

Aufgabenstellung:

1.

Describe the process of gentrification and the resulting changes in neighbourhoods according to the article.

(Comprehension) (13 Punkte)

2.

Analyze how the author conveys her attitude towards gentrification. Focus on communicative strategies and use of language.

(Analysis) (13 Punkte)

3.

Choose **one** of the following tasks:

3.1

Global Citizenship Education (GCED) is part of the UN agenda and based on the idea that all people have civic responsibilities on a social, political, environmental, and economic scale to the world as a whole rather than just to their local communities or countries.

Discuss the need to make GCED a higher priority in schools.

(Evaluation: comment) (18 Punkte)

3.2

Taking the article as a starting point, write a letter to the editor of *The Guardian*, commenting on the effects of a globalised culture on urban neighbourhoods.

(Evaluation: re-creation of text) (18 Punkte)

Leslie Kern

It's not all coffee shops and hipsters: what we get wrong about gentrification

1 On a trip to Mexico City, a bus tour whisks me through neighbourhoods teeming with cool
2 cafes, elegant wine bars and stylish twentysomethings. Starbucks are surprisingly thick on
3 the ground. When I ask my Spanish teacher about these areas, he rolls his eyes and rubs his
4 thumb and fingers together: a universal sign for too expensive and full of unpleasant people.
5 You don't need to be a gentrification researcher (although I am one) to read these signs and
6 immediately understand what is happening here. Gentrification feels, sounds and looks
7 familiar wherever you are: young hipsters transforming neighbourhoods according to a
8 remarkably homogeneous global code of taste and style.

9 As accurate as that narrative might feel, the story we tell ourselves about the changing face
10 of our inner-city neighbourhoods is far too basic. Vilifying the markers of gentrification
11 alone fails to get to the root of the problem – and trust me, it's not as simple as pour-over
12 coffee – and lacks any useful ideas for countering the larger forces at play that have brought
13 artisanal doughnuts to your community.

14 It's true that we can identify gentrification through certain styles and sites of consumption.
15 This has been the case since the slow creep of a neighbourhood "on the up" was first noticed
16 and named in north London in the 1960s. Since then, the tastes of gentrifiers – from what
17 they wear, to what they eat – has generated endless commentary. Their preferences have
18 been viewed as the harbingers of doom for working-class, minority communities in cities
19 around the world.

20 Sites that seem to embody these changes are easy targets. The now-closed Cereal Killer cafe
21 in east London is one such example. Viewed as a sign of everything that had gone or could
22 go wrong in this low-income, predominantly minority ethnic community, the purveyor of
23 overpriced breakfast grains was targeted by protesters, vandals, and graffiti writers who
24 warned of a gentrifier takeover. We love to hate these spaces and their seemingly oblivious
25 owners. After all, they put a face to what seems like an insurmountable problem caused by
26 distant forces.

27 But the question we should be asking is whether closing a coffee shop is going to prevent
28 gentrification. The answer is no, even if we acknowledge that places such as this do play a
29 role. Today, however, the cultural capital of the avocado toast class is worth little compared
30 with the might of the billion-dollar, multi-national, real estate investment and development
31 industries – and their government partners – who now control our cities and neighbourhoods,
32 as well as their potential for social and economic transformation.

33 If we truly want to push back against gentrification, we are misplacing our energies by
34 focusing primarily on superficial markers of taste. They are little more than symptoms of
35 much more disruptive forms of urban change that are enriching the few at the expense of
36 the many. The destruction or market-led "regeneration" of council housing is one such
37 form; luxury high-rise development is another. Large-scale eviction processes, accelerated
38 by the end of pandemic-era protections, are overtly enabling gentrification, especially in
39 minority neighbourhoods. The rise of short-term letting through platforms such as Airbnb
40 is helping to raise housing prices beyond the reach of even the middle classes.

41 These processes are driven by the search for new ways to generate capital and wealth
42 from urban space. The developers, speculators and investment firms that push these

43 changes are able to do so because of government policy that not only allows, but often
44 actively encourages, such developments. Whether it is through tax incentives, rezoning,
45 or government-led “revitalisation” schemes, the state facilitates gentrification on multiple
46 levels.

47 When your corporate landlord is trying to evict you so that your building’s units can be
48 renovated into luxury suites, a nearby coffee shop serving a £6 flat white certainly adds
49 insult to injury. Don’t get me wrong, the cafe is part of the problem: it’s capitalising on and
50 attracting the kind of changes that may be about to boot you from your community for
51 good. However, the seeds that created the conditions for that cafe to take root were planted
52 long before it even opened its doors, by actors with a tremendous amount of power. In other
53 words, that expensive coffee is certainly not helping you but it’s not the entity “renovicting”
54 you, either.

55 Feel free to protest about the cafe, but your energy might be better placed organising the
56 tenants in your building to fight against unfair evictions. This lesson applies more widely to
57 the battle against gentrification. For all of us worried about the changes in our communities
58 that are displacing longtime residents, council housing tenants, senior people, people who
59 are immigrants, young people and many others, we must be strategic and focused in our
60 struggle. This means not letting governments and corporations get away with bulldozing
61 (literally and figuratively) our cities, while we’re distracted by annoyingly high-priced
62 breakfast foods.

63 Admittedly, redirecting our attention to Goliath – indeed, multiple Goliaths – is daunting.
64 However, one of the reasons these groups succeed with their agenda to remake the city for
65 profit, not people, is that we have come to accept the story that rampant capitalist interests
66 cannot be defeated, or even slowed down. But resistance is possible. It can come through
67 rent strikes, squatters’ movements and the growth of community-led models of development,
68 such as community land trusts and cooperative housing. We can push governments to use
69 the regulatory tools at their disposal: eviction bans, rent stabilisation, community benefit
70 ordinances, zoning and taxation.

71 You don’t have to like the latest vegan bistro-pub in your neighbourhood, but let’s remember
72 to focus on the nefarious agents at play behind the trendy frontages. These powerful forces
73 are dismantling people’s ability to live and thrive in our cities today. A different kind of
74 future is possible, but only if we demand it and demand it from the right people.

Leslie Kern, “It’s not all coffee shops and hipsters: what we get wrong about gentrification”, in: *The Guardian*, 4 September 2022

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