

Module 6

- **EMPOWER YOUR ENGLISH SKILLS IN YOUR PROFESSION**



SUMMARY

UNIT 1 - Linking words

UNIT 2 - Reading Comprehension

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Introduction



Behind closed doors

From Downing Street to the Bank of England, Arabella Youens takes a look through the keyhole of some of London's famous front doors

Anyone finding themselves ambling down Kensington's Bedford Gardens during the end of April or early May will quickly spot something unusual. Each spring, pockets of people armed with selfie sticks (and, in some cases, full lighting crews) stand in front of a particular house, which is gloriously garlanded in wisteria vines. Some even go the extra mile by dressing for the occasion in a lilac or another tonally appropriate hue. It's Instagram perfection and the cherry on the cake is the house's pastel-pink front door.

There are other more famous front doors in the capital, of course, and photographer Cath Harries confesses to being obsessed with them. On commission to take photographs for a pub guide in 2010, her attention was diverted by street art sprayed on doors in Shoreditch and art deco flourishes on mansion blocks in Marylebone.

Years later, this obsession has morphed into a new book, *Doors of London*, which is published later this month. Written together with the house historian (and *The London Magazine* contributor) Melanie Backe-Hansen, the book goes on a journey through the capital's central boroughs and examines how the development of each area shaped its architecture. They describe the doors as “portals to living history”.



The history behind the doors is as colourful as the portals themselves Credit: Cath Harries

Among the area guides are separate sections, such as Doors in Film and Television, including Gruber's Antiques (*Paddington*) and the infamous blue door from the film *Notting Hill*. There are also vignettes of social history, such as the door in Farm Street which Wallis Simpson slipped into during visits to see the then Prince of Wales before the abdication crisis. We also learn about the growth of street art in areas such as Hackney and Camden, which began in the 1980s and continues apace.

Then there are some more curious pieces of trivia. Take, for example, a seemingly innocuous pair of front doors in Leinster Terrace, a row of stucco-fronted houses in Bayswater. The first clue that they aren't what they seem lies in the lack of a letterbox. When the Metropolitan Railway was extended from Paddington to

Notting Hill in the 1860s, the company used the “cut and cover” technique, which involved excavating a deep channel for the tracks and then building over it to create the tunnel. Roads and houses above which had been demolished for the work were then rebuilt. However, in some places, gaps were needed to release steam and smoke from the engines in use. This is one such space. Instead of leaving a hole between the houses, they created two false facades to create the illusion of an uninterrupted terrace. The facades are about five-feet deep, and above the doors, the window “frames” are painted in grey to create an illusion of glass; nothing lies behind.



One of the few remaining infill houses in the heart of the Pimlico Grid on Cumberland Street. The two-bedroom house is for sale at £1.195m through Jackson-Stops' Pimlico office Credit: Cath Haries

“I did much of the research in the London Library during the first summer of the pandemic,” explains Mel. “Cath and the publishers asked me to put some context around her wonderful photographs. I have a soft spot for historic doors and love the ones in Queen Anne's Gate, Westminster, with their elaborate canopies, which

make you stop and stare. But I was also taken by the doors in Albury Street, in Deptford. They're a wonderful survival of early 18th century London."

Knock on wood: first impressions

While we're often told not to judge a book by its cover, a smart, well-maintained front door can instantly give the impression of a well-cared-for home," says Harry Buchanan, director of Jackson-Stops Pimlico & Westminster. "From ornate doorknockers to hanging baskets and olive trees, a smart front facade helps to set the tone, and can significantly influence the overall perception of a house." So iconic is the sight of a smart London door that Heather Carter-Drake, head of Film Lets at Hamptons, managed to net her client £500 for a day's filming. "The production team wanted a classic black front door in Knightsbridge," she explains.



London's period homes range from loft apartments to Georgian terraces. The striking Victorian vicarage in Hammersmith, featured top left, is available through Hamptons for £5m Credit: Cath Harries

Various surveys have been conducted to find out what colour's best when selling a house, the unanimous verdict is blue. However, paint experts at Paint & Paper Library

have a more decorative approach. “Many home exteriors are red brick, which pairs beautifully with green,” says creative director Andy Greenall. “Light-coloured stone exteriors suit a warm light neutral or grey, while grand traditional properties, such as Georgian houses, suit dark, confident colours. Alternatively, pick a complementary shade that sits comfortably alongside the surrounding brickwork or render.”

When it comes to front-door furniture, it can be challenging to identify what best suits different period properties, as many designs went in and out of vogue. “Generally speaking, the early 19th century saw an interest in highly decorative door furniture, with historical patterns and motifs prevailing,” says Tom Miles of ironmongers Beardmore whose long-standing shop is in Fulham Road, SW10. “This was followed by simpler, more modest designs for most of the Victorian period before the influence of art nouveau brought a return to a more elaborate aesthetic.”

UNIT ONE

Linking Words

Have a look at these two paragraphs. Which one sounds better?

Paragraph A

The building had structural issues. The engineers were concerned. The project was delayed. The architects proposed a solution. The contractors rejected the proposal.

Paragraph B

Because of the structural issues, the engineers were concerned. As a result, the project was delayed. However, when the architects proposed a solution, the contractors rejected the proposal.

Did you find that Paragraph B sounds much better? The ideas are connected, and the text sounds more professional and polished.

In fact, the only difference between the paragraphs is that, in B, we used four simple linking phrases: **because of, as a result, however, and when**.

The most used are:

ADDITION similar to <i>and</i>	CONTRAST similar to <i>but</i>	RESULT similar to <i>so</i>	REASON similar to <i>because</i>
additionally also moreover besides furthermore	despite however in spite of on the other hand whereas	as a result therefore	due to

What are linking words?

Linking words are sometimes called linking phrases (they can be made up of more than one word), connectors, or even linkers.

In short, they connect ideas together. We use them in both writing and speaking, but they are especially important in technical writing because they provide structure to your descriptions and explanations.

Linking words in sentences

Linking words can connect two parts of one sentence. They go at the beginning of a sentence or in between the two parts:

Example 1: Although the blueprint was approved, the contractors encountered several issues.

Example 2: The contractors encountered several issues although the blueprint was approved.

Linking words can also connect an idea from the previous sentence (or paragraph) to the current one:

Example: The materials were delayed. As a result, the construction schedule was revised.

Why are linking words important?

Linking words provide structure to your writing and help explain complex relationships clearly. They also guide the reader or listener on what to expect next:

Example: The structural assessment revealed weaknesses in the foundation. However...

The word *however* here tells the reader to expect a contrasting detail about the assessment.

Examples of linking words

There are hundreds of linking words and phrases in English. It helps to think of them in different categories. Here's a categorized list with examples:

1. Consequence

- So
- Hence
- Therefore
- As a result

- Consequently

Example: The design was modified to reduce costs. As a result, the project stayed within budget.

2. Additional information

- And
- Moreover
- In addition
- Furthermore

Example: The design incorporates energy-efficient windows. Moreover, the building meets LEED standards.

3. Cause and effect

- Due to
- Because
- As a result
- Because of
- Consequently

Example: Due to the lack of proper insulation, the energy consumption increased.

4. Contrasting

- But
- Besides
- Although
- However
- Even though

Example: The exterior is minimalist. However, the interior features intricate detailing.

5. Conditional information

- If
- Unless
- Even if
- Whenever

Example: The façade will be approved if the material matches the initial proposal.

6. Showing a different opinion

- On the contrary
- On the other hand

Example: Many architects prefer bold designs. On the other hand, traditional styles often blend better with the surroundings.

7. Clarification

- That is
- Simply put
- To be clear
- In other words

Example: The load-bearing walls will carry the weight of the upper floors. Simply put, these walls are essential to the building's stability.

8. Concession

- Admittedly
- Nonetheless
- Nevertheless

Concession means admitting one part of your statement is problematic or acknowledging an exception.

Example: The project faced delays. Nevertheless, the team managed to complete it on time.

9. Summary

- In brief
- Overall
- To sum up
- In summary
- In a nutshell
- On the whole
- All things considered

Example: In this report, we reviewed the challenges and solutions. All things considered, the project was a success.

10. Conjunctions

Conjunction	Function
for	connects a reason to a result
and	connects equal and similar ideas
nor	connects two negative ideas
but	connects equal but different ideas
or	connects two equal choices
yet	connects equal and contrasting ideas
so	connects a result to a reason

11. Conciseness

Try to replace phrases with a single words which mean the same.

Instead of ...	Use ...
employed the use of	used
basic fundamentals	fundamentals
alternative choices	alternatives
in as few words as possible	concisely
look into	investigate
put on	gained
turned down	rejected
got better	improved
hit and miss	erratic
in spite of	although

EXERCISE 1 - Fill in the gaps with the adverbial expressions provided in the box below.

actually / after all / as far as / at least / but also / furthermore / on the other hand / otherwise / regarding / that is to say / whereas

Defensive architecture, also known as hostile architecture, has been implemented in cities across the UK. 1. _____ the primary goal of such designs is to discourage undesirable behaviour, they often spark heated debates. Many argue that defensive architecture targets vulnerable populations, 2. _____ the homeless, in a way that is not only unkind 3. _____ counterproductive. 4. _____, its supporters claim it is a practical solution to urban challenges like crime prevention and public safety.

