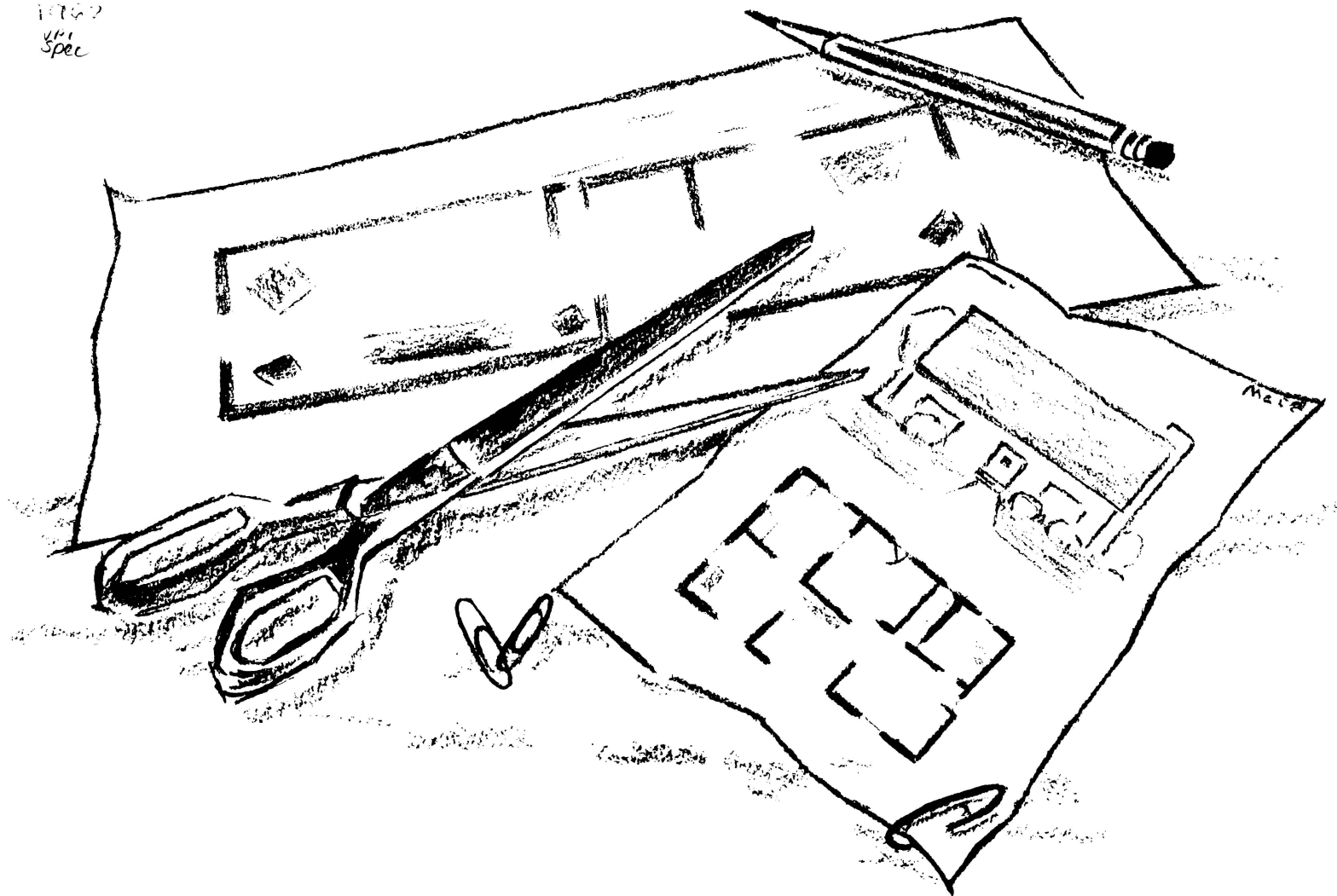


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Furniture Arrangement

Agricultural Extension Service
Virginia Polytechnic Institute
Blacksburg, Virginia

FURNITURE ARRANGEMENT

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Introduction

Furniture arrangement must meet requirements for comfort and convenience, as well as presenting an attractive picture.

Modern architecture and decoration go hand in hand with today's casual way of living. The old fashioned huddle of chairs and sofa about the fireplace is hardly needed with today's central heating. Chairs are placed where they command a pleasant

view, good light for reading, or a good angle for the television. In many homes dividers or furniture are used to separate areas. There is a swing to use of curving lines, rather than rectangular shapes, in exterior and interior walls. Most important, family life is more casual. Patterns of living vary, so there can be no hard and fast rules for furnishing. What is right for one family may not be for another.

Steps in Arranging Furniture

MAKE A FLOOR PLAN.

Measure your room and sketch its outlines on paper marked in squares, letting 1 square equal 1 foot. Indicate windows, doors, electrical outlets, radiators, and any special architectural features, such as a fireplace, arched opening, or built-ins.

NOTE TRAFFIC LANES.

These are paths the family takes in and out of a room. They will be about 2 feet wide, and should be as short and direct as possible. These lanes should be clear of furniture. Leave at least 3 feet of clearance at all doorways and a 4 foot clearance at the entrance.

DEVELOP A CENTER OF INTEREST

Your decoration focal point can be a fireplace, a fabric, or a picture window. Whatever you choose, arrange furniture to call attention to it.

CONSIDER NEEDS, INTERESTS, AND HOBBIES.

Locate areas in the room for activities of each member of the family. For example:

Reading	Entertaining	Sleeping
Conversation	Television	Eating

Do the activities line up toward casual comfort or more gracious formal living? This answer will indicate style of furniture and what kinds of things are needed.

CREATE DESIGN THROUGH LIGHT.

Light is an important factor in arrangement. The use of directional light to create definite areas for the purpose of design is important, since it acts as a visual force in emphasizing the centers of interest and balance.

AVOID CLUTTER.

This means too much furniture and too many small, ungrouped pieces. Choose quality rather than quantity. This idea, if carried out, will save time in cleaning and also provide a more liveable home.

BALANCE FURNITURE GROUPS.

This means the proper distribution of weight and the best use of space. Properly done, it creates a feeling of rest and unity. Balance is so natural that one is unaware of it when it is present, but when it is violated, there is a sense of discomfort or annoyance. There are two kinds of balance, formal and informal.

