

EXPLORE 2. Expensive London

TB → p. 67

Je reprendrai en HD les extraits dans les natifs quand je les aurai retrouvés sur Gaïa. (p. 67 du manuel)

I will never be able to afford to live where I grew up

I will never be able to afford to live where I grew up. It's true that I don't know what the future will bring, but given the state of the British economy, I doubt that I'm going to become a millionaire anytime soon. And thanks to the rocketing¹ cost of housing in the corner of London that I call home, I would need to be a millionaire to carry on living here. [...]

Southwark, the south London borough where I have spent my entire life, is in the grip of a particularly cruel crisis of affordable housing. We have a council housing² waiting list of 16,500 and council housing stock decreased by 18,000 between 1994 and 2020. Despite this, Southwark council has been engaged for many years in two controversial "regeneration" projects: knocking down one of western Europe's largest housing estates, the Aylesbury, as well as the Heygate estate in Elephant and Castle, to make room for mainly privately owned flats. This is not regeneration. It is gentrification. [...]

I am an elected representative in the Southwark Youth Parliament; I care deeply about my community and I love many things about Southwark, not least its incredible diversity. But Southwark council's decision to demolish the homes of largely working-class, often minority-ethnic, residents and replace them with sanitised apartment blocks where a flat can cost more than £1m, all while having the audacity to claim that it is creating the new "life and soul of London"—as one billboard³ puts it—is not only harming said community, but erasing it.

Elsie McDowall (17-year-old student, Winner of the 2023 Hugo Young Award), theguardianfoundation.org, 2023



▲ The Shard building in the Southwark borough, London

CULTURE SPOT

London is made up of thirty-two boroughs, each with its own local government. They vary in size, culture, and character. Some, like Westminster, are known for landmarks, while others, like Hackney, are famous for creativity and diversity.

¹ rising ² logement social ³ panneau publicitaire

WAY 1

1. Look at the photograph and read the title and the source. Guess what the document might be about. Tick and justify your choice(s) [several possible answers].

- This text might be: a personal story an advert
- The text might deal with: moving to another country. housing problems in London.

2. Read the document and pick out the transparent words. Sum up the general idea in two sentences maximum.

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3. Focus on key words and write them down in the following chart.

The problem	The causes	The consequences
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4. Read again and focus on Elsie's tone. Tick at least two adjectives to describe it.

angry hopeful sad critical proud neutral

5. Recap the main ideas of the document. You can use the following words:

housing crisis • expensive • regeneration / gentrification • community • diversity

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WAY 2 

1. Look at the photograph, the title and the source. Pay attention to the author and say what the text might be about.

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2. Read the document. Pay attention to the words she uses and identify the main topic of the text.

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3. a. Focus on the introduction of the document and circle the nouns used by the author.

student → pay → future → millionaire → cost
 housing → LONDON → streets

Je n'ai pas bien compris ce qu'il fallait faire exactement

b. Explain the context of the event.

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4. Focus on the author's language and ideas. Explain why she criticises the regeneration projects.

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5. Sum up what you understood insisting on the idea that regeneration projects can erase local communities.

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