

Daily English Vocabulary - Lesson 4: Home and House

Level: B1 | Everyday English | Student Worksheet

Vocabulary

Housing market and property

mortgage (noun)	A loan taken out to buy a property, repaid over many years with interest.	<i>"They took out a twenty-five-year mortgage to buy their first home."</i>
equity (noun)	The portion of a property's value that the owner actually owns, as opposed to what is owed on a mortgage.	<i>"After ten years of repayments, they had built up considerable equity in the house."</i>
surveyor (noun)	A professional who assesses the condition of a building before purchase.	<i>"The surveyor found several structural issues that needed addressing before the sale could proceed."</i>
conveyancing (noun)	The legal process of transferring ownership of a property from one person to another.	<i>"The conveyancing took three months because the chain of buyers and sellers was very long."</i>
gazumping (noun)	The practice of a seller accepting a higher offer from a new buyer after already accepting an offer from someone else.	<i>"They were victims of gazumping and lost thousands on surveys and legal fees."</i>
leasehold (noun/adjective)	A form of property ownership where you own the right to use the property for a fixed number of years, but not the land itself.	<i>"Many flats in England are sold as leasehold rather than freehold."</i>

Living arrangements and community

co-housing (noun)	A type of housing arrangement where residents have private homes but share common spaces and resources.	<i>"Co-housing communities often share a garden, workshop, and communal dining area."</i>
gentrification (noun)	The process by which a previously affordable neighbourhood becomes expensive as wealthier residents move in.	<i>"Gentrification has transformed the area — it was a working-class neighbourhood a decade ago."</i>
tenure (noun)	The conditions under which a property is occupied, such as renting or owning.	<i>"Secure tenure means tenants cannot be evicted without good reason."</i>
downsizing (noun/verb)	Moving to a smaller home, typically after children have left or to reduce costs.	<i>"They are considering downsizing now that their children have grown up and left."</i>
communal (adjective)	Shared by all members of a group or community.	<i>"The building has a communal roof terrace that all residents can use."</i>

affordable housing (noun phrase)	Housing that is priced or subsidised so that lower-income households can afford it.	<i>"The council has committed to building more affordable housing in the borough."</i>
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Describing and improving a home

dilapidated (adjective)	In a state of serious disrepair; decayed and neglected.	<i>"The house was completely dilapidated when they bought it but now it is beautiful."</i>
open-plan (adjective)	Describing a space where rooms flow into each other without dividing walls.	<i>"They knocked down the wall between the kitchen and living room to create an open-plan space."</i>
insulation (noun)	Material used in a building to prevent heat from escaping.	<i>"Poor insulation is one of the main reasons old houses are so expensive to heat."</i>
retrofit (verb/noun)	To add new technology or features to an existing building not part of the original design.	<i>"They decided to retrofit solar panels on the roof to reduce their energy bills."</i>
kerb appeal (noun phrase)	The attractiveness of a property as seen from the street, influencing a buyer's first impression.	<i>"A fresh coat of paint and new front door improved the kerb appeal significantly."</i>
stamp duty (noun phrase)	A tax paid by the buyer when purchasing a property above a certain value.	<i>"The stamp duty on the house added an extra twelve thousand pounds to the total cost."</i>

Exercise 1: Listening

Listen to the conversation. Then answer the questions. Some questions ask about attitude and implied meaning.

Conversation

Presenter: On today's programme we are looking at the housing crisis. I am joined by Rosa, a housing policy researcher, and Tom, who recently bought his first home after years of trying.

Rosa: The core problem is that we have treated housing primarily as an asset rather than a basic need. When prices rise, homeowners benefit, so there has been little political incentive to bring them down.

Tom: Frankly, demoralising. I was saving for eight years. By the time I had enough for a deposit, prices had risen so much that I still could not afford anywhere decent. The goalposts kept moving.

Rosa: That points to the fundamental issue — we are not building enough homes, particularly affordable housing.

Rosa: Co-housing communities are genuinely promising. Residents share communal spaces while retaining private homes — it reduces costs, reduces isolation, and tends to build very strong local communities.

Tom: The gentrification of my area made my situation worse. As the neighbourhood changed, rental prices went up, making it even harder to save.

Rosa: We need to build significantly more homes at genuinely affordable prices, and reform leasehold so people who think they are buying a home actually own what they have paid for. Gazumping should also be made illegal.

Tom: And the conveyancing process needs to be faster. My purchase took six months from offer to completion — six months during which prices could have risen further and the deal could have fallen through.

