

Calculating Living Area

**Chambre
immobilière
du Grand Montréal**



**Greater Montréal
Real Estate
Board**

Calculating living area

These guidelines have been published by the MLS Division specifically for use by its members. It provides recommended means for calculating the living area of residential buildings, commercial property and condominiums.

Uniform and regular application of these guidelines will permit improved understanding on this important aspect of real estate transactions, for the benefit of real estate practitioners, their clients and prospects.

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Basis of living area measurement

Reviewing and comparing the various methods used for identifying and expressing the living area of residential buildings, and the varying discrepancies, the premise of these guidelines is that the living area of all residential buildings is the total floor area of the building situated above grade. In the case of bi-level, split-level and other multi-level buildings, the living area is the sum of the gross area of each floor included within the structure, situated above grade.

Living area includes the square area of all utility rooms, storage areas and cupboards, located on the same level(s) as the main living area(s).

It is recommended that the following should not be considered or included as being part of the living area of residential buildings:

Porches, decks, patios: closed-in, screened-in, or not, garages, carports, recreation or cold rooms in basement, or other areas situated below grade which do not have (at least) crawl space below.

The above areas situated below grade, should be shown separately on the listing under property description.

Basic practice for measuring living area

Measurements are taken from the outside surface of the exterior walls for detached houses; row houses are measured from the centre line of the party walls and the outside surface of exterior walls; semi-detached and end units of row housing are measured from the outside surface of exterior walls and the centre line of party walls.

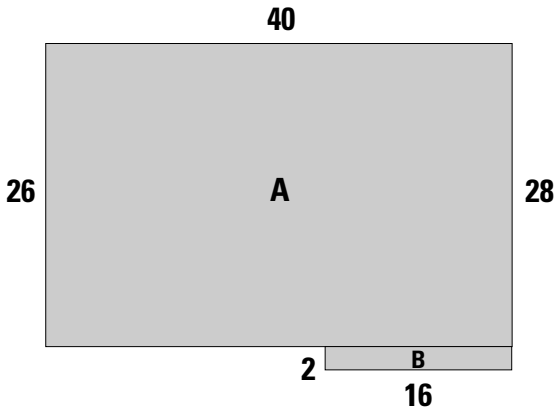
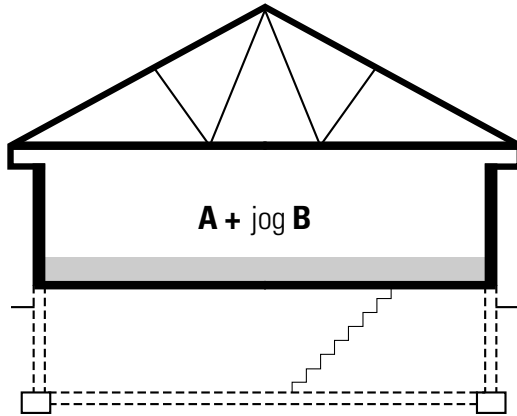
Prior to taking any measurements of the structure, first prepare a rough outline sketch or layout of the perimeter of the building. Indicating all dimensions on this sketch will serve as a check when comparing the front width dimension to the rear width and similarly, when comparing the two length dimensions.

Establish all measurements from the outside of the building, utilizing a measuring tape with a hook at the zero end. If this is impossible because of obstructions such as trees, bushes or utilities, measure on the inside of the building, adjusting the figures to allow for the thickness of exterior walls.

This will, of course, be necessary in the case of establishing dimensions for the second floor of a storey-and-a-half dwelling; cantilevered, multi-level buildings; dormers, bays, and other projections incorporated into the design of many residential buildings.

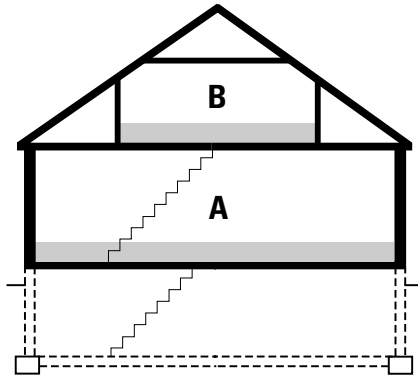
The following instructions and illustrations will show by example, the correct manner to calculate and express the living area of many of the more common house designs.