5. _____ restricting seating or making benches uncomfortable can deter loitering, it can 6. _____ alienate and exclude certain groups from public spaces. Critics highlight that these designs promote a culture of exclusion. 7. _____, there are alternative ways to approach urban safety without making spaces inhospitable to certain groups. For example, investing in community programs or providing better social services might address the root causes of the issues defensive architecture seeks to mitigate.

8. _____, urban designers and city councils must decide whether defensive architecture aligns with the values of inclusivity and fairness. 9. _____, we must

remember that public spaces are meant to serve everyone. 10. _____, if we continue to prioritize functionality over humanity, we risk creating cities that are less welcoming and compassionate.

EXERCISE 2 - Fill in the gaps with the adverbial expressions provided in the box below.

1. The new luxury bunkers in the US are far more affordable than those in Europe. _____, they offer advanced security features and self-sufficiency for extended stays.
a) However b) On the whole c) Furthermore
2. The luxury bunkers in the US are equipped with state-of-the-art technology. _____, they can be quite expensive to maintain.
a) Though b) However c) Despite
3. _____ the high cost, many wealthy individuals invest in luxury bunkers as a long-term security measure.
a) But b) Though c) Despite
4. _____ luxury bunkers can be seen as a necessity for some, others believe they are an excessive luxury.
a) On the other hand b) Even though c) However
5. So, while there are clear benefits to owning a luxury bunker, it is important to consider the environmental impact. _____, the investment may be worthwhile for those who prioritize personal security.
a) On the whole b) And c) Lastly
6. _____ the growing concerns about global instability, luxury bunkers are becoming more popular among the ultra-wealthy.
a) Because b) Due to c) Despite
7. The new luxury bunkers come with top-tier amenities, including underground spas and gyms. _____, they also provide advanced air filtration systems and food supplies to ensure survival.
a) Finally b) However c) In short
8. John often brags about his luxury bunker, claiming it's the best. _____, he believes it's an essential investment for the future.

a) Furthermore

b) And

c) In short

Tricky linking words in writing

- **Because/Because of**

- *Because* connects two independent clauses:

Example: The team adjusted the plan because the initial measurements were inaccurate.

- *Because of* connects one complete sentence to a noun or noun phrase:

Example: The delay occurred because of unforeseen weather conditions.

- **If/When/Unless**

Conditional sentences describe possible scenarios, which is essential in architectural planning.

Example: If the steel reinforcement is inadequate, the structure could fail.

The use of *when* in architectural contexts often describes processes or stages of construction:

Example 1: When the foundation is poured, we begin work on the frame.

Example 2: When the materials arrived, the construction resumed.

Unless is useful for conditions in plans or requirements:

Example: The contractor will not proceed unless the client approves the changes.

- **Even though/Even if**

- *Even though* introduces surprising facts:

Example: Even though the building uses glass extensively, it is highly energy-efficient.

- *Even if* introduces hypothetical conditions:

Example: Even if the site is small, the design maximizes available space.

- **However**

However connects two ideas but cannot join two parts of a sentence directly. Instead, start a new sentence or use a semicolon:

Incorrect: The design is functional, however it lacks aesthetic appeal.

Correct: The design is functional. However, it lacks aesthetic appeal.

Using a semicolon:

Correct: The design is functional; however, it lacks aesthetic appeal.

Semicolons

Semicolons are handy for linking related sentences in technical writing:

Example: The project exceeded expectations; it won multiple awards.

- Whatever/However/Whenever

These generalize scenarios:

Example: You can customize the layout however you like.

Example: The team will be available whenever the client schedules a meeting.

By using a wide range of linking words, you can improve the clarity and professionalism of your architectural reports, proposals, and presentations.

EXERCISE 3 - Fill in the blanks with the most appropriate linking word from the options provided. Each option can be used only once.

Options:

- because / because of
- if / when / unless
- even though / even if
- however
- whatever / however / whenever

1. The project was delayed _____ unexpected weather conditions.
2. _____ the structure is well-designed, it still faces challenges due to external factors.
3. The design will be approved _____ it meets all the safety regulations.
4. The architects will begin drafting the plans _____ the client confirms the

budget.

5. _____ the site is small, the building will include all necessary amenities.
6. The contractor will not proceed _____ the final design is approved by the regulatory authority.
7. The team can modify the layout _____ the client prefers.
8. The design is finalized; _____, some changes may still occur during the construction phase.

Additional comments or ideas	additionally; also; moreover; furthermore; again; further; then; besides; too; similarly; correspondingly; indeed; regarding.
Alternatives	whereas; conversely; in comparison; by contrast; another view is...; alternatively; although; otherwise; instead.
Analysing results	therefore; accordingly; as a result of; the result is/results are; the consequence is; resulting from; consequently; it can be seen; evidence illustrates that; because of this; thus; hence; for this reason; owing to x; this suggests that; it follows that; otherwise; in that case; that implies; Author (year) suggests that;
Cause / Reason	as a result of; because (mid-sentence only)
Compare	compared with; in the same way; likewise
Contrast	by contrast; although; compared with; conversely; despite; however; nevertheless; yet
Effect / Result	As a result; therefore; thus
Emphasising earlier statements	however; nonetheless; furthermore; in the final analysis; despite x; notwithstanding x; in spite of x; while x may be true, nonetheless although; though; after all; at the same time; even if x is true; count
Introducing examples	for example; for instance; namely; such as; as follows; as exemplified by; such as; including; especially; particularly; in particular; notably; mainly;
Re-phrasing	in other terms; rather; or; better; in view of this; in contrast
Sequencing	first (ly); second (ly); third (ly); another; additionally; finally moreover; also; subsequently; eventually; next; then
Summary or Conclusion	in conclusion; therefore; to conclude; on the whole; hence; thus to summarise; altogether; overall; ... following the research of... after analysis

UNIT TWO

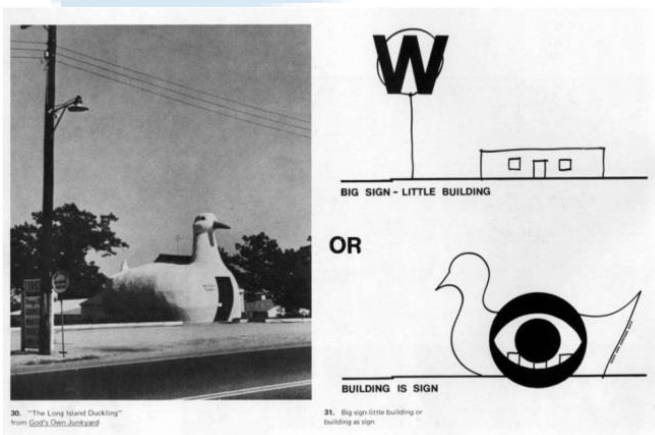
Reading comprehension

Writing on the wall: the language of buildings

The interplay between structures, text and symbols reveals much about society and takes to another level how architects communicate with the public

Buildings speak. Some utter monosyllabic grunts, like *trump*. Others are more loquacious braggarts, babbling *iohanes oricellarius pav f an sal mccccclxx*. Or, going back a little further, *m agrippa l f cos tertivm fecit*. The first of these needs no deciphering; the second is the inscription on the facade of Santa Maria Novella telling us that Giovanni Rucellai paid for it; the last, from the Pantheon, proclaims the generosity of Marcus Agrippa.

Inscription is a very ancient custom, telling us about lost cultures when less-durable media have long since rotted away. The sealed chambers within Egyptian pyramids are covered with hieroglyphic incantations, texts intended for otherworldly eyes that need no light to read them: *Oho! Oho! Rise up, O Teti! / Take your head, collect your bones / Gather your limbs, shake the earth from your flesh! / Take your bread that rots not, your beer that sours not / Stand at the gates that bar the common people!*



Denise Scott Brown and Robert Venturi differentiated between a 'duck' – a building that explicitly represents its function through shape and construction – and a 'decorated shed', a generic structure with signs and decor to convey its purpose. They defended The Long Island Duckling for

combining functional and symbolic aspects of architecture.

The work above is from Learning from Las Vegas, 1972, by Steven Izenour, Scott Brown and Venturi. Image courtesy of Venturi Scott Brown and Associates, inc.

Even when inscriptions are less eloquent about their intended recipients, their placement – high up on facades, for instance, or deep in labyrinthine chambers – still reveals something of the historical relationship between architecture and its publics. At times, these publics are very specific, even individual, and the authors themselves are not of this world: *mene, mene, tekel, upharsin*. This is the horripilating warning that appears in letters of fire on the wall of Belshazzar's palace, ruining his dinner: 'you have been weighed in the balance and found wanting'. On other occasions, similar judgments are added to buildings by less-authoritative hands, in the form of graffiti or posters. Buildings then become places of competing texts, not exactly *tabulae rasae* but – that dreadfully abused word here becomes literal – palimpsests. The low overwrites the high, whether with simple assertions of identity in the form of tags, or more-complex slogans.

