

The Death of the Living Room – Advanced B2-C1 Reading Worksheet

ARTICLE

Across many British cities, a quiet shift has been unfolding: the traditional living room is slowly disappearing from rental homes. Driven by rising costs and landlords eager to squeeze every penny from limited space, many properties now feature box-sized bedrooms and cramped shared areas. For young renters, the loss of a shared living space can feel like yet another sign that the housing market is increasingly stacked against them.

Property analysts say the trend took off during the last decade as landlords tried to pack in as many tenants as possible. What once served as a place to unwind, catch up with flatmates, or simply stretch out at the end of the day has been carved up into extra bedrooms. Critics argue that this quick fix papers over deeper problems in the rental sector, including a chronic shortage of affordable housing and a lack of meaningful oversight.

For many renters, the shift has knock-on effects on social life. Without a common area, flatmates often retreat to their own rooms, drifting apart rather than building a sense of home. Others end up eating meals on their beds, juggling laptops and plates while trying to wind down. While some tenants adapt and make do, others say the loss of a proper living room chips away at their quality of life and leaves them wondering whether things will ever pick up in the housing market.

TRUE OR FALSE

1. The disappearance of living rooms is linked to rising housing costs.
2. Landlords have been reducing shared spaces to create more bedrooms.
3. Analysts believe the trend began only in the last two years.
4. Some critics say the issue reflects deeper housing problems.
5. Tenants report that the change has no impact on social life.
6. Many renters end up eating meals in their bedrooms.
7. All renters easily adapt to the loss of a living room.
8. Some renters feel the change reduces their quality of life.

PHRASE MATCH

Phrases from the article	Meanings (A–J)
1. squeeze every penny	A. gradually weakens or damages something
2. stacked against them	B. hides a problem instead of dealing with it properly
3. took off	C. indirect or additional consequences of an action
4. pack in	D. try to save or extract as much money as possible
5. carved up	E. manage with what is available, even if it is not ideal
6. papers over	F. arranged so that someone is at a disadvantage
7. knock-on effects	G. put as many people as possible into a space
8. drifting apart	H. started to become popular or common quickly
9. make do	I. divided something into smaller parts, often unfairly
10. chips away at	J. gradually becoming less close or less connected

SYNONYM MATCH

Words from the article	Synonyms (A–J)
1. cramped	A. adjust
2. unwind	B. supervision
3. oversight	C. deficit
4. retreat	D. consequences
5. effects	E. crowded
6. adapt	F. change
7. analysts	G. persistent
8. shortage	H. withdraw
9. chronic	I. experts
10. shift	J. relax

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS – STUDENT A

1. Describe your current home. Which room do you spend most time in?
2. Do you prefer a separate living room or a combined living space?
3. What are your must-haves when choosing a place to live?
4. Have you ever lived somewhere with no living room? How did you cope?
5. What is the worst accommodation you have ever stayed in?
6. How important is it to eat meals at a proper table?
7. What would your dream home look like?
8. Are renters losing too many comforts in modern housing?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS – STUDENT B

1. How many people should reasonably share a living room?
2. Should governments regulate minimum living space standards?
3. Do you think social interaction changes without a shared room?
4. Is it better to pay more for space or save money with a smaller flat?
5. Which home design trends annoy you the most?
6. Would you rather live alone in a tiny studio or share a bigger flat?
7. How important is natural light in your living space?
8. Do you think this trend will continue in the future?

ANSWER KEY

TRUE/FALSE: 1 T, 2 T, 3 F, 4 T, 5 F, 6 T, 7 F, 8 T

PHRASE MATCH: 1 d, 2 f, 3 h, 4 g, 5 i, 6 b, 7 c, 8 j, 9 e, 10 a

SYNONYM MATCH: 1 e, 2 j, 3 b, 4 h, 5 d, 6 a, 7 i, 8 c, 9 g, 10 f