Presenter: The housing crisis shows no sign of resolving itself — solutions require both political will and long-term commitment.

Circle the correct answer.

1. According to Rosa, what is the fundamental reason the housing crisis has not been resolved?

a) There are not enough surveyors. b) Housing has been treated as a financial asset rather than a basic need. c) The government has actively tried to keep prices high. d) Leasehold properties are too common.

2. How does Tom describe his experience of trying to buy a home?

a) Exciting but stressful. b) Straightforward once he had saved enough. c) Demoralising, with the goalposts constantly moving. d) Frustrating because of slow conveyancing.

3. What does Rosa say is the core building problem?

a) The planning system does not allow renovation. b) Not enough homes are being built, particularly affordable ones. c) Developers are building in the wrong areas. d) New homes are too small for families.

4. What are the benefits of co-housing communities according to Rosa?

a) They are cheaper to build. b) They reduce costs and isolation and build strong local communities. c) They allow residents to avoid stamp duty. d) They give residents more control over planning.

5. How did gentrification affect Tom?

a) It improved his neighbourhood with no effect on savings. b) It caused rental prices to rise, making it even harder to save. c) It led directly to him being gazumped. d) It meant the area became too dilapidated.

6. What does Tom's comment about conveyancing imply?

a) He found the legal process confusing. b) A faster process would reduce the risk of deals falling through. c) Conveyancing should be removed from the process entirely. d) He was a victim of gazumping during the six-month period.

Exercise 2: Multiple Choice

Circle the correct answer. Options may be close in meaning - read carefully.

1. The building was completely ____ when the developers bought it — the roof had collapsed and the walls were crumbling.

a) open-plan b) leasehold c) communal d) dilapidated

2. They decided to ____ the property with heat pumps and double glazing to make it more energy-efficient.

a) retrofit b) downsize c) survey d) gazump

3. They were victims of ____ — the seller accepted a higher offer from someone else the day before they were due to exchange.

a) conveyancing b) leasehold c) gentrification d) gazumping

4. Now that the children have left home, they are thinking about ____ and moving to a smaller place near the coast.

a) gentrifying b) conveyancing c) downsizing d) retrofitting

5. The rapid ____ of the area has made it unaffordable for many families who have lived there for generations.
a) downsizing b) retrofitting c) gentrification d) conveyancing
6. The house has poor ____, which means it loses heat quickly in winter and is very expensive to keep warm.
a) leasehold b) insulation c) equity d) stamp duty
7. After paying their ____ for fifteen years, they had built up enough ____ in the property to borrow against it.
a) stamp duty / conveyancing b) mortgage / equity c) lease / tenure d) survey / deposit
8. The development includes a hundred units of ____ housing, priced to be accessible to people on lower incomes.
a) open-plan b) leasehold c) communal d) affordable

Exercise 3: Matching

Match each word or phrase (A) to its definition (B). Write the correct number on the line.

A - Word / Phrase	B - Meaning
1. mortgage ____	3. The process by which a neighbourhood becomes wealthier and more expensive as better-off residents move in
2. gazumping ____	6. A housing arrangement where residents have private homes but share communal spaces
3. gentrification ____	4. A form of ownership where you own the right to occupy a property for a fixed term, but not the land
4. leasehold ____	2. A seller accepting a higher offer after already accepting one, leaving the original buyer out of pocket
5. retrofit ____	1. A loan taken out to buy property, repaid over many years with interest
6. co-housing ____	7. The portion of a property's value that the owner actually owns rather than owes on a mortgage
7. equity ____	5. To add new technology or features to an existing building not originally designed for them
8. dilapidated ____	8. In a state of serious disrepair due to neglect

Exercise 4: Gap Fill

Choose the correct word or phrase from the box to complete each sentence.

Word Bank: conveyancing | downsize | leasehold | open-plan | affordable housing | kerb appeal | surveyor | insulation

- The ____ process took four months because there were five properties in the chain.
- They plan to ____ once their children leave home and move to a smaller cottage by the sea.

3. The flat is ____ with eighty years remaining on the lease, which could cause problems when they try to sell.
4. They knocked down the dividing wall to create an ____ kitchen and living area that feels much more spacious.
5. The government announced plans to build more ____ to address the shortage of homes for lower-income families.
6. A fresh coat of paint on the front door dramatically improved the ____ and helped the property sell within a week.
7. The ____ identified several structural problems that the seller had not disclosed.
8. They invested in better ____ and replaced the old boiler, cutting their heating bills by almost half.

