

Making Sense Out of Real Estate Lingo

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As with all industries, real estate professionals have developed a lingo and acronyms to help them communicate with each other more easily. For the first-time homebuyer (and even some veterans), making sense of property listings can sometimes leave you feeling like you're deciphering the DaVinci Code.

Let's take a look at a sample real estate listing:

2,500 sf on a c-d-s, 2BR, 2.5BA, CA, spac grt rm w/ wbf, grmet kit, det gar

Looks a lot like alphabet soup. However, using this type of abbreviated property description saves valuable advertising space. Some abbreviations you'll probably encounter are:

- AC or A/C: air conditioning
- BA: bathroom
- BR: bedroom
- CA: central air
- C-D-S: cul de sac
- DET: detached
- DK: deck
- EIK: eat-in kitchen
- F/FIN BSMT: finished basement
- FDR: formal dining room
- FP, frplc: fireplace
- GAR: garage
- GRMT KIT: gourmet kitchen
- GRT RM: great room
- HDW, HWF, Hdwd: hardwood floors
- HOA: home owners association
- LR: living room
- KIT: kitchen
- OFC: office
- PVT: private
- SF: square feet
- SPAC: spacious
- VW, VU: view
- WBFP: wood-burning fireplace

In addition to the abbreviations in property listings, here are a few other common terms you should become familiar with.

FSBO—For Sale By Owner. This term refers to a property which the homeowner is trying to sell independent of a real estate professional.

MLS—Multiple Listing Service. MLSs are comprised of a group of real estate brokers who have agreed to share their property listings. This listing is then provided to the group through a database or directory. If you are buying your home, this is the service that your sales professional will use to search for potential homes for you to purchase. If you are selling your property, your real estate professional can list your home through the MLS. For-Sale-By-Owner (FSBO) properties are typically not listed through the MLS.

CMA—Comparative Marketing Analysis. This analysis is an informal assessment of a property's market value. This is one of the tools your real estate professional can use to help you determine a reasonable listing price. Usually, the CMA compares your property with similar properties that have sold in your area within a certain time frame. Besides purchase price, some of the information typically listed is the number of bedrooms and baths, approximate square footage, size of major rooms, amenities such as fireplaces and pools, age of the home, and property taxes.

During the real estate process, you'll more than likely come across more acronyms and lingo. Make sure you ask your real estate professional to explain any terms you are unfamiliar with so that you are not in for any surprises.

By the way, the listing above was a 2,500 square-foot home on a cul-de-sac, with two bedrooms and two and a half baths, central air, a spacious great room with a wood-burning fireplace, and a gourmet kitchen and detached garage.

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