMPLEMENTARY EXERCISES

To complete your studies of this topic you should take part in some of the following exercises which will be organised by your teacher.



Practical Group Assignments

1 The Shop Building

Examine a shop.

- a) Prepare a list of improvements to the building which you would like to recommend.
- b) Try to find out the cost of each improvement.
- c) Suppose that there is not enough money to do all the improvements at once. List them in the order they should be done. Give reasons for the order you have chosen.
- d) Compare your list with that made by other groups.

2 The Furniture

The assignment is the same as for the building.

3 The Equipment

Examine a shop.

- a) Prepare a list of all equipment used in the shop.
- b) Compare your list with the one in this Element (pages 30 to 33) and find out if there are any essential things missing in the shop. Has money been wasted on unnecessary equipment?
- c) Compare your report with those of other groups.

Group Discussions

4 Shop Location

- a) Your teacher will describe to you some possible sites for a shop. Discuss and then decide which is the best one. Give reasons for your decision.
- b) Alternatively, you may discuss the location of some nearby shops and judge which of them has the best location.
- c) Compare the decisions of the groups.