Example 1
One storey



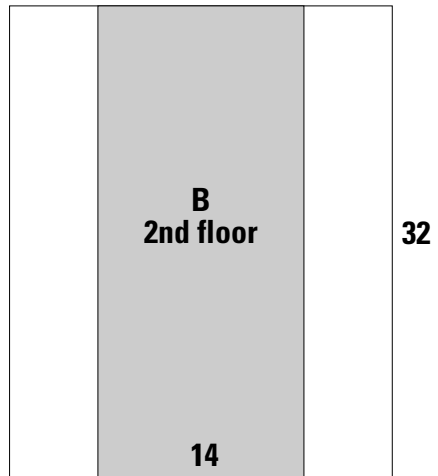
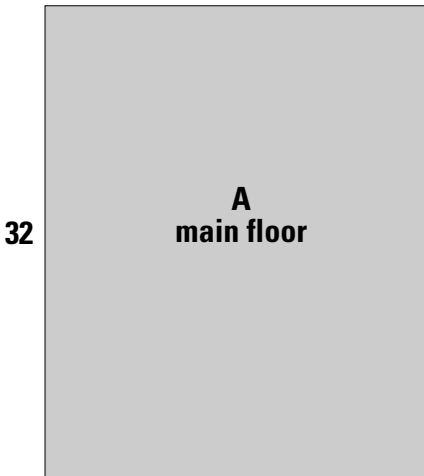
A main floor	$40 \times 26 =$	1 040 sf
B main floor	$16 \times 2 =$	32 sf
Living area		1 072 sf

Example 2
**One and a half storey
 without dormers**



26

26



A main floor

$$26 \times 32 =$$

832 sf

B 2nd floor

$$14 \times 32 =$$

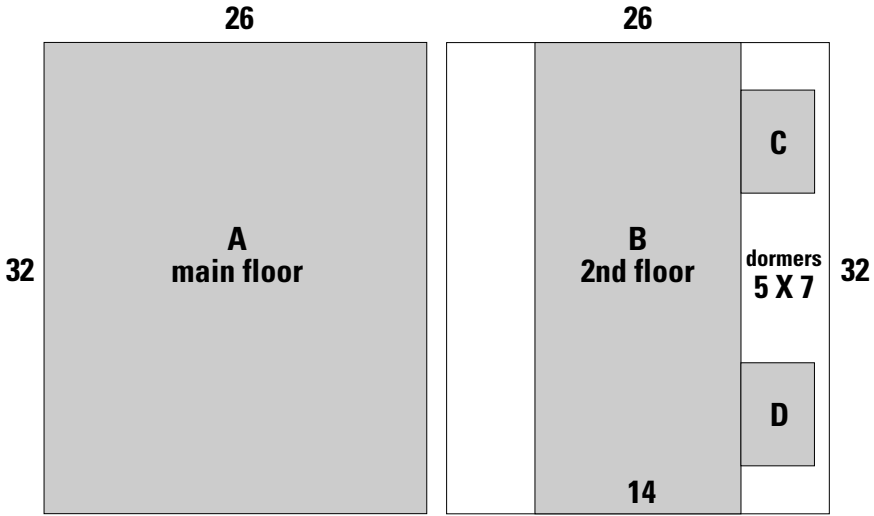
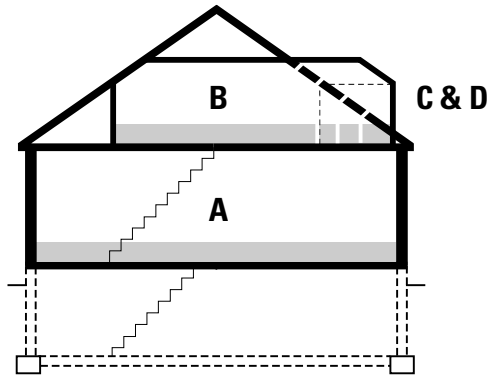
448 sf

Living area

1 280 sf

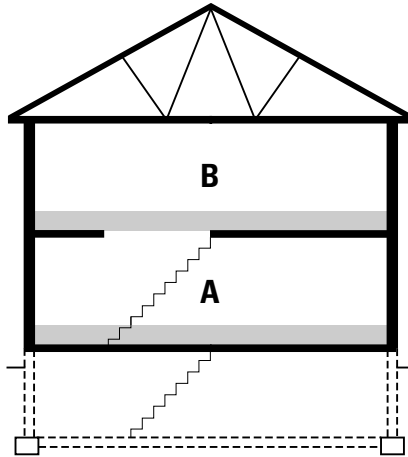
Note: The length of the 2nd floor area will usually be the same as the length of the main floor, but the width between vertical interior walls of the 2nd floor can only be obtained by measurement.