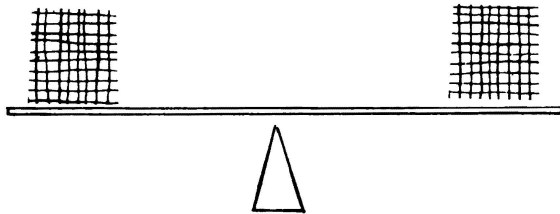
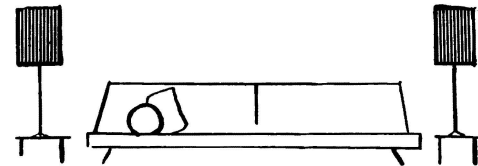


Figure 1



FORMAL BALANCE — Two objects of equal weight are placed the same distance from a center point, such as identical lamps at either end of a sofa. (See Figure 1).

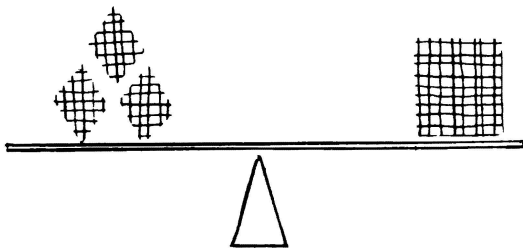
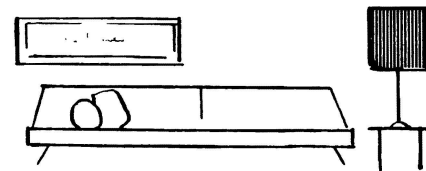


Figure 2



INFORMAL BALANCE — Objects of unequal size or weight are brought together around a central point. (See Figure 2). In a room it is good to use both types of balance, as well as pattern and color.

CONSIDER ARRANGEMENT OF HEAVY PIECES.

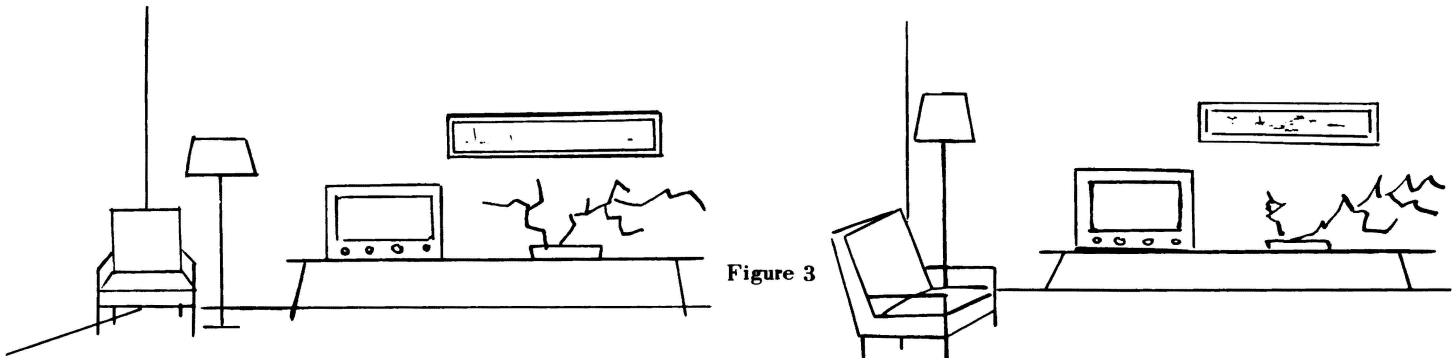
Compose one grouping at a time. Arrange and fit tables, lamps, and chairs. Note what is needed in the unit. Provide a comfortable chair, a table, and a good light for each member of the family. Check tables' proportion and height in relation to sofas and chairs. Lamps should be the right size and height for the tables, and for the people who will use them. A large table placed end-to-the-wall, with a good reading lamp on it, may serve 2 or 3 people.

TAKE A LOOK AT WHAT YOU HAVE.

Determine whether or not you are making the best use of the furnishings and space you have. Decide what you want to keep or discard. At this point, make a long range plan of what you need to buy and in what sizes. If you move, live in the new home for a time before making purchases. Plan multiple uses of tables, chests, and other furnishings.

Guides

1. Are you using too many pieces of furniture of the same kind, size, and color? Try mixing wood and upholstered pieces. Vary height with a tall, built-in picture, tall lamps, growing plants, or screen.
2. Is your most comfortable seating arrangement placed away from the entrance? People tend to walk well into a room before taking a seat.
3. Is your most important accessory placed near your center of interest?
4. Are your pictures in proportion to the space they occupy and to the furniture over which they hang?
5. Where is the television? Usually the best arrangement for cabinet television is parallel with the walls, so seated persons can view it. Locate it away from traffic lanes so that the view will not be interrupted.
6. An economical use of space is the "L" arrangement, which increases seating for conversation and for viewing television. Cater-cornered arrangements waste space. (See Figure 3.)
7. One room-size rug, rather than scatter rugs, unites the furniture and makes the room appear larger. Light walls and small-scale furniture will help make small rooms appear larger.
8. People require space. There should be enough room for people to get up from chairs without bumping into one another or pieces of furniture.