There are also historical Chinese buildings whose plans resemble linguistic characters, such as the pavilion in the Garden of Perfect Brightness shaped like a swastika, which in Mandarin is pronounced 'wan', meaning 'infinity'. This was the game of a learned elite relaxing in its cultivated retreat, a message for a minuscule audience. More recently, OMA's China Central Television (CCTV) Headquarters building in Beijing can be seen as a return to this tradition, albeit for a national public (the orientation is telling in this regard). The rectangular silhouette could be read as the character 'kou', meaning mouth – mouthpiece of the party, perhaps.

'According to architecture parlante, the formal qualities of buildings inform viewers of their function and, thereby, of the ideals of the society that built them'

But even those buildings that do not bear inscriptions or resemble texts themselves have been called legible. The first decades of the Western neoliberal reaction, from the late 1960s to the 1990s, were animated by an architectural debate that seemed almost quaint and certainly extinct until very recently. Are buildings not meant to be read, went the question, posed in a variety of different forms and by equally various people. This was, to some extent, a response to the 'theory' percolating through the humanities, but it was also a more direct reflection of the political situation, as well as an internal reaction within the relative autonomy of architectural culture itself.

Walker Evans' *Times Square/Broadway Composition*, 1930, reflects New York's vibrant confusion of towering billboards and names in lights that, together, produce a city to be read, especially at night.

The Postmodernists, for one, objected to the supposedly incommunicative facades of Modernist buildings, either on the grounds of their elitism, their rejection of meaning and tradition, or their tedium. At around the same time and borrowing from post-structural theory, those architects and theorists who would later be christened Deconstructivists sought to interrogate the text of the building and city. The linguistic turn had first entered the discipline via semiotics, which had been concerned, in a more passive way, with reading the conventional signs of architecture – now designers wanted to disrupt them. In this regard, Deconstructivism can be seen as a critical extension of Postmodernism.

The notion that buildings might be legible was not new. The idea that the church is the bible of the illiterate is often attributed to Pope Gregory I; this is, in fact, a misquotation of a remark that occurs in a letter of his dated AD 599. Returning to the text, it is clear Gregory was specifically referring to the pictures displayed on the walls of churches, and he goes on to urge that these should be preserved from iconoclasts because they aid the uneducated to learn about sacred stories and the lives of the saints.

Nevertheless, later writers have seized on Gregory's words and expanded them to encompass not just pictures, but the building of the church itself. And, although this is an abuse of the text, it adheres to its logic: Gregory was the first to assert that visual matter could be read. This notion was secularised in the Enlightenment with the concept of *architecture parlante*, according to which the formal qualities of buildings inform viewers of their function and, thereby, of the ideals of the society that built them – specifically the nation state. The most commonly cited example of this is Ledoux's design for a brothel at Chaux, planned like an erect penis. This 'speaking architecture' can be understood in the context of the new bourgeois public, a field of discourse discovering its autonomy from the church and court, the avant-garde of which sought entirely new codes of communication.



Herbert Bayer's Entwurf für einen Zeitungskiosk, 1924, merges architectural themes with advertising techniques. Image courtesy of DACS 2018

In the 19th century, as the dialectic of the Enlightenment became apparent, there was a complex double movement of progressive reaction to such ideas. Ruskin, who sought a socialist future in the medieval past, described San Marco as a 'vast illuminated missal'. For 19th-century critics, the Middle Ages seemed a lost golden age before the onslaught of modernity, a period of unity, in which people came together to construct great buildings that were also perceived – read – by the same community. In the attempt to revive such communality, old languages of ornament were also documented and revived. This coincided, however, with a huge growth in literacy and

the industrial production of books, which meant that the masses were no longer dependent on the visual languages of buildings.

At the same time, buildings were starting to be understood as 'purely' spatial, in the thought of Hegel, Semper and Schmarsow. In the face of the revolution in literacy, the textual qualities were stripped from buildings. This prepared the way for the relatively abstract spaces of Modernism; it also made the possibility of reading a building like a book, or even as an image, problematic, as the pre-eminent mode of experiencing a building was no longer merely ocular but via bodily movement through space. And yet, in modernity, text returned to the building with a vengeance. The towering billboards, names in lights and ceaseless tickers of the great metropolis, produced a city to be read, especially after nightfall.

Completed in 1984, Tbilisi's Palace of Rituals is known as The Wedding Palace. Emphatically phallic in elevation and yonic in plan, Victor Djorbenadze's building represents the act of marriage as a symbolic and anatomical conjoining.

Times Square is the epitome of this phenomenon, an open-air petri dish for experimenting with neon on a mobile army of subjects. It is itself named after a form of text media: the *New York Times* relocated to a new headquarters here in 1904 and persuaded the city to rename its location in its honour. In the same year, the newspaper also pioneered an entirely new form of reading when it installed the 'zipper' – a panel of moving, illuminated text – wrapped around the base of its tower. (Today, the tower is an uninhabited husk, hollowed out by the text smothering it like a parasitic creeper.)

Reactions to these developments varied. The new aesthetic element they introduced to the experience of the city was depicted in the textually exuberant photographs of Fritz Lang and Walker Evans, and the paintings of Charles Demuth. This novel urban volubility also bursts into Modernist literary works, peppering *Ulysses* with the slogans seen by the meandering protagonist, Leopold Bloom (who also works in advertising), thereby demonstrating the effects of the metropolis on the consciousness of its inhabitants. Walter Benjamin also tries to capture this in his 1928 book *One-Way Street*, a collection of aphorisms titled with fragments of text torn from the street, which he develops into more or less related critical texts. Here, the book and the space of the city are brought together under the modern condition of distraction, in which the built environment and the book are both perceived by people buffeted by overwhelming sensory stimuli, their thought processes entangled with texts from commercial and other sources. The challenge, for some, seemed to be the production of architectural space that was adequate to this state – a challenge taken up by designers like Mendelsohn.

'We experience space not in its phenomenological plenitude, nor as an ancient message from the depths of the European soul, but entirely absent-mindedly'

In cities such as Moscow and Berlin, the innovations of the capitalist West were also adapted more critically, rerouting the language of commercialism towards revolutionary goals. The Constructivists designed – and sometimes built – structures that were more text than building, a return to the problem first tackled by the designers of *architecture parlante*: how to make an architecture that speaks to, and thereby conjures, a new public. Karl-Liebkecht-Haus in Berlin, headquarters of the

German Communist Party, demonstrated a pragmatic approach to the problem: the long bare spaces between its rows of windows were filled with frequently repainted exhortations, a low-tech version of the ticker girdling tower of the *New York Times*.

However, such borrowings from commercial design were subsequently evacuated from the canonical view of modern architecture – the so-called International Style – and the abstract, phenomenological approach to space triumphed. This was never a total triumph, however, and the a-textuality of Modernist space – depending of course on what one means by 'text' – was never complete. Even the barest of facades spoke to their viewers, announcing a new era (of architecture, at least). Lefebvre himself admits the possibility of reading buildings like a text, but adds that 'the analogy would serve no particular purpose'. Nevertheless, if the question of publics is brought to the fore, and the very literal textuality of some buildings is not suppressed, then the textual analysis of buildings can be a fruitful one, albeit not the only one – Lefebvre is right in that space is not reducible to text.



Soaring priapically out of the Nevada desert, the gaudily brazen temple to conspicuous consumption that is Trump Tower Las Vegas, by Bergman, Walls & Associates, opened in 2008. Gold-mirror glass, gold signage and giant gold Ts fuel an orgy of auric exhibitionism that would put Midas to shame. Image courtesy of Getty Images

However, with Pomo once more in the ascendant – to the extent that one can barely swing a cat in London without hitting some implied columniation – it can seem that this argument has been resolutely won by those who would make buildings speak, and speak plainly: the uncritical ventriloquists of architecture. These have their doubles on the fringes of the political right; the latter rarely have the same politics as the neo-Postmodernists, but they are their occasional allies in the fields of preservation and planning, and both advocate an architecture that speaks a common tongue.

But these all seem Canute-ish manoeuvres when one considers the lived reality of our spatio-textual situation, in which the built has been thoroughly and irrevocably penetrated by the word. Those textual aspects of the modern city singled-out in the 1920s by avant-gardists such as Benjamin and Moholy-Nagy have since been intensified, not lost, albeit in an unexpected dimension. We experience space not in its phenomenological plenitude, nor as an ancient message from the depths of the European soul, but entirely absent-mindedly, while reading. We stare intently at our hand-held screens, through which we move as we walk, scrolling through the city. The consequences are occasionally fatal to pedestrians and, although they may not be a matter of life and death for architects, they are still perplexing – what should a city look like when it isn't looked at? When it is read but never seen?