Exercise 5: Sentence Transformation

Rewrite each sentence using the word given. Do not change the meaning.

1. They bought the right to use the property for ninety years, but not the land itself.

Key word: LEASEHOLD

2. The neighbourhood has changed completely because wealthier residents have moved in.

Key word: GENTRIFICATION

3. They are planning to move to a smaller home now that the children have grown up.

Key word: DOWNSIZE

4. The seller accepted a better offer from another buyer the day before contracts were due to be exchanged.

Key word: GAZUMPED

5. They added solar panels and a heat pump to the house after it was built.

Key word: RETROFIT

6. After years of repayments, the amount they actually owned of their home increased significantly.

Key word: EQUITY

Exercise 6: Error Identification

Each sentence contains one error, or no error at all. Underline the error if there is one and write a correction or "No error" on the line.

1. The property was completely dilapidated — the roof had partially collapsed and the walls were damp.

Correction / No error: _____

2. They were gazumped at the last minute and lost over three thousand pounds in survey and legal fees.

Correction / No error: _____

3. The building is held on a ninety-year leasehold, with just forty years remaining on the lease.

Correction / No error: _____

4. The rapid gentrification of the area have displaced many long-term residents who could no longer afford to stay.

Correction / No error: _____

5. They retrofitted the house with solar panels and underfloor heating to reduce their carbon footprint.

Correction / No error: _____

6. Better insulation in the roof and walls has significantly reduced our energy bills this winter.

Correction / No error: _____

7. The conveyancing took longer than expected because one of the sellers in the chain withdrew.

Correction / No error: _____

8. They have built up a considerable amount of equity on their home after twelve years of repayments.

Correction / No error: _____

Exercise 7: Paragraph Gap Fill

Read the extract and write the correct word or phrase in each gap. Choose from the options given below each gap.

Buying a first home in the current climate is one of the most challenging financial decisions many people will make. Even those who successfully secure a (1) ____ often find that the monthly repayments leave little room for savings.

Gap 1 options: mortgage / leasehold / equity / stamp duty

The shortage of (2) ____ means that many households are trapped in the private rental sector, unable to build financial security.

Gap 2 options: affordable housing / co-housing / leasehold property / communal living

In some areas, rapid (3) ____ has pushed rents so high that even professionals on good salaries find it hard to save enough for a deposit.

Gap 3 options: gentrification / downsizing / retrofitting / conveyancing

For those who do manage to purchase, buying a (4) ____ property — one requiring significant repair — can be a more affordable entry point into the market.

Gap 4 options: dilapidated / open-plan / communal / retrofitted

With careful planning, you can (5) ____ an older home with modern insulation and energy systems, increasing its value and reducing long-term running costs.

Gap 5 options: retrofit / downsize / survey / conveyance

Property ownership is not just about having a home — it is about building (6) ____ over time, creating financial stability that renting cannot provide.

Gap 6 options: equity / tenure / leasehold / stamp duty

TEACHER ANSWER KEY

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Exercise 1: Listening

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Answer: Housing has been treated as a financial asset rather than a basic need.

2. How does Tom describe his experience of trying to buy a home?

Answer: Demoralising, with the goalposts constantly moving.

3. What does Rosa say is the core building problem?

Answer: Not enough homes are being built, particularly affordable ones.

4. What are the benefits of co-housing communities according to Rosa?

Answer: They reduce costs and isolation and build strong local communities.

5. How did gentrification affect Tom?

Answer: It caused rental prices to rise, making it even harder to save.

6. What does Tom's comment about conveyancing imply?

Answer: A faster process would reduce the risk of deals falling through.

Exercise 2: Multiple Choice

1. The building was completely ____ when the developers bought it — the roof had collapsed and the walls were crumbling.

Answer: dilapidated

2. They decided to ____ the property with heat pumps and double glazing to make it more energy-efficient.

Answer: retrofit

3. They were victims of ____ — the seller accepted a higher offer from someone else the day before they were due to exchange.