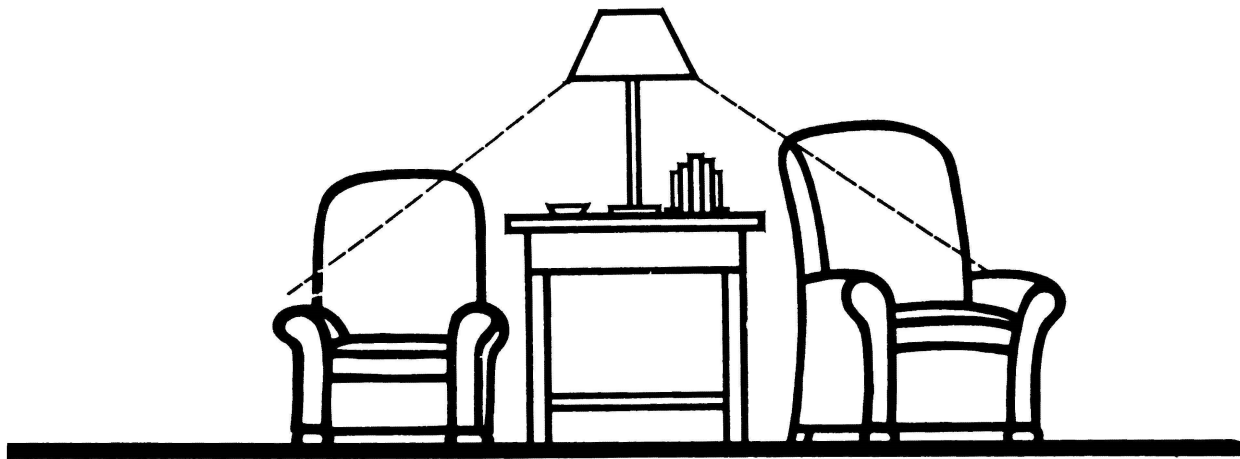


Check Your Final Arrangement

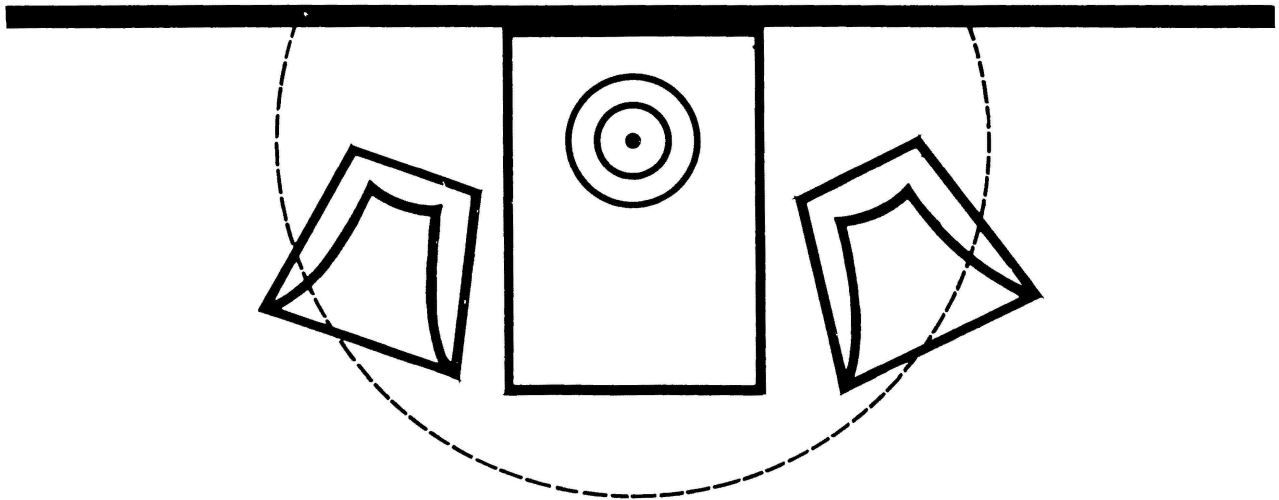
Is it attractive, comfortable, and convenient?
Have you made the best possible use of space and light?
Is it well balanced?
Are traffic lanes open?
Does each area have the necessary furniture and furnishings?
What is the center of interest?

You have a plan. Stick to it. Now you can begin moving furniture.