Perhaps a return to another Modernist might be productive at this juncture: Ludwig Hilberseimer. His mute facades and city plans constitute an undifferentiated architecture that holds its tongue, admitting the impossibility of competing with the lure of screens. The elevated walkways that separate pedestrians from the traffic below would make a safer environment for the bent-necked, shuffling masses, who glance neither sideways at each other nor up at the silent facades surrounding them.

VOCABULARY CHART

Word	Definition
Utter	To speak or express something aloud.
Trump	To surpass or outdo someone or something.
Braggarts	People who boast about their achievements or possessions.
Babbling	Talking in a way that is difficult to understand or incoherent.
Rotted away	Decayed or deteriorated over time.
Otherworldly	Relating to a world beyond or different from the physical world, often mystical or spiritual.
High up	Positioned at a great height or elevated location.
Dreadful	Causing fear, dread, or alarm; very bad or unpleasant.
Quaint	Charming in an old-fashioned or unusual way.
Legible	Clear enough to be read or understood.
Percolating	Filtering or spreading gradually, often used to describe ideas or liquids.
Christened	Given a name or title, often in a formal or ceremonial way.
Sought to	Tried to achieve or do something.
Sought to	Tried to achieve or do something.
Thereby	As a result of that; by means of that.
Stripped from	Removed or taken away from someone or something.
Yonic	Relating to or resembling a female organ, especially symbolically in architecture or art.
Conjoining	Joining together or merging.
Petri dish	A shallow, flat dish used in laboratories for cultivating biological cultures, here symbolizing a controlled environment.
Husk	The outer shell or covering of a seed or fruit, often empty or discarded.
Hollowed out	Made empty by removing the inside, often used to describe something that has been emptied or carved.
Smothering	Suffocating or covering completely, often in a way that prevents growth or breathing.
Bursts into	Sudden or forceful entry or beginning of an action.
Torn from	Pulled away or ripped from something.

Torn from	Pulled away or ripped from something.
Buffeted by	Hit or struck repeatedly, often by wind or forces of nature.
Entangle	To twist or involve in a confusing way, making movement difficult.
Take up	To begin or engage in an activity, or to occupy space or time.
Absent-minded	Forgetful or inattentive, often due to being preoccupied with something else.
Tackled by	Confronted or dealt with, often in a physical or direct way.
Girdling	Encircling or surrounding something tightly, often referring to a plant's stem being cut around.
Bring to the fore	To make something more noticeable or important.
Albeit	Although; used to introduce a contrast or exception.

EXERCISE 1 – Choose the correct option a, b, c or d.

1. What is the central theme of the text?

- a) The historical evolution of architecture
- b) The role of language and symbolism in architecture
- c) The impact of modern architecture on urban life
- d) The debate between functional and symbolic architecture

2. According to the text, what do buildings reveal about society?

- a) The economic status of the country
- b) The relationship between architecture and its publics
- c) The cultural history of the country
- d) The social class of the people living in them

3. What is the difference between a 'duck' and a 'decorated shed' in architecture?

- a) A 'duck' is a structure with minimal decoration, while a 'decorated shed' is more elaborate.
- b) A 'duck' represents its function explicitly through its shape, while a 'decorated shed' uses signs and decor to convey its purpose.

- c) A 'duck' is a modern building, while a 'decorated shed' is a postmodern building.
- d) A 'duck' is a building meant for large-scale public events, while a 'decorated shed' is a private residence.

4. What does the phrase "the church is the bible of the illiterate" refer to in the text?

- a) A statement about religious architecture
- b) The use of pictures and symbols in churches to communicate sacred stories
- c) The growth of literacy in religious communities
- d) The role of buildings in teaching religion

5. How does the author describe the impact of Modernism on architectural space?

- a) Modernism eliminated the use of text in architecture entirely.
- b) Modernist buildings spoke through signs and inscriptions.
- c) Modernism emphasized abstract, phenomenological space.
- d) Modernist buildings were heavily decorated with inscriptions.

6. What does the term "architecture parlante" refer to?

- a) Architecture that explicitly represents its function through form and design
- b) Architecture that focuses on aesthetics without considering function
- c) A movement that rejects any symbolic meaning in buildings
- d) Architecture meant only for a specific, elite audience

7. What is the significance of Times Square in the context of this text?

- a) It represents the intersection of architecture and advertising, where buildings and billboards become a form of text.
- b) It symbolizes the triumph of Modernism in New York City.
- c) It serves as an example of architecture parlante.
- d) It demonstrates the decline of traditional architectural styles.

8. What does the author mean by the term "palimpsests" in relation to buildings?

- a) Buildings that have been restored to their original designs.
- b) Buildings that have been repurposed for new uses.
- c) Buildings that have layers of text or decoration, with new messages over time.
- d) Buildings that contain traces of ancient inscriptions.

EXERCISE 2 - Fill in the blanks with the correct word from the options given, a, b, c or d.

- 1. The ancient city's ruins have been _____ by time, leaving only the skeleton of what was once a thriving center.**
a) smothering b) rotted away c) hollowed out d) torn from
- 2. The architect wanted the building to represent the concept of strength, so the structure was designed with a _____ shape.**
a) yonic b) quaint c) dreadful d) trump
- 3. The scientists were trapped in a _____ of conflicting theories, with no clear solution in sight.**
a) labyrinth b) husk c) petri dish d) percolating
- 4. The king's rule was questioned by the people, and his authority was _____ from them through speeches and acts of defiance.**
a) stripped from b) sought to c) torn from d) tackled by
- 5. The new technology _____ the issue of energy consumption in cities, making it a key part of urban planning debates.**
a) bursts into b) brings to the fore c) takes up
d) tackles by
- 6. He spoke with such passion that his words seemed to _____ the room, captivating everyone.**
a) babbling b) burst into c) smothering d) entangle
- 7. The building's entrance was positioned _____, so that the most important visitors could be easily seen entering.**
a) away b) in the fore c) high up d) stripped from

8. The architect was _____ in his work, forgetting even basic details as he became absorbed in his design.
a) buffeted by b) braggarts c) absent-minded d) otherworldly
9. The designers _____ the traditional forms of architecture to create something entirely new, although the process was difficult.
a) tackled by b) stripped from c) smothered d) conjoining
10. The mayor _____ the idea of building a new park and, _____, it was implemented as part of the city's urban renewal program.
a) sought to / thereby b) tackled by / bursting into
c) christened / ripped from d) babbling / taken up

READING 2

Operating theaters, bowling alleys and home cinemas: Not happy with safe rooms, the super-rich are building luxury fortresses



Few things appear to soothe the existential anxieties of the super-rich like a bunker designed to withstand anything short of total nuclear Armageddon. Yet it's no longer enough for the security-conscious billionaire to stick an impenetrable safe room in the

basement where it might sit empty forever. In today's uber-prime properties, bunkers have gone seriously upmarket and hi-tech, in some cases growing to the extent that whole homes are becoming 21st century fortresses.

"We've seen a lot more of a focus on entertainment," said Al Corbi, who has been at the forefront of secure luxury for 50 years as the president and founder of SAFE (Strategically Armored & Fortified Environments), based in Virginia, in the US. "If you're going to be able to survive underground, we want you to be having fun."

Corbi, who helped secure a 27-floor private home in Mumbai for the billionaire industrialist Mukesh Ambani (whose son Anant recently made headlines with his lavish wedding celebrations), is currently working on a sprawling house on a 200-acre wooded plot, at an undisclosed location in the US (he is understandably tight-lipped about many aspects of his work).



Courtesy SAFE

A bunker with bowling alley designed by SAFE. The company's AI Corbi said there is no appetite for utilitarian design in safe spaces amongst his high net worth clients and added that he's built underground escape tunnels that double as go-kart tracks.

The house itself, Corbi said in an interview via Zoom, is ultra-secure with the blast-proof doors, unbreakable windows and biometric door-entry systems. Then there's the 30-foot-deep moat with a swing bridge, the water canons capable of taking out helicopters, drones or skydivers, and the film of flammable liquid that can be automatically deployed across the surface of the artificial lake and ignited to create a defensive ring of fire.

“Look at medieval times, a moat is one of the greatest deterrents,” said Corbi. “But they didn’t have jet skis back then.” Corbi’s client, a business mogul and avid watersports fan, saw a dual use for his moat and plans to use it as a race track for his alpha pals, too.

The very wealthy have always been targets, whether from intruders, kidnappers, or assassins. Now fears have grown to include “eat the rich” anti-capitalist activists, extreme weather caused by climate change, terrorists, unforeseen apocalyptic events — and a perennial pandemic threat that was made all too real in 2020.

‘Like the Ritz-Carlton, underground’

Corbi, who has also built underground escape tunnels that double as go-kart tracks, said there is no appetite among his clients for utilitarian design in safe spaces. Even 50 years ago, he says traditional bunkers looked like high-end hotels — “kind of like the Ritz Carlton, underground”. But now his richest clients would scoff at such modesty.