Example 3
**One and a half storey
 with dormers**



A main floor	$26 \times 32 =$	832 sf
B 2nd floor	$14 \times 32 =$	448 sf
C & D 2nd floor	$2 (5 \times 7) =$	70 sf
Living area		1 350 sf

Example 4
Basic two storey



28



A & B

main & 2nd floors

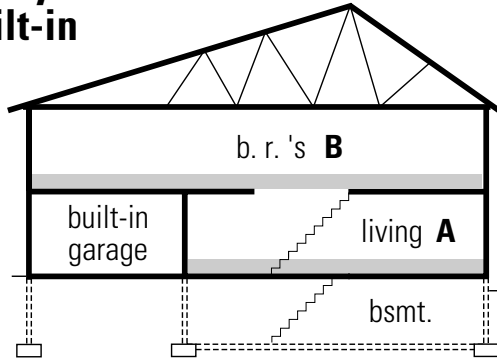
$$2 (28 \times 28) =$$

1 568 sf

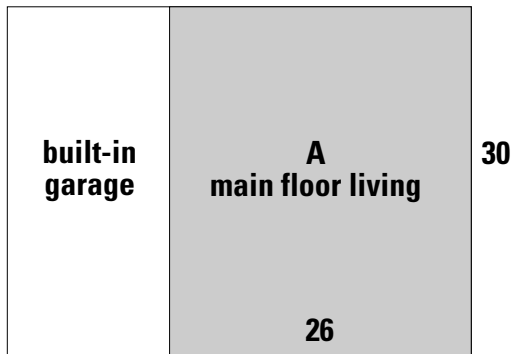
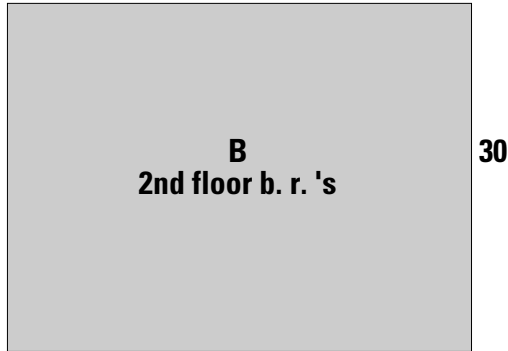
Living area

1 568 sf

Example 5
**Two storey
 with built-in
 garage**



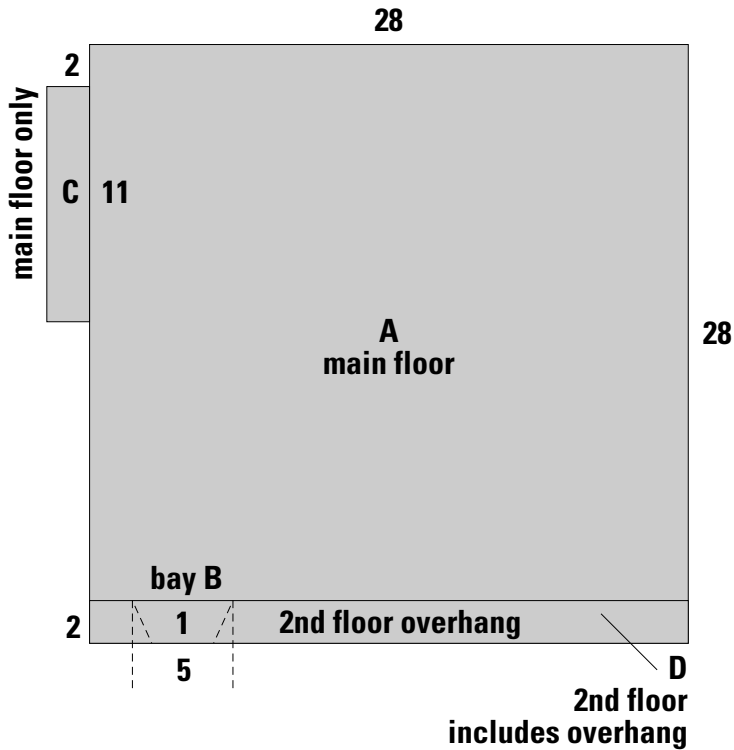
40



A main floor without garage	26 x 30 =	780 sf
B 2nd floor	40 x 30 =	1 200 sf
		<hr/>
Living area		1 980 sf