FOR STUDY



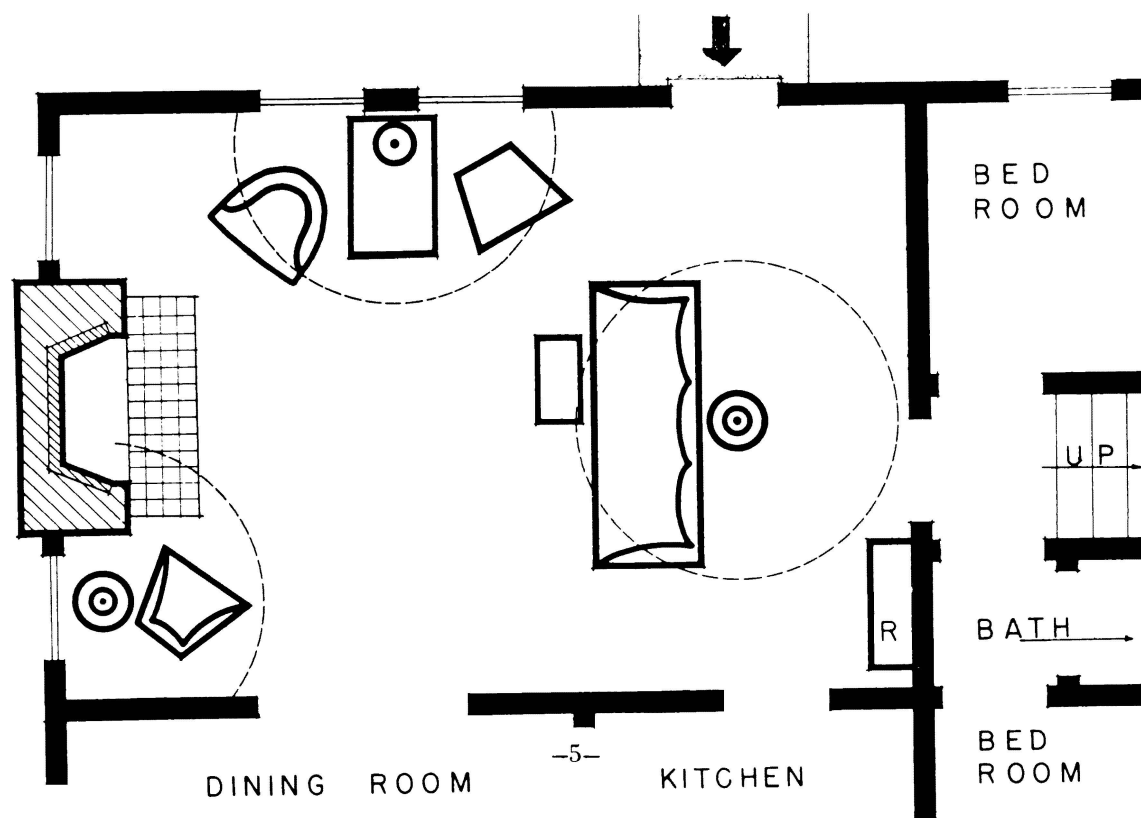
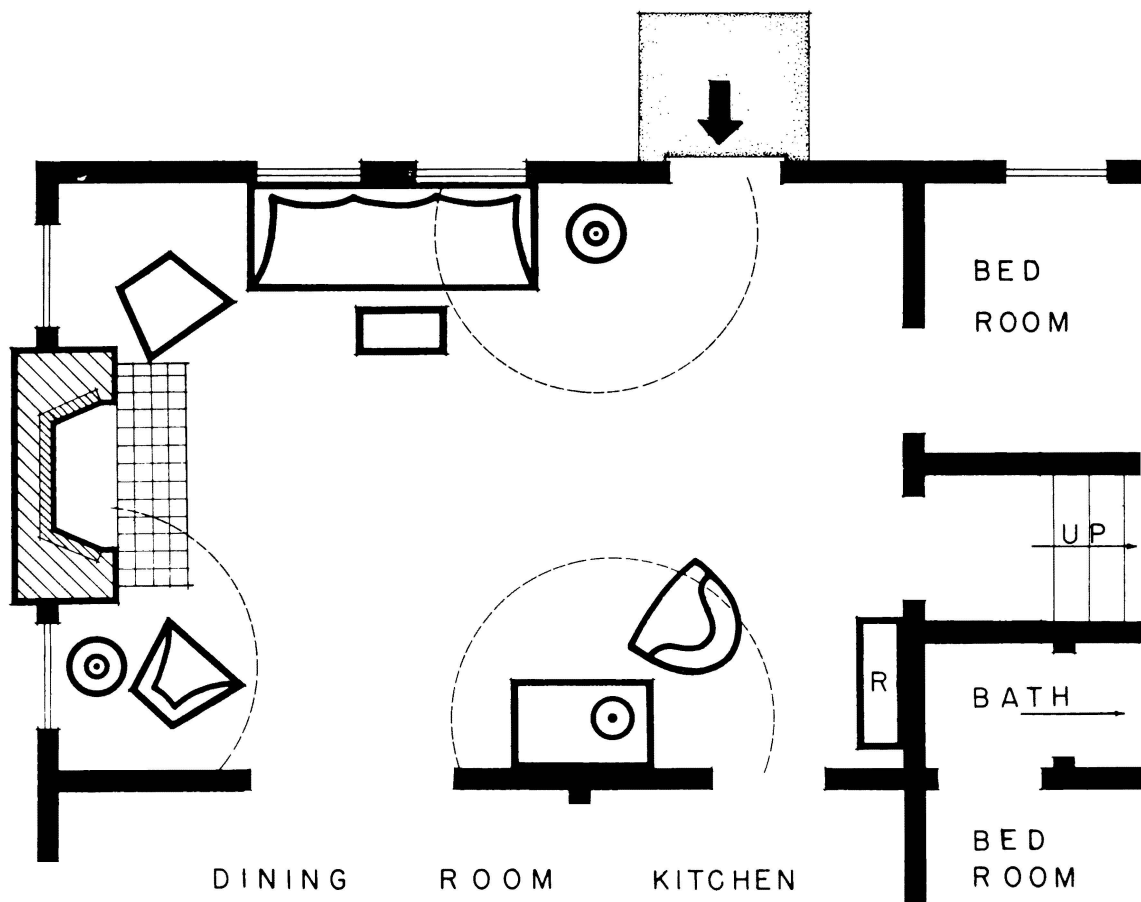
This comfortable and attractive arrangement of furniture for a corner of a living room shows how a table and one lamp of good design serves two persons.



A tall lamp with a wide shade is used instead of a low lamp. It is placed near the wall so that light from it will shine on the work rather than in the eyes of the persons in the chairs.

The table placed end-to-the-wall allows both chairs to be moved closer to the lamp. They are then within the circle of light, as shown by the dotted lines.

The table space in front of the lamp is convenient for magazines, books, ash trays, or boxes.



Living Room Furniture Arrangements

On the facing page is shown part of the plan of a home occupied by a family of 3—father, mother, and teen-age daughter.

The house was heated by a warm-air furnace and needed only a few additional electric outlets.

ORIGINAL ARRANGEMENT:

Advantages: Good light from the windows reached the davenport and the chairs beside the fireplace.

Disadvantages: Traffic from the front door, the front bedroom, and the stairway had to cross through the center of the living room to reach the dining room.

The traffic lane to the kitchen was partly blocked by the large chair near the kitchen door.

The table beside this chair covered the warm-air register and the davenport covered the cold-air returns. Heating difficulties resulted. For summer, the position of the davenport was satisfactory.

One end of the davenport and the chair between it and the fireplace received little light from the lamps.

This disadvantage was not too serious in summer when evenings were longer, because the family spent less time in the living room. Less reading and studying were done.

The bathroom was reached through the rear bedroom, which opened off the kitchen.

REARRANGEMENT

Traffic from the front door, the front bedroom, and the stairway to the dining room is now directed around the furniture. The lane to the kitchen is more open.

The furniture is more closely grouped, but with enough space between pieces to prevent a feeling of crowding.