A spirit of one upmanship may partly be driving demand. Several specialists have reported a bump in inquiries since reports surfaced last year of a huge compound that Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg is building in Hawaii, which, public planning documents revealed, includes a 5,000 sq ft underground shelter with living space, a plant and mechanical room to keep the bunker operational, and an escape hatch. Bill Gates reportedly has bunkers under all of his many homes.

Al Corbi of Virginia-based company SAFE (Strategically Armored & Fortified Environments) helped secure the 27-floor “Antilia” residence in Mumbai for billionaire industrialist Mukesh Ambani.

Graham Harris, a founding partner at SHH Architecture and Interior Design in London, one of the world’s leading high net worth design studios, said he, too, is responding to shifting demands. Not long ago, clients tended to build the bathrooms of their primary suites to withstand attacks. Interior walls would be made of concrete, and secure doors were designed to blend with the home’s decor. Better to be able to pop next door at night than try to race down to a far-off basement.

“Now they’ve really grown in size and stature,” said Harris, who often now secures the whole suite rather than just the bathroom, allowing clients to cocoon themselves with the flick of a bedside switch. “We also did a house in Highgate (an upmarket area of north London) where the cinema was actually the safe room with its own separate filtered air supply, secure doors, a kitchenette and a fully stocked area that could sustain a family for over a week.”

Another client turned his 3,000 sq ft art gallery into a safe room, which also had a separate power supply. To help keep such spaces comfortable, smart “skylights” can be installed in the ceiling to mimic the time and outside weather, bathing subterranean interiors in constantly changing “natural” light.

Shark tanks, shooting ranges and simulators

Secret doors and passageways have become as much a desirable novelty to show off to guests after dinner as a vital safety feature. Creative Home Engineering in Arizona — a company who specialize in creating and installing them for clients around the globe — recently built a giant working rotating fireplace that swivels to reveal the underground entrance to a shooting range. In another house, an old British phone booth has been engineered so that when the right code is entered on the keypad, the glass windows turn opaque, and the back wall opens to reveal a slide leading to a secure basement complex that includes a flight simulator and a shark tank.



Courtesy SAFE

Increasingly, the ultra wealthy are interested in features such as escape tunnels and medical rooms as seen on these renderings. SAFE say they have created some facilities to rival operating theatres at the best hospitals, with decontamination chambers and fully stocked pharmacies.

Corbi said billionaires have always been wise to danger, but he has now noticed far more inquiries from millionaires who might traditionally have been content with standard security measures. For this market, existing rooms can be secured for a few thousand dollars. For hundreds of thousands, prefabricated modular steel bunkers can be dropped into the ground under a new-build house.

For all but the most secure systems, Corbi explained his clients are simply buying time: "If someone breaks in at night, they're still going to get in, but they're not going to be able to get into the bedroom, where the family is safe plenty long enough for the police to finish their coffee and donuts."

At the richer end of the spectrum, billionaires are increasingly paranoid about threats to their health, whether from bioterror attacks, viral pandemics or old-fashioned heart failures and accidents. Covid gave a big boost to this part of SAFE's business, which Corbi's wife Naomi, a registered nurse, now heads up.

Some of the rooms she has overseen the creation of are as well-equipped as operating theatres at the best hospitals, with decontamination chambers, wardrobes of personal protective equipment and pharmacies stocked with emergency medicines as well as vitamin compounds tailored to residents to help them withstand long periods in isolation.

"Forget nuclear bombs, the thing we should be prepping for is real life," Corbi said. "If I had a dollar to spend on a bunker or on medical preparedness, I know what I'd do. The days when you can throw a first aid kit in a prefab bunker and say you're safe are long gone."

EXERCISE 3 – Say whether the following statements referring to the text are True or False.

Read the statements below and indicate if they are True or False:

1. The article focuses primarily on the growing demand for luxury bunkers among the super-rich. **T/F**
2. Al Corbi's company, SAFE, is based in London and specializes in designing high-tech luxury homes. **T/F**
3. Safe rooms are now designed with more focus on luxury and entertainment rather than basic security. **T/F**
4. Mark Zuckerberg has reportedly built a 5,000 sq ft underground shelter in Hawaii. **T/F**
5. The wealthy are increasingly interested in medical preparedness, with some bunkers equipped like operating theaters. **T/F**
6. Al Corbi mentions that his clients want their safe rooms to have simple, utilitarian designs. **T/F**
7. Corbi's clients are generally interested in features like go-kart tracks and bowling alleys as part of their luxury bunkers. **T/F**
8. According to the article, the wealthy are no longer concerned with the possibility of extreme weather or pandemics. **T/F**
9. Some luxury bunkers have features such as shark tanks, shooting ranges, and escape tunnels. **T/F**
10. Al Corbi believes that the current approach to bunkers is more about comfort and entertainment than about strictly securing safety. **T/F**

UNIT THREE

Listening Comprehension

Why cities are full of uncomfortable benches

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WeyLEeIT0yo>



When designing urban spaces, city planners have many competing interests to balance. After all, cities are some of the most diverse places on the planet. They need to be built for a variety of needs. In recent years, these competing interests have surfaced conflict over an unlikely interest: purposefully uncomfortable benches. Enter the New York City MTA. They've installed 'leaning bars' to supplement traditional benches & save platform space. But designs like this carry an often invisible cost: they rob citizens of hospitable public space. And the people who experience this cost most directly are those experiencing homelessness.

EXERCISE 1 – Watch the video and answer the following questions.

1. Why are the benches in New York City designed to be uncomfortable?
2. What term does the MTA use instead of "bench" for the new seating design?
3. What is the main purpose of defensive design in urban spaces?
4. How does the presence of armrests and short backs on benches relate to defensive design?

5. What are some other examples of defensive design in New York City mentioned in the video?

EXERCISE 2 -Vocabulary Focus

Choose the correct answer based on the vocabulary used in the video:

6. What does "hostile" mean in the context of the video?
- a) Designed to be welcoming
 - b) Designed to deter certain behaviors
 - c) Designed with an awe-style to foster certain behaviours
 - d) Designed according to the local style
7. What does the term "defensive design" refer to in the context of the video?
- a) A type of urban planning that discourages the use of private amenities
 - b) A design meant to preserve American designers and their ideas
 - c) A design that focuses on defense from birds and animals damages
 - d) A type of urban planning that discourages misuse and unwanted behavior
8. What is implied by the term "leaning bars" instead of benches?
- a) Bars encouraging users to remain upright rather than sitting down
 - b) Comfortable bars specifically designed for disabled people
 - c) A place to sleep
 - d) An area for socializing
9. What does "loitering" refer to in the video?
- a) The act of walking briskly through an area
 - b) The act of staying in one place without any purpose
 - c) The act of walking through an area with friends
 - d) Sitting uncomfortably for a short period

The architecture trend dividing London's elites

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5YquWKsi0Q8>



One of London's most unusual luxury trends might be its gigantic basements. Professor Roger Burrows and his coauthors collected data on every basement construction project in from 2008 to 2019, and mapped it. They found more than 7,000 basement additions had been built. A combination of historic preservation laws, rapidly ballooning property values, and changing tastes have led to a boom in basement building. This construction hasn't been without complications. Many of the existing residents see the constant construction as a "plague" that's hollowed out the city, contributed to air pollution, and even changed the acoustics of their homes. Burrows sees it as a symbol of increasing wealth inequality in the global city.

EXERCISE 1 – Watch the video and say whether the following statements are True or False.

1. Mr. May blamed the basement building for the flooding of his apartment. **T/F**
2. Basements are for rich people. **T/F**
3. The conflict Professor Burrows mentioned is "to have or not to have a yacht."
T/F
4. Basements are not a thing in the US because of the underground soil. **T/F**
5. The Professor wrote three stories about the megabasements. **T/F**

6. There are three types of basements. **T/F**
7. In London, it is forbidden to change the exterior of the buildings. **T/F**
8. The basement belt surrounds London. **T/F**
9. Gianluca Vialli once begged the commission to allow him to build a basement. **T/F**

GLOSSARY

Word/Phrase	Meaning
Black sewage	Wastewater that contains harmful contaminants, typically from toilets or industrial waste.
Sludge	A thick, soft, wet mixture of liquid and solid components, often from sewage or waste.
Realtors	Real estate agents who assist in buying, selling, or renting properties.
Haves and have nots	A phrase referring to people who are wealthy versus those who are not.
I am not an architect, nor am I a planner	A statement emphasizing that the speaker's expertise is neither architecture nor urban planning.
Lavish	Extravagant, luxurious, or excessively ornate.
Thunderous crash	A very loud, sudden, and impactful noise, like thunder.
Ginormous scale	Extremely large in size or magnitude.
Striker	In sports, especially soccer, a player whose primary role is to score goals.
To curb permits	To limit or restrict the approval of legal permissions for construction or other activities.
Burrow down	To dig or tunnel downward, often metaphorically meaning to explore deeper.
Compiled through	Gathered and organized from various sources.
Well-off	Wealthy or financially comfortable.
Freehold laws	Legal provisions allowing property owners to own the land beneath their property.