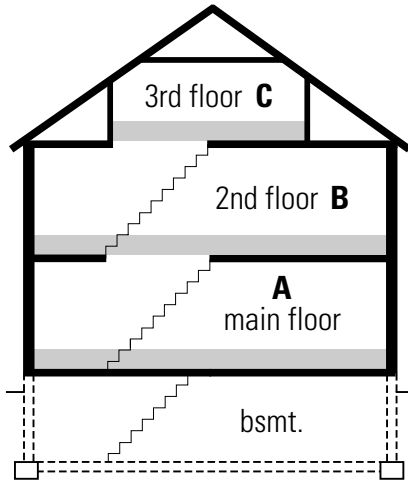
Example 6

**Two storey
with bay window,
2nd floor overhang
and side addition
on main floor**



A main floor	$28 \times 28 =$	784 sf
B bay	$5 \times 1 =$	5 sf
C addition	$2 \times 11 =$	22 sf
D 2nd floor	$28 \times 30 =$	840 sf
Living area		1 651 sf

Example 7
Two and a half storey



24

24

24

**A & B
 1st & 2nd
 floors**

**C
 3rd floor**

13

A & B 1st & 2nd floors

$$2 (24 \times 24) =$$

1 152 sf

C 3rd floor

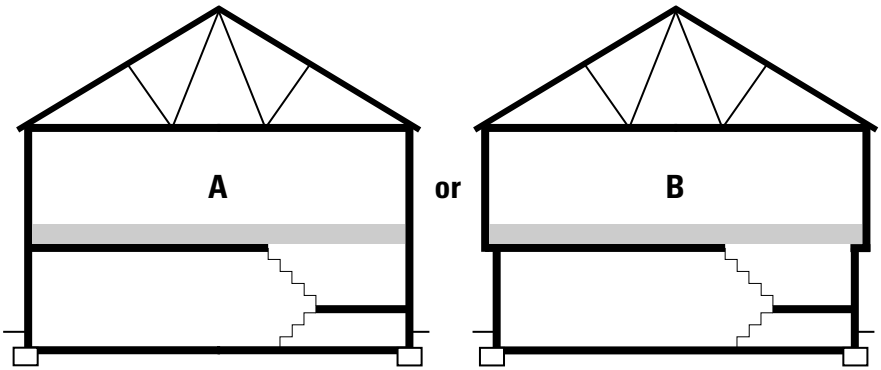
$$13 \times 24 =$$

312 sf

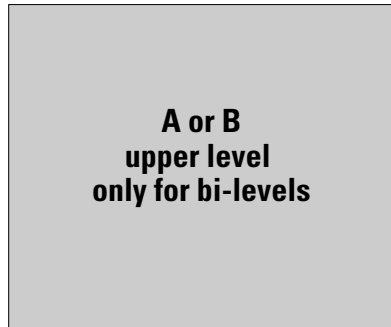
Living area

1 464 sf

Example 8
One storey
(bi-levels)