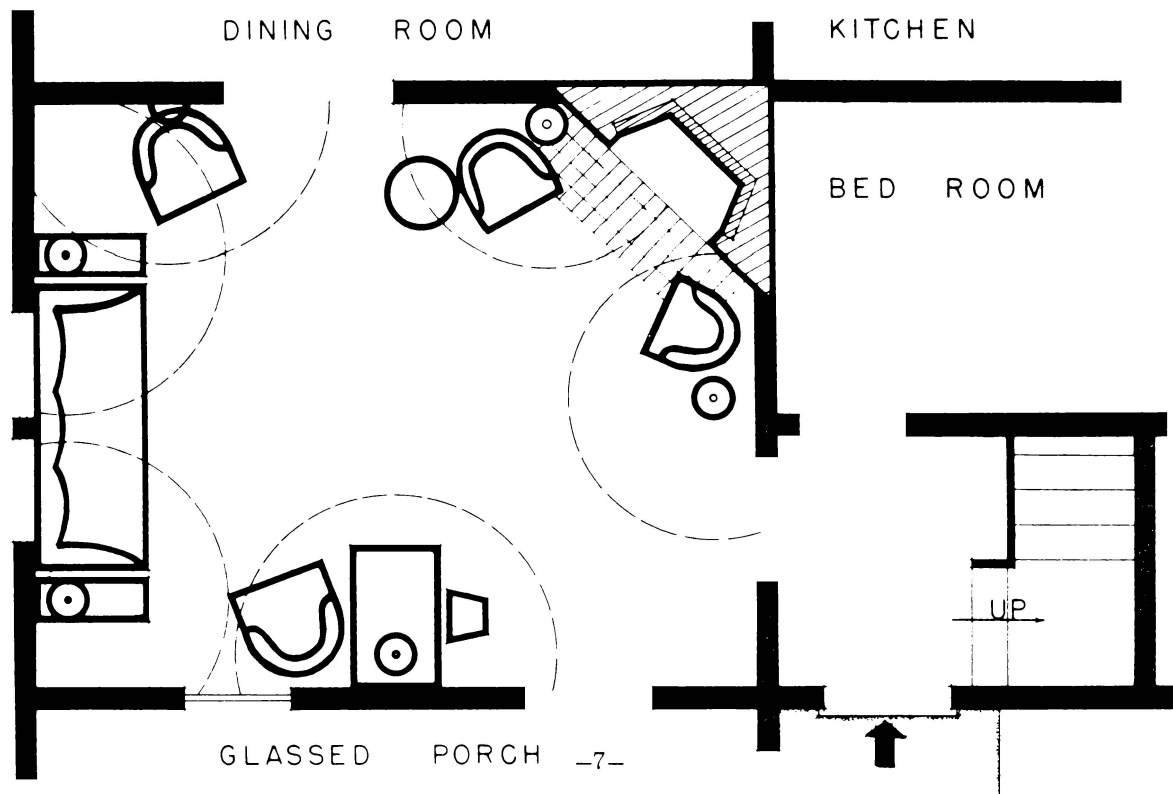
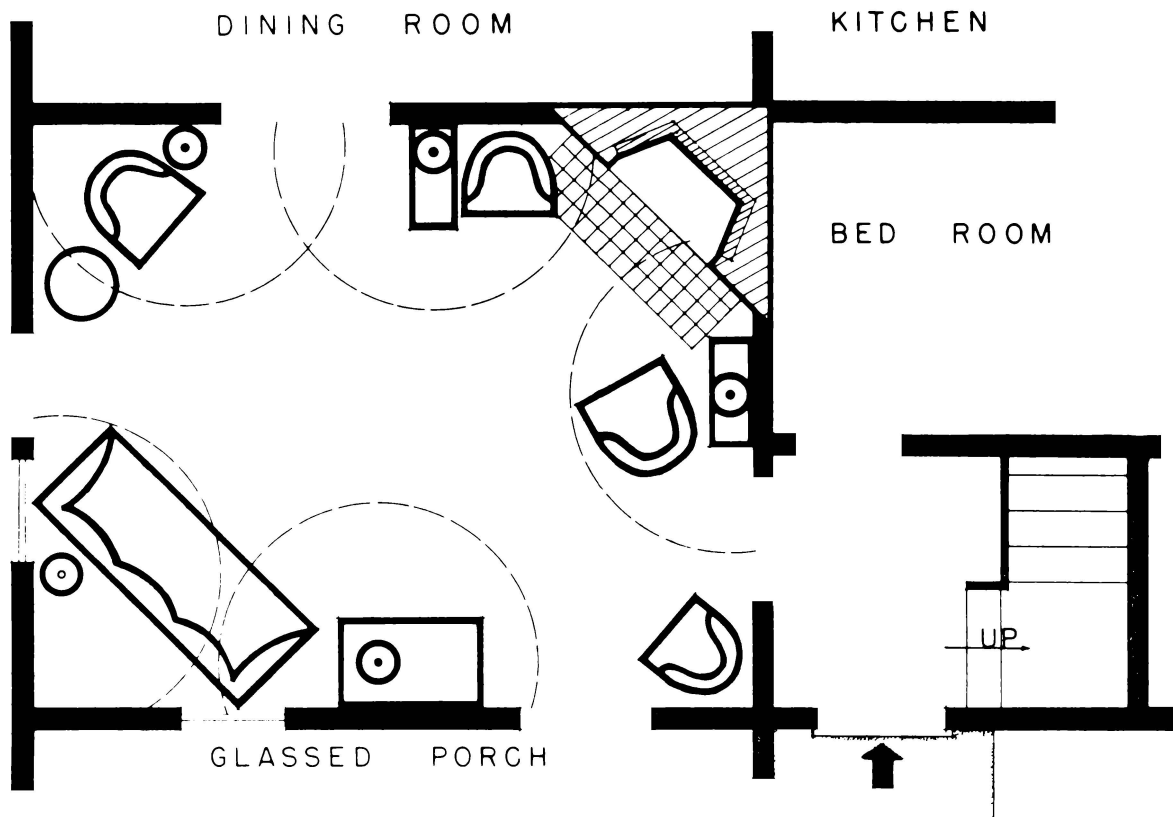
No piece of furniture now blocks the flow of heat from the warm-air register.

The table, placed with one end toward the double windows, does not slow up the flow of air into the cold-air returns. The lamp on this table serves both chairs well.

The lamp behind the davenport provides light over the entire piece. A new outlet was needed for this lamp. Connecting it to an outlet in either wall would be dangerous, as the cord would cross one of the traffic lanes. A recessed floor outlet just behind the davenport was recommended. The top of this type of outlet is flush with the floor surface.

Through doorways cut from the stair hall into the front bedroom and into the bathroom hall, traffic can go from that bedroom, the living room, and the stairway to the bathroom without going through the living room, kitchen, and rear bedroom. Closing the doorway between the front bedroom and the living room gives more wall space in both the living room and bedroom.

The radio is left in its first position, so that it can be heard in both the living room and kitchen.



On the opposite page is shown the floor plan of the living room in a home which houses a family of 4. They have frequent guests. It is heated with a hot-water heating system and has a satisfactory number of electric outlets in the living room.

ORIGINAL ARRANGEMENT

The living room was small, with a corner fireplace. Traffic from the front door into the living room and through to the dining room was awkward because of the chairs by the living room doorway.

Space was lost by placing the davenport diagonally. This made the room seem smaller, and cleaning was difficult.