UNIT FOUR

Use of English

IDIOMS INSPIRED BY ARCHITECTURE

- **A bridge too far**

Designing an all-glass skyscraper in a city with extreme weather might be a bridge too far for the current technology.

(Progettare un grattacielo interamente in vetro in una città con condizioni climatiche estreme potrebbe essere un passo troppo lungo per la tecnologia attuale.)

- **Back to the wall**

With the budget exhausted and strict deadlines, the architects had their back to the wall.

(Con il budget esaurito e scadenze rigide, gli architetti erano con le spalle al muro.)

- **Behind closed doors**

The client meetings to finalize the luxury villa's layout happened behind closed doors.

(Gli incontri con i clienti per definire il progetto della villa di lusso si sono svolti a porte chiuse.)

- **Bet the farm**

The firm bet the farm on the revolutionary building design, hoping to win industry acclaim.

(Lo studio ha puntato tutto sul design rivoluzionario dell'edificio, sperando di ottenere il plauso del settore.)

- **Bet the ranch**

I wouldn't bet the ranch on that new material; it hasn't been tested in harsh conditions.

(Non ci scommetterei tutto su quel nuovo materiale; non è stato testato in condizioni difficili.)

- **Bounce off the walls**

The design team was bouncing off the walls with excitement after winning the international competition.

(Il team di progettazione era entusiasta dopo aver vinto il concorso internazionale.)

- **Bridge the gap**

This eco-friendly housing project aims to bridge the gap between affordability and sustainability.

(Questo progetto di case ecologiche mira a colmare il divario tra accessibilità economica e sostenibilità.)

- **Bring home**

The presentation brought home the importance of designing for climate resilience.

(La presentazione ha fatto capire l'importanza di progettare per la resilienza climatica.)

- **Bring the house down**

The architect's keynote speech brought the house down at the international design conference.

(Il discorso principale dell'architetto ha riscosso un grande successo alla conferenza internazionale sul design.)

- **Build bridges**

The urban renewal project is designed to build bridges between traditional architecture and modern needs.

(Il progetto di riqualificazione urbana è pensato per costruire ponti tra l'architettura tradizionale e le esigenze moderne.)

- **Burn your bridges**

If you criticize the client harshly now, you might burn your bridges for future collaborations.

(Se critichi duramente il cliente ora, potresti rovinare i tuoi rapporti per future collaborazioni.)

- **Buy the farm**

The old cathedral nearly bought the farm after decades of neglect, but a restoration saved it.

(La vecchia cattedrale era quasi crollata dopo decenni di incuria, ma un restauro l'ha salvata.)

- **By the back door**

They managed to get approval for the controversial building by the back door, bypassing public consultation.

(Sono riusciti a ottenere l'approvazione per l'edificio controverso in modo clandestino, evitando la consultazione pubblica.)

- **Castles in the air**

Dreaming of a zero-carbon city without addressing current infrastructure challenges is like building castles in the air.

(Sognare una città a zero emissioni senza affrontare le sfide infrastrutturali attuali è come costruire castelli in aria.)

- **Charity begins at home**

Before planning grand international projects, the firm should focus on revitalizing local communities—charity begins at home.

(Prima di pianificare grandi progetti internazionali, lo studio dovrebbe concentrarsi sulla rivitalizzazione delle comunità locali: la carità comincia da casa.)

- **Circle the drain**

The ambitious skyscraper project began circling the drain after losing its key

investors.

(L'ambizioso progetto del grattacielo ha iniziato a crollare dopo aver perso i principali investitori.)

- **Cross that bridge when you come to it**

Let's not worry about potential zoning issues now; we'll cross that bridge when we come to it.

(Non preoccupiamoci ora dei possibili problemi di zonizzazione; ce ne occuperemo quando sarà il momento.)

- **Don't throw bricks when you live in a glass house**

Before critiquing others' designs, remember not to throw bricks when you live in a glass house.

(Prima di criticare i progetti altrui, ricorda che è meglio non scagliare pietre quando vivi in una casa di vetro.)

EXERCISE 1 – Choose the best option a, b, c, or d.

1. **What does the idiom "a bridge too far" imply in architectural projects?**

- a) A project that exceeds the budget
- b) A design that is overly ambitious and not feasible
- c) A structure that is literally too long to be built
- d) A project with significant public support

2. **When architects have their "back to the wall," they are likely...**

- a) Facing significant challenges with limited options
- b) Designing a unique wall feature
- c) Relaxing after finishing a project
- d) Considering alternative solutions proactively

3. **Meetings happening "behind closed doors" are typically...**

- a) Conducted in public spaces
- b) Held to discuss structural integrity
- c) Focused on construction issues
- d) Private and exclusive

4. **If a firm "bets the farm" on a project, it means they...**

- a) Ensure the project is environmentally sustainable

- b) Take a huge risk by investing everything in its success
 - c) Focus on rural architecture
 - d) Plan the construction of multiple buildings
5. **What does it mean to "burn your bridges" in professional relationships?**
- a) Avoid damaging a relationship permanently
 - b) Criticize someone constructively
 - c) Ruin a relationship with no chance of reconciliation
 - d) Use creative bridges in architectural designs
6. **The phrase "bridge the gap" in eco-friendly housing projects means...**
- a) Physically constructing a bridge
 - b) Connecting two separate buildings
 - c) Closing the difference between two objectives
 - d) Expanding housing into remote areas
7. **When a presentation "brings the house down," it...**
- a) Is a tremendous success with applause and enthusiasm
 - b) Causes the audience to lose interest
 - c) Creates a structural collapse
 - d) Generates strong criticism
8. **Urban renewal projects that aim to "build bridges" strive to...**
- a) Literally connect neighborhoods with physical bridges
 - b) Focus only on preserving historic structures
 - c) Create a barrier between old and new designs
 - d) Foster understanding between traditional and modern architecture
9. **What does "by the back door" suggest about gaining approval for a controversial design?**
- a) Approval was obtained in an informal or secretive way
 - b) The design adheres strictly to regulations

- c) The design features a backdoor entrance
- d) Approval was sought after public consultation

10. Dreaming of a zero-carbon city without addressing challenges is like...

- a) Building castles in the air
- b) Burning bridges
- c) Betting the farm
- d) Crossing that bridge when you come to it

British slang words & phrases

- **Any road**
 - when you hear this, the person isn't asking you to pick a road! They are most likely substituting it for "anyway" and the context could be "any road are you from China or Japan."
- **Cheerio**
 - No it is not just a breakfast cereal but also one of the many words used to say goodbye in the UK. "Ta ta" is popular in the North of England and you will also hear "laters" and "see ya".
- **Easy peasy**
 - A fun and childish way of expressing something is easy to do or understand. We dare you to use it next time your lecturer is explaining something.
- **Elevenes**
 - a mid-morning snack before lunch that normally includes a cup of tea and a biscuit.
- **Full of beans**
 - full of beans means someone is very energetic and vivacious.
- **For crying out loud**
 - This is a replacement for a rude word. For example, you discover your bike has a flat tyre & you yell "Oh, for crying out loud!"
- **Faff around**
 - If you're faffing around you look busy, but you're achieving very little. For example: "I told him to stop faffing around and wash the dishes."
- **Gobsmacked**
 - if you are gobsmacked you are amazed by something or someone. In a good or bad way!
- **Hammered**
 - is the slang word used to describe someone who is very drunk. You can say someone is tipsy if they appear to be a bit drunk.

- **I'm not being funny but I haven't got all day**
 - this is a popular saying in Wales and simply means hurry up!
- **I'm easy**
 - next time you are in a restaurant and your friends are debating what to order just say "order whatever. I'm easy". That's a signal that you're happy with whatever they order.
- **I'm off to Bedfordshire**
 - is rhyming English slang for when someone is tired and wants to go to bed. Get it?
- **It's brass monkeys outside**
 - is used when it is bitterly cold. The origins of this saying refer to the brass handles on doors which get very cold. This bit makes sense but the monkeys bit of this saying is baffling, even to the Brits.
- **Keep your hair on**
 - can you lose your hair if you get too angry or excited? That's what this idiom suggests. For example: "Keep your hair on – I only accidentally deleted your dissertation."
- **Last order**
 - you will hear bar staff, in pubs, shout this and ring a bell at 11pm or at 10.30pm on Sunday to let customers know they have 20 minutes in which to finish their drinks.
- **Minted**
 - if someone is described as minted it means they are rich, so become their best friend immediately!
- **Mind your P's and Q's**
 - means to be on your best behaviour. For example: "My parents are very conservative – mind your p's and q's."
- **Miffed**
 - is another way of saying you are confused or annoyed. For example: "She is really miffed that she's not been invited to the party."
- **Numpty**
 - if someone does or says something inappropriate, wrong or a bit silly you might hear a Brit saying "You numpty you've got your T-shirt on back to front."
- **Naff**
 - is used to describe something that is of poor or inferior taste. Example: "I don't like my flat, the furniture is a bit naff."
- **Oh my giddy aunt**
 - is another expression for "Oh my God!" and used to show shock or surprise.
- **One off**
 - an expression used to describe something unique. For example: "I

bought this one-off dress from a student studying fashion.”

