

Revitalized neighbourhoods or ghost towns?

1. Look at the word in the box and think about what it means to you. Consider whether its meaning has changed in your lifetime.

community

2. Discuss the questions.

- Is 'community' the same as 'neighbourhood'? If not, what's the difference?
- How would you describe the atmosphere of your city or neighbourhood? Is it hectic, peaceful, vibrant, welcoming, tight-knit? Has it changed over time?
- What are three things people in your neighbourhood often complain about?

3. You're going to watch a video about a protest. Read the information in the box and decide what the protest was about.

In September 2015, a group of protestors attacked an east London store for selling a bowl of cereal for around \$5–7. The fight, however, represented a **much bigger problem**.

4. Watch the first part of the [video](https://youtu.be/fsf2fq-jvY8) [https://youtu.be/fsf2fq-jvY8] (to 01:00) and check your idea.

Possible answer: The group attacked the store because they felt it symbolised the issue of gentrification in London and other big cities. People who protest against gentrification aren't 100% opposed to the idea of urban renewal. They have a problem with higher rents and housing prices that force established working-class communities to move.

5. Watch the second part of the [video](#) (from 01:01) and say what is mentioned about the points below.

- A. foreign investment Foreign investors are more likely to buy properties in gentrified cities like London, as urban renewal has made the area more desirable. [01:10]
- B. ghost towns Ghost towns (neighbourhoods full of empty houses) are an extreme manifestation of urban renewal. [01:38]
- C. loss of community Urban renewal can make a place more attractive, but it doesn't necessarily make it desirable to live in, and a community won't form there. [01:55]

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6. Discuss the questions.

- Had you heard the term 'gentrification' before the video? What was the context?
- Can you talk about somewhere that is affected by this problem? Give details about what's happening, and about how this might look in the future.
- To what extent are newcomers and residents responsible for the consequences of gentrification?
- How does someone know if their neighbourhood has been gentrified?
- Look at some common signs of gentrification. Have you noticed any of these where you live?
 - changes to houses, e.g. more security cameras
 - increase in private transport, e.g. Uber/Lyft
 - upmarket cultural establishments, e.g. speciality shops
 - trendy décor in bars and restaurants, e.g. exposed brick



7. Look at some opinions about gentrification and choose the correct word or phrase.

- A. By increasing rents and losing loyal tenants, we risk losing the **motivation/essence** of a community.
- B. **Displacing/Protecting** existing residents to welcome wealthy investors will only create a bunch of ghost towns.
- C. Urban renewal isn't all bad because it **ignores/revitalizes** urban areas.
- D. Urban **sprawl/creation** is one of the most worrying aspects of gentrification.
- E. Higher consumer prices are necessary to generate income for investment in **uneconomical/up-and-coming** neighbourhoods.
- F. Established **working-class communities/urban professionals** are the biggest target of gentrification.
- G. Another problem of gentrification is that it leads to a cultural **divide/diversity**.

To make sure students understand the vocabulary, ask them to do the following task:

In the sentences, find the phrase which...

- T**
- A. describes the movement of development towards the outskirts of a city. (urban sprawl)
 - B. describes the heart, soul or character of where you live. (essence of a community)
 - C. describes a conflict of ideas about lifestyle and society. (cultural divide)

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- D. means to get rid of people currently living somewhere. (displace existing residents)
- E. describes an area that is about to become successful or popular. (up-and-coming neighbourhood)
- F. means to make a city more attractive. (revitalize urban areas)
- G. describes groups of people employed in manual labour who have been in an area for a long time. (established working-class communities)

8. Choose any four statements in ex. 7 and explain whether you agree or disagree.

9. Look at some solutions to tackle the problems of gentrification. Consider how useful they could be, thinking of specific examples and potential challenges.

introducing property fees and taxes

launching community-led development strategies

providing support for tenants

restricting investment in Airbnb and holiday homes

providing support for local businesses

investing in transport networks

10. Finish the statements about tourism with your own ideas.

- Some tourists avoid the popular, revitalized areas because...
- Tourists rarely notice the cultural divide of a city due to...
- In old cities, a lot of historical and cultural activities are often displaced by...
- Urban sprawl can really affect a touristic experience because...
- The best way to experience the true essence of a new place is to...
- It's becoming more difficult to find authentic established communities when travelling because...

This worksheet includes an additional task that you can use as homework or revision. It's only available in the teacher's version of the worksheet. Print it and hand it out to your students.

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Imagine you live in a neighbourhood of a big city like London or New York. Look at the situations and choose three to write short social media posts about. Use the vocabulary in the box.

EXAMPLE: You notice the streets of your city have become quiet and the houses look empty.
This is what happens when every apartment is turned into a fancy Airbnb! 9 p.m. on a Friday night and nobody's around! It's like living in a ghost town. Have we completely lost the essence of our community? #DownWithGentrification

- A. You notice that many abandoned buildings have been developed into new businesses, such as bars and restaurants.
- B. Your landlord has just notified you that your rent will be going up again this year (this is the third year in a row).
- C. You notice that a lot of the run-down and dangerous areas seem to have disappeared in your neighbourhood.
- D. You have to move to a development outside the city in order to be able to afford the rent.
- E. You've noticed prices rising in your favourite bars and restaurants.
- F. You observe that your city seems to be becoming culturally and demographically more diverse.

cultural divide
displace existing residents
essence of a community
established working-class communities
revitalize urban areas
up-and-coming neighbourhoods
urban sprawl