The chair in the corner of the room prevented the full swing of the door between the living room and the glassed in porch, which was used often during the summer.

REARRANGEMENT

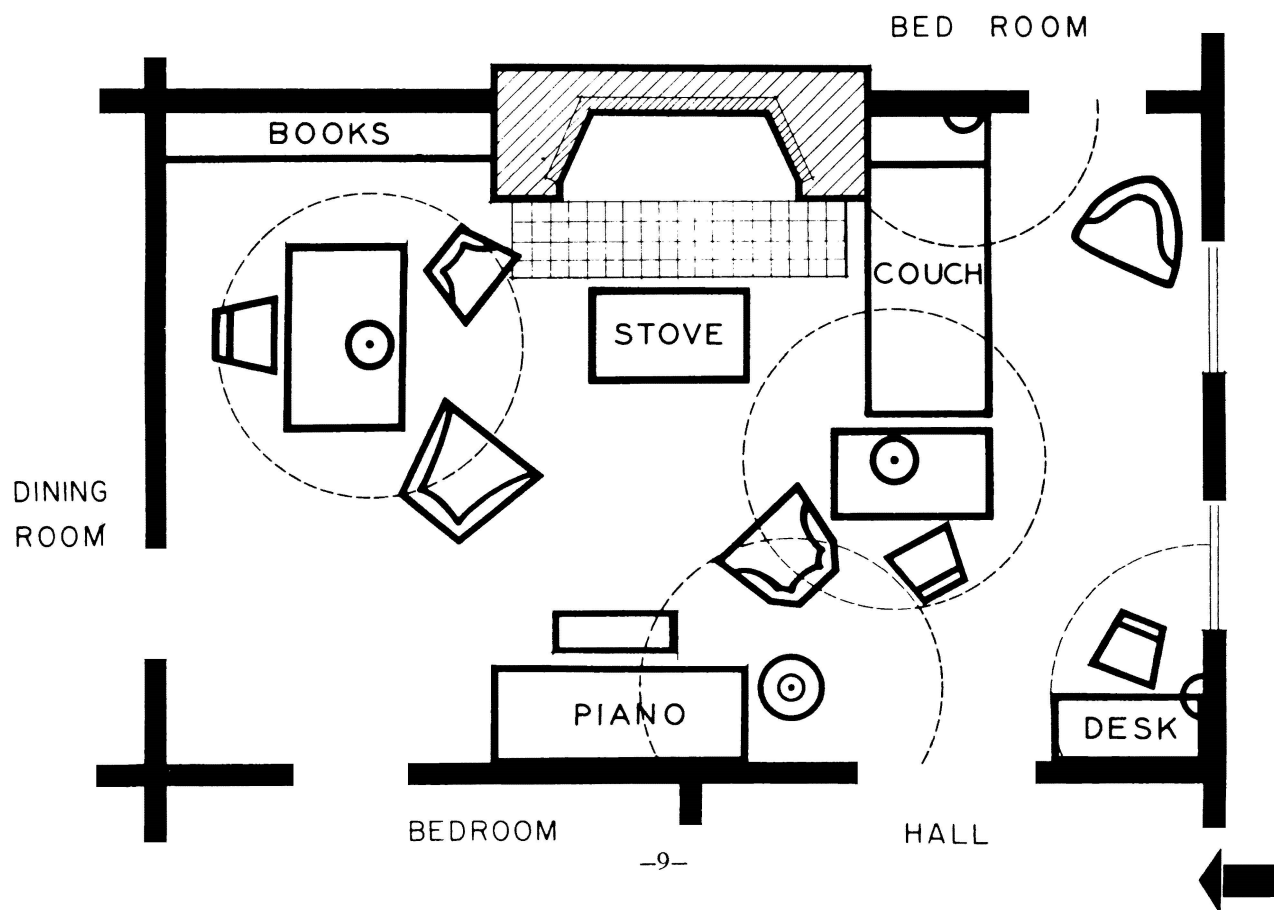
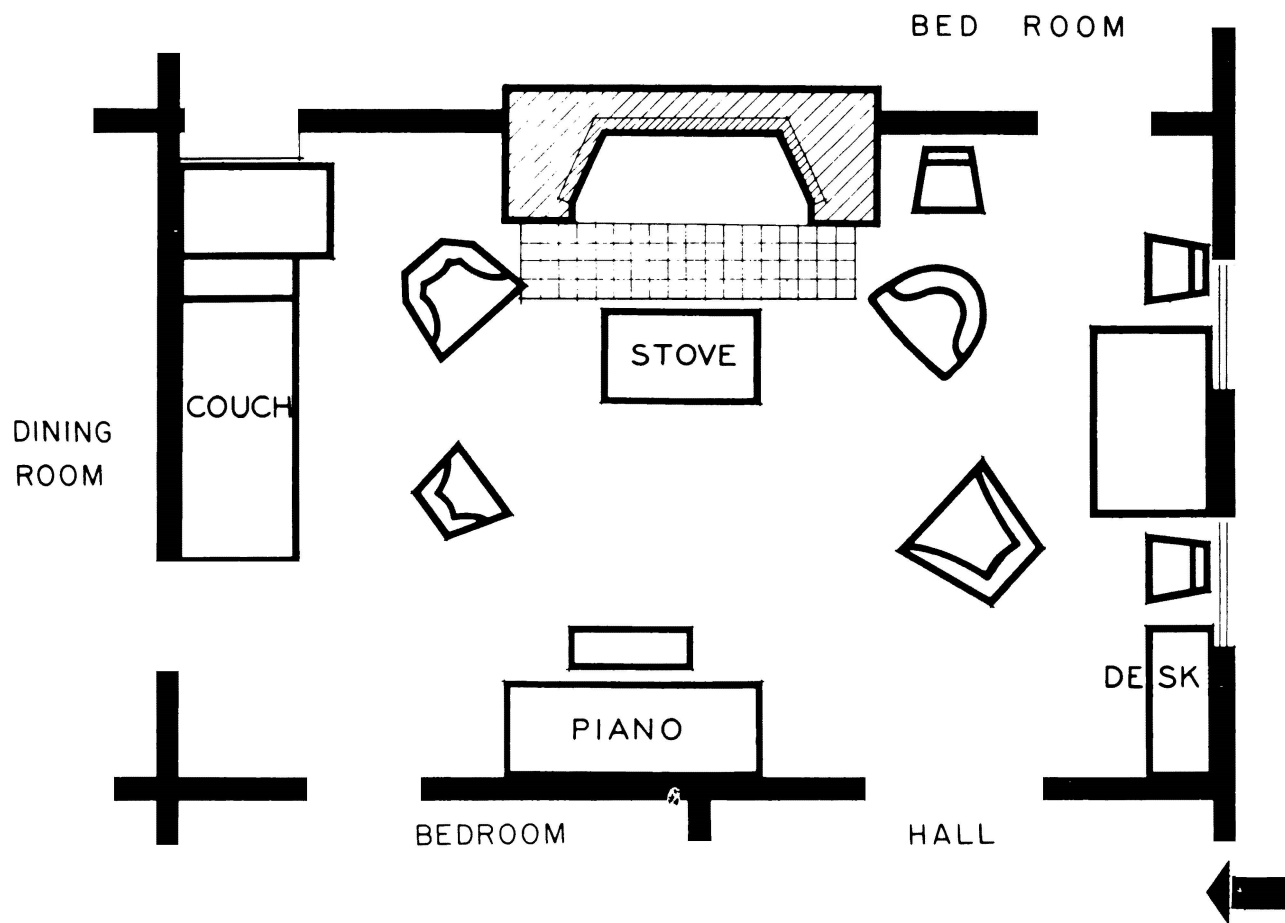
The traffic lane into the living room is widened by using a smaller chair and moving it closer to the fireplace. A bridge lamp is placed behind it, eliminating the table.