- **Odds and sods**
 - another way of saying 'bits and pieces.' For example: “My glasses were in the drawer with all the odds and sods.”
- **Pip pip**
 - an old-fashioned way of saying goodbye.
- **Up for it**
 - slang for being enthusiastic/willing to participate. For example: “I like bowling, I'm up for it tonight.”
- **Zebra crossing**
 - is often used to describe the black and white horizontal markings on the road where pedestrians can cross.

EXERCISE 2 – Read each sentence and select the most appropriate answer (a, b, or c).

1. *During the site inspection, the architects paused for **elevenes** to discuss the blueprint updates.*
a) The architects paused until 11 a.m. b) The architects paused for eleven minutes c) The architects paused around 11 a.m.

2. *The team didn't have time to **faff around**, as the deadline for the proposal was the next day.*
a) Waste time b) Focus intensely c) Rearrange plans

3. *The client was **gobsmacked** by the stunning 3D renderings of the skyscraper.*
a) Shocked b) Uninterested c) Displeased

4. *After the grand opening of the new eco-building, the team celebrated so much they ended up **hammered**.*
a) Exhausted b) Drunk c) Overworked

5. *When asked to choose between the two façade designs, the lead architect shrugged and said, "**I'm easy**."*
a) I'm enthusiastic b) I'm touched c) I have no preference

6. After a long day reviewing plans, the junior architect declared, "**I'm off to Bedfordshire!**"
- a) I'm going to bed
 - b) I'm heading to a meeting in Bedford
 - c) I'm moving to the countryside
-
7. The team working on the outdoor site joked, "**It's brass monkey outside today!**"
- a) Very crowded
 - b) Very noisy
 - c) Extremely cold
-
8. The client, clearly **minted**, wanted a gold-plated ceiling in the penthouse design.
- a) Wealthy
 - b) Trendy
 - c) Confident
-
9. The project manager was **miffed** when the team missed another deadline.
- a) Relieved
 - b) Annoyed
 - c) Confused
-
10. The storage room was filled with **odds and sods** from past projects.
- a) Leftover materials
 - b) Miscellaneous items
 - c) Expensive equipment
-
11. When asked about working on the skyscraper project, the young architect said, "**I'm totally up for it!**"
- a) Opposed to it
 - b) Hesitant but willing
 - c) Excited and ready

PRONUNCIATION

Exploring the differences between Italian and English phonology

1) the English /h/

In the Italian language, the “h” letter is silent, so Italian speakers tend to transfer this rule to English and omit /h/ in English as well. While there are some English words that have a silent h, such as hour or honest, or small “h” words in fast connected speech, most other words have pronounced /h/ sounds.

Examples: home, happening, hard, hope, hats

2) TH fricative sounds

To make these TH sounds in English, touch the tip of your tongue on the bottom edge of your top teeth and exhale, letting air pass between your teeth and tongue for a slightly longer duration than may feel comfortable.

Examples: thought, though, than, thin, those, think

3) Silent R

In Italian, the <r> is rolled, while in GB English, it is pronounced in a more vowel-like way. Often, it isn't even pronounced! This can be incredibly confusing for Italian speakers of English.

Examples of silent r before consonants or before nothing: bird, sister, your, turn, learn

Examples of vowel-like r: red, rain, roll, grapes, freight

10 Commonly Confused Words

1. walk, work
2. bought, boat
3. match, much
4. wonder, wander
5. of, off
6. loose, lose, choose, chose
7. leave, leaf
8. bow, bow, row, row, sow, sow
9. bear, beer, beard

10. tough, though, through, thorough, thought

bow /bəʊ/ – noun – ‘shoelaces tied in a bow’, ‘bow and arrow’

bow /baʊ/ – noun – the front of a ship

bow /baʊ/ – verb – ‘actors bow at the end of a play’

row /rəʊ/ – noun – ‘row of seats’, ‘columns and rows’

row /rəʊ/ – verb – ‘row a boat’

row /raʊ/ – noun – argument

row /raʊ/ – verb – to argue

sow /səʊ/ – verb – to plant seeds

sow /saʊ/ – noun – a female pig

EXERCISE 3- Add the consonant sound to the word to make another word.

Example: /g/ + eight = gate

1 /k/ + aim = _____

6 /s/ + eyes = _____

2 /k/ + ache = _____

7 /h/ + eye = _____

3 /l/ + eight = _____

8 /b/ + air = _____

4 /r/ + owes = _____

9 /b/ + earn = _____

5 /w/ + eight = _____

EXERCISE 4 – In this story, there are 12 incorrect words (1 is already done: week). The correct word is pronounced the same as the incorrect one, but the spelling is different. Circle and correct them.

week
Last ~~week~~, I cent my sun Jamie to the shops to bye sum food. He got a peace of meet and too pairs. On the weigh home, the bag broke. The food fell onto the rode and got dirty. In the end, Jamie through the food in the bin.



EXERCISE 5 – Think of a computer which people speak into and it writes what they say. This computer wrote these sentences wrongly. The mistakes are underlined and one of the correct words is given at the end in (brackets). Write the correct sentences.

EXAMPLE *She dozen turn much. (earn)* *She doesn't earn much.*

1. I thing cold cars are better. (think) _____
2. The bang caught to be open by now. (ought) _____
3. I thing call the time. (all) _____
4. These big cars whole date people. (hold) _____
5. Did he fill mother kinds of movies too? (other) _____
6. Three people have sick size. (eyes) _____
7. If you took aspirins, your head wooden take. (ache) _____

EXERCISE 6 – Think of a computer which people speak into and it writes what they say. This computer wrote these sentences wrongly. Guess from the context which word is wrong, circle it and write the correct word.

EXAMPLE *Watch your name?* *What's...*

- 1 I hate going to museums and arc galleries. _____
- 2 Have you ever tribe Belgian beer? _____
- 3 I got ache questions correct out of ten. _____
- 4 She's a good player and can wing games against most people. _____
- 5 He copied out the text lime by line. _____
- 6 It was a bag question; nobody got the answer right.

Keep on practicing with the Listening Practice Through Dictation with Transcripts exercises: <https://english-practice.net/listening-practice-through-dictation-with-transcripts/>

ANSWER KEYS

UNIT ONE

EXERCISE 1

1. Regarding
2. That is to say
3. As far as
4. But also
5. After all
6. Actually
7. On the other hand
8. Furthermore
9. Otherwise
10. At least

EXERCISE 2

- | | |
|-------------------|--------------------|
| 1. c) Furthermore | 5. a) On the whole |
| 2. b) However | 6. b) Due to |
| 3. c) Despite | 7. b) However |
| 4. b) Even though | 8. c) In short |

EXERCISE 3

- | | |
|----------------|-------------|
| 1. because of | 5. Even if |
| 2. Even though | 6. unless |
| 3. if | 7. whatever |
| 4. when | 8. however |

UNIT TWO

EXERCISE 1:

- | | |
|------|------|
| 1. C | 5. C |
| 2. A | 6. B |
| 3. B | 7. A |
| 4. D | |

EXERCISE 2:

- | | |
|-------------------|-------------|
| 1) b) rotted away | 2) a) yonic |
|-------------------|-------------|

- 3) c) petri dish
- 4) a) stripped from
- 5) b) brings to the fore
- 6) b) burst into
- 7) c) high up
- 8) c) absent-minded
- 9) b) stripped from
- 10) a) sought to / thereby

EXERCISE 3:

- 1. True
- 2. False: Al Corbi's company, SAFE, is based in Virginia, not London.
- 3. True
- 4. True
- 5. True
- 6. False: Al Corbi mentions that his clients do not want simple, utilitarian designs for their safe rooms.
- 7. True
- 8. False: The wealthy are concerned about the possibility of extreme weather and pandemics, as mentioned in the article.
- 9. True
- 10. True

UNIT THREE

EXERCISE 1:

Sample answers:

1. The benches are designed to be uncomfortable to prevent people from staying on them for too long. They aim to discourage behaviors like lying down or lingering, which could be seen as misuse of public space.

2. The MTA uses the term "leaning bars" instead of "bench" for the new seating design.

3. The main purpose of defensive design is to moderate behavior and limit the ways objects or spaces can be misused, such as preventing loitering, vandalism, or other unwanted activities in public spaces.

4. The armrests and short backs on benches are part of defensive design because they prevent people from lying down and make it clear that the bench is not meant for long-term use, discouraging people from getting too comfortable.

5. Other examples of defensive design in New York City include security cameras in subway turnstiles, spikes on columns to deter birds, knobs on ledges to prevent skateboarders, and sprinklers once placed under a bookstore awning to stop people from sleeping there.

EXERCISE 2:

6. B 7. D 8. A 9. B

VIDEOSCRIPT

Why are cities full of uncomfortable benches?

This one has armrests to prevent you from dozing off — to prevent you from taking a nap.

Here's another — again with the arms, the stiff metal.

And this one — it's brand new.