Answer: gazumping

4. Now that the children have left home, they are thinking about ____ and moving to a smaller place near the coast.

Answer: downsizing

5. The rapid ____ of the area has made it unaffordable for many families who have lived there for generations.

Answer: gentrification

6. The house has poor ____, which means it loses heat quickly in winter and is very expensive to keep warm.

Answer: insulation

7. After paying their ____ for fifteen years, they had built up enough ____ in the property to borrow against it.

Answer: mortgage / equity

8. The development includes a hundred units of ____ housing, priced to be accessible to people on lower incomes.

Answer: affordable

Exercise 3: Matching

1. mortgage -> 1

A loan taken out to buy property, repaid over many years with interest

2. gazumping -> 2

A seller accepting a higher offer after already accepting one, leaving the original buyer out of pocket

3. gentrification -> 3

The process by which a neighbourhood becomes wealthier and more expensive as better-off residents move in

4. leasehold -> 4

A form of ownership where you own the right to occupy a property for a fixed term, but not the land

5. retrofit -> 5

To add new technology or features to an existing building not originally designed for them

6. co-housing -> 6

A housing arrangement where residents have private homes but share communal spaces

7. equity -> 7

The portion of a property's value that the owner actually owns rather than owes on a mortgage

8. dilapidated -> 8

In a state of serious disrepair due to neglect

Exercise 4: Gap Fill

1. The ____ process took four months because there were five properties in the chain.

Answer: conveyancing

2. They plan to ____ once their children leave home and move to a smaller cottage by the sea.

Answer: downsize

3. The flat is ____ with eighty years remaining on the lease, which could cause problems when they try to sell.

Answer: leasehold

4. They knocked down the dividing wall to create an ____ kitchen and living area that feels much more spacious.

Answer: open-plan

5. The government announced plans to build more ____ to address the shortage of homes for lower-income families.

Answer: affordable housing

6. A fresh coat of paint on the front door dramatically improved the ____ and helped the property sell within a week.

Answer: kerb appeal

7. The ____ identified several structural problems that the seller had not disclosed.

Answer: surveyor

8. They invested in better ____ and replaced the old boiler, cutting their heating bills by almost half.

Answer: insulation

Exercise 5: Sentence Transformation

Accept any answer preserving the meaning and using the key word correctly. Suggested answers below.

1. They bought the right to use the property for ninety years, but not the land itself.

Key word: LEASEHOLD

Suggested: They bought the property on a leasehold basis for ninety years.

Also accept: The property is leasehold with ninety years remaining on the lease.

2. The neighbourhood has changed completely because wealthier residents have moved in.

Key word: GENTRIFICATION

Suggested: Gentrification has changed the neighbourhood completely.

Also accept: Gentrification has completely transformed the neighbourhood.

3. They are planning to move to a smaller home now that the children have grown up.

Key word: DOWNSIZE

Suggested: They are planning to downsize now that the children have grown up.

Also accept: They plan to downsize now that the children have grown up.

4. The seller accepted a better offer from another buyer the day before contracts were due to be exchanged.

Key word: GAZUMPED

Suggested: They were gazumped the day before contracts were due to be exchanged.

Also accept: The buyer was gazumped the day before contracts were to be exchanged.

5. They added solar panels and a heat pump to the house after it was built.

Key word: RETROFIT

Suggested: They decided to retrofit the house with solar panels and a heat pump.

Also accept: They retrofitted the house with solar panels and a heat pump.

6. After years of repayments, the amount they actually owned of their home increased significantly.

Key word: EQUITY

Suggested: After years of repayments their equity in the property increased significantly.

Also accept: They built up significant equity in their home after years of repayments.

Exercise 6: Error Identification

1. The property was completely dilapidated — the roof had partially collapsed and the walls were damp.

Answer: No error.

2. They were gazumped at the last minute and lost over three thousand pounds in survey and legal fees.

Answer: No error.

3. The building is held on a ninety-year leasehold, with just forty years remaining on the lease.

Answer: No error.

4. The rapid gentrification of the area have displaced many long-term residents who could no longer afford to stay.

Error: "have" -> "has" | Subject-verb agreement error — gentrification is singular so the verb should be has, not have.

5. They retrofitted the house with solar panels and underfloor heating to reduce their carbon footprint.

Answer: No error.

6. Better insulation in the roof and walls has significantly reduced our energy bills this winter.

Answer: No error.

7. The conveyancing took longer than expected because one of the sellers in the chain withdrew.

Answer: No error.

8. They have built up a considerable amount of equity on their home after twelve years of repayments.

Error: "on" -> "in" | Preposition error — you build up equity in a property, not on it.

Exercise 7: Paragraph Gap Fill

Gap 1: mortgage

Gap 2: affordable housing

Gap 3: gentrification

Gap 4: dilapidated

Gap 5: retrofit

Gap 6: equity