36



30

A or B upper level

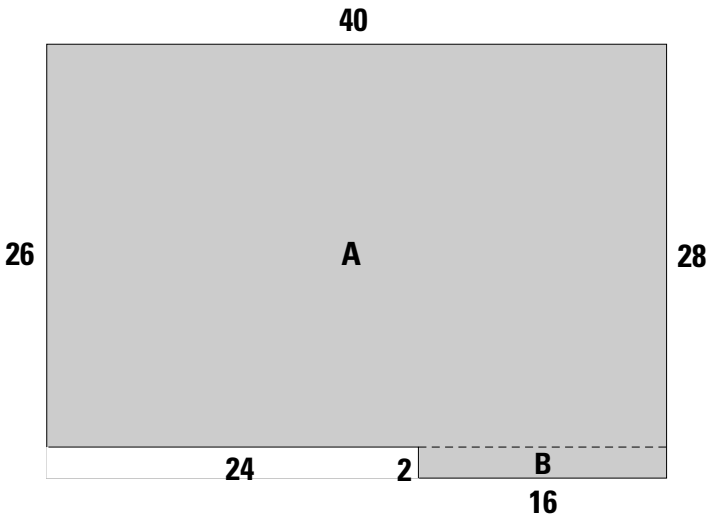
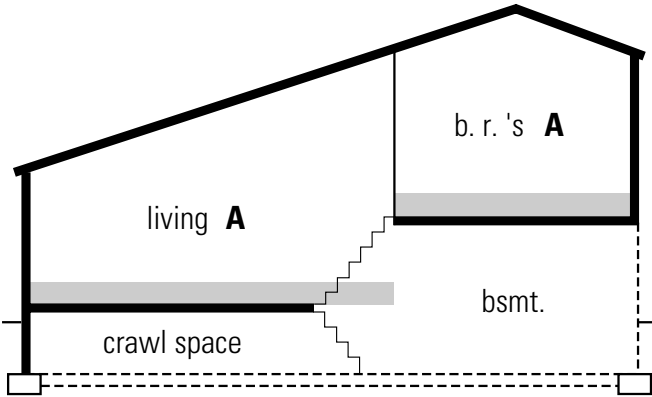
$36 \times 30 =$

1 080 sf

Living area

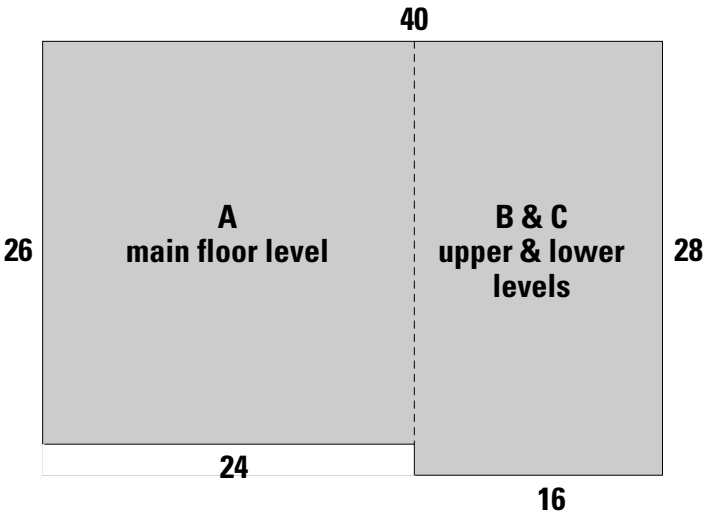
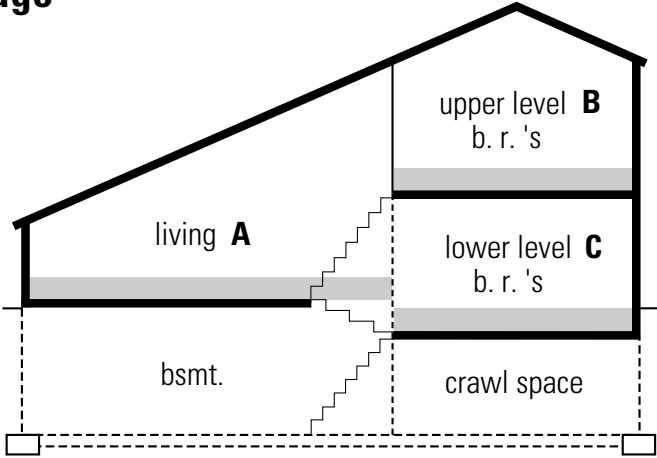
1 080 sf