The MTA in New York began installing them as part of a subway enhancement plan.

And they don't call it a bench.

They prefer the term "leaning bars."

So what if I told you it was designed with discomfort in mind?

New York City is filled with some of the most innovative architecture and urban planning in the world. Today, nearly every kind of public space here has been developed with close attention to detail.

So these benches are no mistake. They are designed to allow you to sit but not get too cozy.

And that is intentional.

The concept stems from a school of thought that goes by many names, but today we'll use "defensive design."

Defensive design is about moderating behavior.

The goal is to limit the ways an object can be misused.

These benches have armrests because that will prevent anyone from laying down.

Their short back is another nod to say, "This bench isn't yours forever."

This trend is worldwide. And it's not just in the benches.

When you start looking for defensive designs in New York City, you'll find examples everywhere:

- It's the presence of security cameras in subway turnstiles or Times Square.
- It's these spikes on this column, meant to deter birds.
- It's the knobs on these ledges, to discourage skateboarders.
- There were once sprinklers underneath the awning of this bookstore, to prevent people from sleeping there.
- It's sidewalk barriers.
- It's even these regular streetlights.

Streetlights are probably some of the most recognizable defensive designs. When they surfaced in 19th-century Western cities, the dynamic of urban life changed. More people spent time outside at night, which drove economic development and a reduction in crime.

Most hostile architecture tries to influence behavior in a similar way.

The designs attempt to make public space a bit more hospitable, more ideal. Defensive designs can deter crime, prevent the destruction of public property, and prevent loitering.

But there is a reason why defensive design is characterized as "hostile."

Take the example of the bench again.

Disability advocates have a problem with that appearing in the MTA.

One advocate pointed out that "People who travel with disabilities or just get tired sometimes need a bench to sit on, not a wall to lean against."

And while no one likes an uncomfortable bench, these additions mean something more for people who are experiencing homelessness.

The United States is currently experiencing a decline in the overall homeless population.

But in New York, the homeless population is growing.

About 1,800 people were found to have been sleeping in the subway.

That's because emergency shelter isn't always a viable option.

There are several examples of hostile architecture that target people who are homeless.

These designs imply that public space is not where homeless people should be.

As it goes, city planners have a dilemma — how do they design inclusive cities?

As for the enhanced subway initiative, the MTA's mock designs highlight new USB ports and electronic signage in stations.

But you won't find any press materials highlighting this uncomfortable bench. Excuse me, the "leaning bar."

That's because it makes for an uncomfortable discussion about who we design public space for — and who gets left out.

READING 2

EXERCISE 1:

1. True
2. False – The transcript specifies that basements are not just for the rich but for the *superrich*.
3. False – He described it as a conflict between "the haves and the have yachts."
4. True – The transcript mentions that in New York, digging basements is difficult due to the rocky soil.
5. False – He did not write stories; rather, he studied and mapped basements, categorizing "mega-basements" as those with three stories or more.
6. True – The transcript mentions "standard," "large," and "mega-basements."
7. True – The historic codes in London prevent changes to the outside appearance of properties.
8. False – The basement belt is concentrated in particular wealthy neighborhoods, not around all of London.
9. False – He begged the commission to *stop* his neighbors from expanding their basements.

VIDEOSCRIPT

This is Queen's Freddie Mercury, and next to him is lead guitarist Brian May, who in July 2021 returned home to find his Kensington, London home flooded, covered in black sewage sludge. He blamed the basement building that has been plaguing this area for the past 10 years. From 2008 to 2019, 7328 basements were added to homes in London. Basements not just for the rich, but the Super rich. All of these dots represent private underground swimming pools and cinemas and wine cellars. Click to London's top luxury Realtors, sort by price, and you'll find underwater playgrounds and theaters. Homes like this 25,000,000 LB one with two basement levels, including a bar and spa. London's elite are building underground layers. It's an interesting kind of conflict between these different very, very wealthy people. Or as we said, I think

in one page we say it's a conflict between the Habs and the heavy arts. I'm Professor Roger Burrows. I'm Professor of Cities in the School of Architecture, Planning and Landscape at Newcastle University. But I'm not an architect, nor am I a planner. I'm essentially a sociologist and a statistician. Do you remember how y'all got the idea, though? Was it literally just you're walking down the street, you see a ton of construction trucks all the time, and you wonder? Why is there always construction on this street? And then you say, oh, I bet they're making a basement. Exactly. We were doing a case study of four or five different neighborhoods in London and we were interviewing residents about what was happening in the neighborhood. We would notice as we were doing this streets with five or six of these excavations going on at the same time with lorries moving up and down. And indeed, the people that we're interviewing really just wanted to talk about it because they felt that their neighborhood was being ruined. Each borough in London has a Planning Commission where people have to submit renovation plans. Burrows and his co-authors searched every application and found all the basements and then mapped them. But mostly it's concentrated around the great parks around Hyde Park, Kensington, Chelsea, and Hammersmith and Fulham. Brian May's house in Kensington had an original half underground floor. Suddenly his neighbors were all building basements of an entirely different scale. A well-off neighborhood became extremely well-off. Transnational elites were literally burying millions and millions of dollars in the ground. So this isn't as much of a thing in America. Do you have a sense why that is? Is it the historic codes in London? You can't really change the outside appearance of a property. You can't fill the loft out and you can't extend at the back. But because of the freehold laws, you own all of the land under the property, so you can Burrow down. A lot of it is also geological. New York is another kind of world city where you might expect these things to be occurring. That happened a little bit in Brooklyn. But you're literally trying to mine out rock. The great thing about London is of course it's clay, so it's very easy to dig down and generate these spaces. Burrows and his co-authors mapped standard, large, and mega basements, and what we call mega basements are three stories or more. Or two stories, but which extend beyond the envelope. We find 118 of those, and they're on a ginormous scale. This map shows their concentration in wealthy neighborhoods. The combination of incredible wealth and inflexible exteriors led to massive basement builds. Wine cellars, gyms, art galleries, ballrooms, panic rooms, gun stores. In the late 1800s, a shipowner named Charles Booth started tracking inequality in London, a gradient that he mapped from wealth to poverty, compiled through extensive surveys. There is now a clear what I would call basement belt in London and concentrated within particular neighborhoods, in particular particular streets. So I think it is a physical. Manifestation of gross wealth inequality. In the mid 2010s, London boroughs began to curb permits for multi-level basements because of resident concerns like those of Queen's Brian May. The consequences are more than just flooding. Deep digging can cause structural collapses, but basement construction hasn't stopped completely. Gianluca Viali was one of the best Italian strikers in the 1980s and 90s. When he moved to London in 1996, his legend only grew

as he moved into management. He helped lead Italy to win the Euro 2020 final. In 2020, he appeared in the lower right corner of a video conference stream, begging the Kensington and Chelsea Applications Committee not to let his neighbors expand their basements after he'd lived through earlier construction, the noise pollution and the air pollution had been unbearable. I beg you not to give them permission to do that. No one can be successful unless they make the life of everyone else around them a nightmare. Today, his neighbor's house is for sale. It's lavish. There's also one major selling point. The Planning Board has granted permission for a basement excavation.

UNIT FOUR

EXERCISE 1:

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. b | 6. c |
| 2. a | 7. a |
| 3. d | 8. d |
| 4. b | 9. a |
| 5. c | 10. a |

EXERCISE 2:

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. C | 7. C |
| 2. A | 8. A |
| 3. A | 9. B |
| 4. B | 10. B |
| 5. C | 11. C |
| 6. A | |

EXERCISE 3:

- | | | | | |
|---------------|------------|--------------|--------------|----------------|
| 1. came | 2. Cake | 3. Late | 4. Rows/rose | 5. Wait/weight |
| 6. Size/sighs | 7. Hi/high | 8. bear/bare | 9. Burn | |

EXERCISE 4:

sent – son – buy – some – piece – meat – two – pears – way – road - threw

EXERCISE 5:

1. old 2. bank 3. think 4. eight 5. film 6. six 7. wouldn't

EXERCISE 6:

1. art 2. tried 3. eight 4. win 5. line 6. bad

FINAL TEST

DOMANDE PER CREAZIONE QUIZ SEMINARIO ON DEMAND

Inserire 12 domande relative al seminario e indicare la risposta corretta

	Domanda	Vero	Falso
1	Behind closed doors means something hidden or kept secret from the public.	X	
2	Bounce off the walls means to be very sad.		X
3	Castles in the air refers to plans which have little chance to happen.	X	
4	Don't throw bricks when you live in a glass house: it refers to people who should not criticize others for the faults that they have.	X	
5	House of cards refers to something stable and permanent.		X
6	Sitting on the fence means making no decision.	X	
7	Take the floor means to start a phone call.		X
8	Talking to a brick wall means talking to someone who does not understand	X	
9	To be as thick as two bricks means to be open-minded		X
10	Water under the bridge refers to something that may happen soon.		X
11	Were you born in a field? It is often said to a person who leaves all the doors open.	X	
12	Writing on the wall means that something is crystal clear.	X	



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