

ENGLISH LANGUAGE PAPER 4

PART A Group Interaction

This article appeared in a local newspaper:

Redevelopment in Western District leaves residents without a good night's sleep

“Redevelopment of old areas gives opportunities for developers to earn money. But local people do not have any say in the redevelopment and are forced to leave.”

If you took a walk around Western District just a couple of years ago, you would see mostly stationery shops, bakeries, grocers and university students eating in cha chaan tengs. For years, even with its proximity to Central, the old neighbourhood remained largely untouched, retaining its traditional characteristics and flavour.

But when three new MTR stations — Sai Ying Pun, HKU and Kennedy Town — opened in the area in late 2014, they brought with them a whole range of bars and expensive restaurants that drew in young rich hipsters. Today, Western District is the new, trendy neighbourhood, with young professionals increasingly turning older buildings into expensive trendy flats, forcing many long-term residents to leave the area that has been their home all their lives.

Traditional shops are forced to leave because of high rents: 250 of the 700 shops in the Sai Ying Pun area either changed tenants or closed down from 2015 to 2017.

There have been multiple complaints from residents about noise from bars and restaurants. “For families and the elderly in this area, they are disturbed by the noise every day and can’t afford to shop,” one netizen said. “We can’t stop the world from developing, but there has to be a balance.”

Your class is discussing the redevelopment of older districts in Hong Kong. Your group has been asked to discuss the problems redevelopment causes. You may want to talk about:

- why old districts are redeveloped
- what problems redevelopments cause
- what the government should do to reduce the problems residents face
- anything else you think is important

PART B Individual Response

1. What do you like about the area you live in?
2. What is the biggest advantage of redevelopment?
3. What types of shops are typical of old neighbourhoods?
4. Why do older people like to live in traditional districts?
5. What would you like to change about your district?
6. Would you prefer to live in an old neighbourhood or a redeveloped area?
7. Is the redevelopment of old areas too slow in Hong Kong?
8. Who benefits most from redevelopment?