A round table is put in place of the rectangular one by the chair at the left of the fireplace. Absence of sharp corners reduces accident hazards.

Space for writing or studying is provided by turning the table end-to-the-wall. Good artificial light reaches both the table and the chair beside it. The door to the porch may now be swung back against the wall without having to move a chair.

The davenport is placed against the outside wall. The small tables and their lamps, originally used near the fireplace, are placed at the ends of the davenport. In this location good light, both during the day and at night, reaches the davenport.

No new outlets were needed. One pin-up lamp was needed.



This is the home of a family consisting of father, mother, and 3 daughters, aged 13,16, and 18. Each girl has to have a place of her own to study. The living room is heated by a fireplace in the early fall and late spring, and a stove in the winter.

The house was not wired for electricity. Therefore, before wiring, the family studied their needs carefully to be sure outlets would be placed where needed.

ORIGINAL ARRANGEMENT

A couch was placed along an inside wall, with a table at the end for a kerosene lamp. It was too far from the fireplace and the stove for comfort.

The door at the left of the fireplace was not used.

One traffic lane from the front hall to the bedroom was partly blocked by the chair and the large table.

REARRANGEMENT

The stove and the piano are left in their original places. The unused doorway is closed and bookshelves are built along the wall.

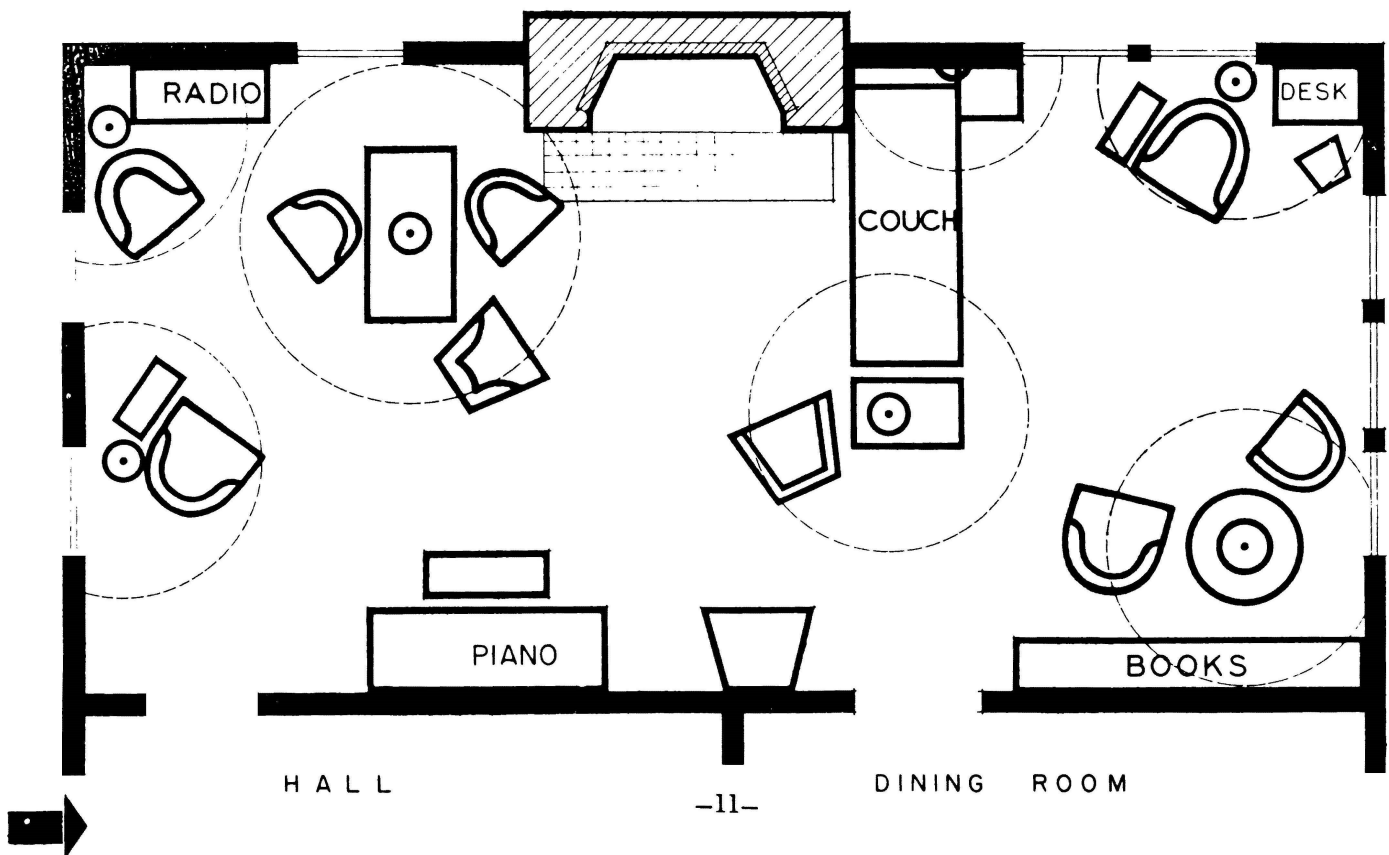
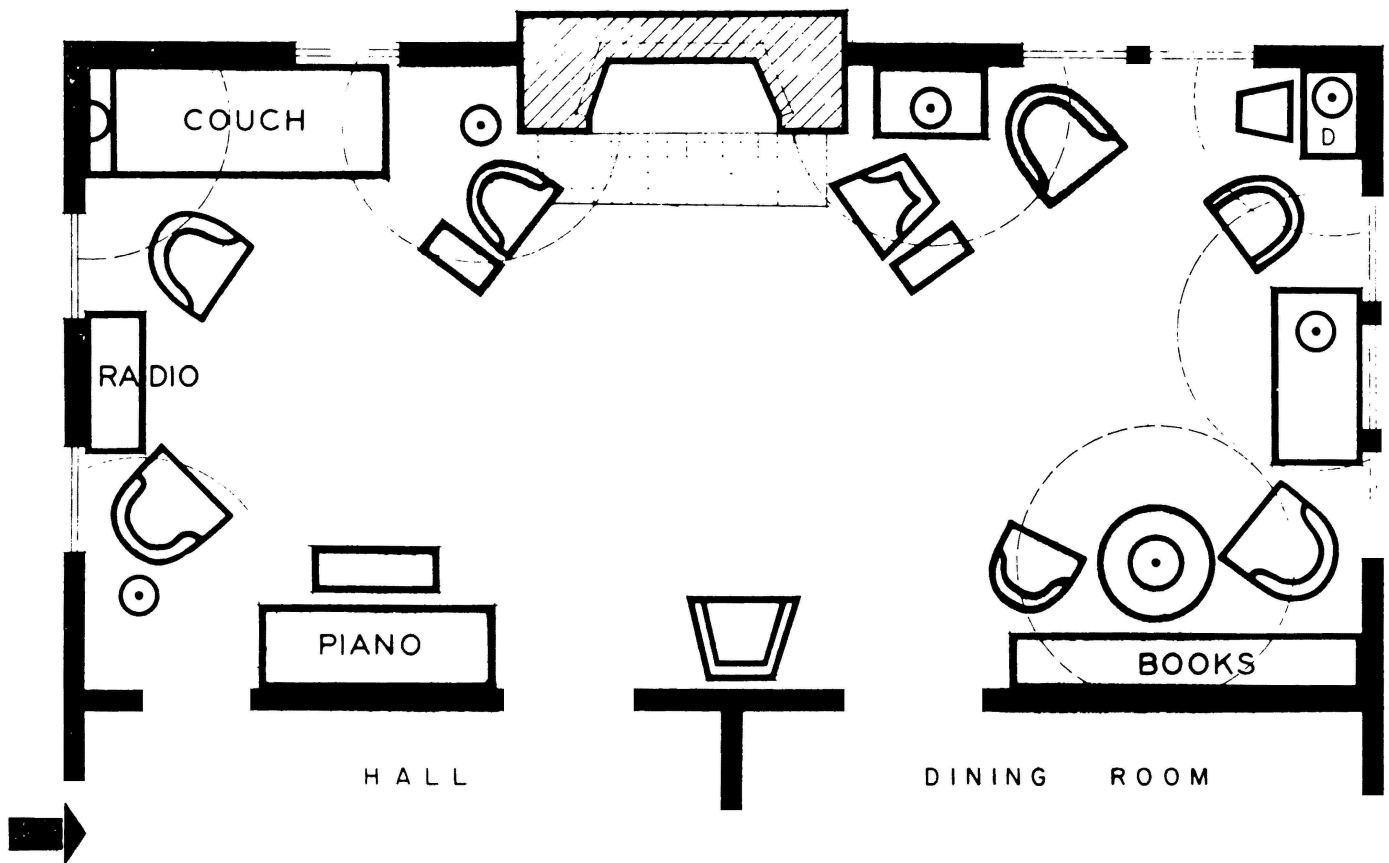
A large table in front of the bookshelves and nearer the fireplace and stove affords a good place for study. A good lamp gives plenty of light for the table and the two chairs in front of it.

The couch is brought closer to the heat by placing it at the right of the fireplace. A pin-up lamp at one end, and a table and lamp at the other give good light for reading and study.

A desk in the corner against the hall wall provides natural light for daytime use and a pin-up lamp gives good light at night.