Example 9
Split level



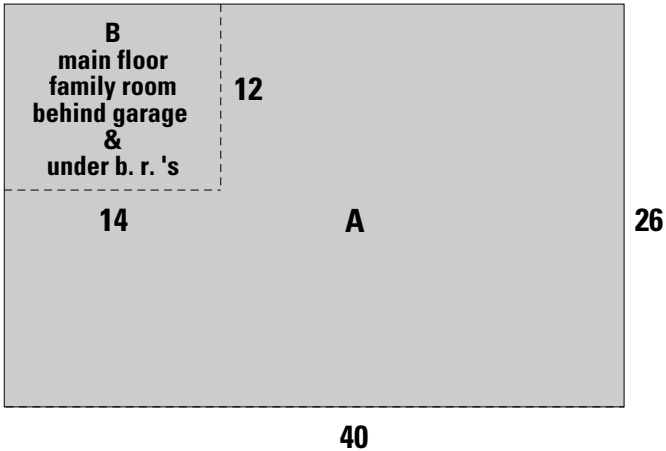
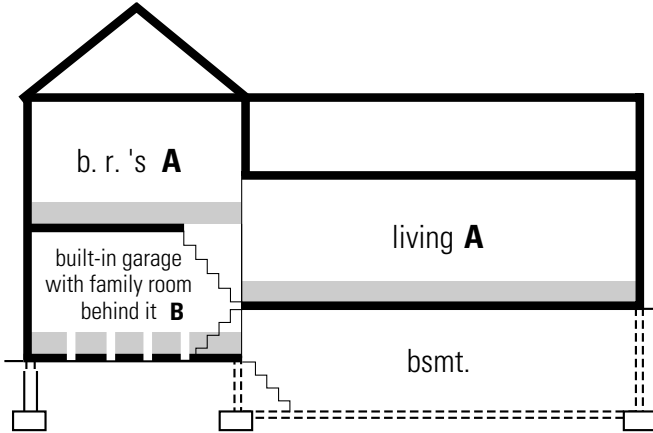
A main & upper	$40 \times 26 =$	1 040 sf
B upper overhang	$16 \times 2 =$	32 sf
Living area		1 072 sf

Example 10
**Three level split
 without built-in
 garage**



A main floor	$24 \times 26 =$	624 sf
B & C	$2 (16 \times 28) =$	896 sf
Living area		1 520 sf

Example 11
**Three level split
 with built-in
 garage**



A main & b. r. 's	40 x 26 =	1 040 sf
B fam. rm.	14 x 12 =	168 sf
Living area		1 208 sf

Floor measurement of commercial properties

Uniformity and consistency in carrying out floor measurements becomes increasingly more important with the advent of computerization within the real estate industry. The "Standard Method of Floor Measurement for Office Buildings" used by the *Building Owner & Managers Association* and the *Society of Industrial Realtors*, is recommended by the Greater Montreal Real Estate Board - MLS Division. Area measurement in office buildings is based in all cases upon typical floor plans.

■ Rentable area-multiple tenancy floor, whether above or below grade-should be the sum of all rentable areas on that floor. The rentable area of an office on a multiple tenancy floor should be computed by measuring to the inside finish of permanent outer building walls, or to the glass line if at least 50% of the outer building wall is glass, to the office side of corridors and/or other permanent partitions, and to the centre of partitions that separate the premises from adjoining rentable areas. No deductions shall be made for columns and projections necessary to the building.

■ Rentable area of a single tenancy floor, whether above or below grade, should be computed by measuring to the inside finish of permanent outer building walls, or from the glass line where at least 50% of the outer building wall is glass. Rentable area shall include all area within outside walls, less stairs, elevator shaft, flues, pipe shafts, vertical ducts, air-conditioning rooms, fan rooms, janitor closets, electrical closets-and such other rooms not actually available to the tenant for his furnishings and personnel-and their enclosing walls. Toilet rooms within and exclusively serving only that floor shall be included in rentable area. No deductions shall be made for columns and projections necessary to the building.

■ To determine the number of square feet in a ground floor rentable store area, measure from the building line in the case of street frontages and from the inner surface of corridor and other permanent partitions and to the centre of partitions that separate the premises from adjoining rentable areas. No deduction should be made for vestibules inside the building line or for columns or projections necessary to the building. No addition should be made for bay windows extending outside the building line.

■ In addition to the foregoing, it is also recommended that in the case of industrial and warehouse buildings, the method of measurement now in practice be followed. Namely, that free-standing buildings with parking, loading and some useable storage area around the building be measured on an "out to out" basis whereby the outside perimeter wall is used to calculate the gross rentable area. In Multi-tenancy buildings, the floor space is calculated from the outside wall to the centre of the party wall.