A floor lamp at one end lights the piano.

Four outlets serve one floor lamp, two table lamps, and two pin-up lamps.



This is a home for a father, mother, and 4 children of 4-H Club age.

The family is active in the community, and their home serves as the social center for many activities. Friends of the parents and children are frequent visitors.

The house is heated by a hot-water system; present wiring serves their needs. There is a fireplace which is used constantly during the fall and winter.

The children do not study in the living room.

ORIGINAL ARRANGEMENT

This arrangement of furniture made the room look bare and stiff, and the family wanted it rearranged for greater enjoyment of the fireplace. They also wanted an arrangement that would make the room more comfortable and inviting for a number of guests of different ages.

Clear space around the piano was needed for a small orchestra. The triple windows at the end of the living room overlooked the flower garden, but the large table front of them prevented full enjoyment of the view.

There was a good library and all the family made use of it.

REARRANGEMENT

By re-grouping the furniture as shown, more persons can sit around the fireplace. Good light falls on every chair and both ends of the couch.

The large table, with its lamp, is moved to the left of the fireplace. The lamp serves 3, of whom 2 become part of the fireplace group. The third one becomes part of the smaller group at the end of the room near the radio.

The view of the garden is a center of daytime interest and it can be seen from most of the chairs.

Both daytime and evening lighting have been improved for the desk and bookcase areas.

One doorway between the living room and hall is closed. The piano is then moved over to give more space around it for the orchestra practice. This move gives more space for the traffic lanes.

Re-grouping creates an atmosphere of friendliness and comfort which typifies the family's attitude toward each other, their neighbors, and friends.

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