

Providing Institution:



You will read a blog about a woman looking for a flat.

- Read the following text.
- Answer the multiple-choice questions about it and choose the correct answer: A, B, C or D.
- Place a ☐ in the appropriate box on your Answer Sheet.

Jasmine Porter's Blog

Today has been a difficult day filled with arguments.

I left university after completing my graphic design course in the summer. Until then I had lived in various subsidised university accommodation over four years. So leaving a sheltered life and having to find accommodation in the market place was a real shock. We decided, two girls and two boys, to find a flat, and I volunteered to speak to the flat-owners.

At first sight one would think that our university town would be an easy place to find accommodation. All the heavy industry and manufacturing industries closed down a couple of decades ago and many people moved away to find work, so compared with the country as a whole house prices are low here. Flats of various sizes are available, but finding a cheap flat of a reasonable size affordable for four young people was challenging.

Like any sizeable town, ours has districts with different housing. Goldmark in the west contains most of the wealthy housing and we didn't bother looking there. Newtown way out to the south is mostly prefabricated housing blocks with high levels of unemployment but very little going on at the cultural level. After eliminating those areas, we confined our search to Babylon in the east with its multicultural background.

Of the four of us three were living on savings and welfare payments. Paul, one of the boys, had a night job working in a twenty-four hour mini-supermarket in the town centre. Our poor economic profile meant that flat owners were reluctant to rent to us, fearing that we would default on our rent payments. In the end we claimed to have jobs that we did not. If we hadn't done so, we wouldn't have found anywhere.

By far the most disturbing aspect during our search was the run-down character of so much of the property on offer. Much of it fell far below legal standards: the gas and electricity systems were poorly maintained and the sewage systems were below standard. Usually these properties were meagerly furnished and were extremely dirty. We had to choose the least worst option which was a three-roomed flat on the fourth floor of a tenement building.

We moved in today. The landlord asked for a thousand Euro deposit and three months rent in advance. With great difficulty we complied. The place is filthy and I have drawn up a list of work that needs to be done to make the place liveable. As we only have three rooms we drew lots to see who would end up with the kitchen: the other girl, Dora, chose the short straw. Well, she can make cups of tea during the night.

Anyway I must sign off now as I have work to do.



Questions for Task Three:

14. Before searching for her current flat Jasmine...

- A** had only lived in one place at university.
- B** had received financial assistance for housing.
- C** didn't realise that she would have to move.
- D** knew much about the difficulties in renting accommodation.

15. Jasmine says that housing in the town is...

- A** in shorter supply than elsewhere.
- B** not easily obtainable by the young.
- C** becoming expensive.
- D** unsuitable for young people.

16. Concerning the geography of the town, Jasmine says...

- A** housing price and quality is broadly uniform.
- B** she rejected some parts for reasons other than price.
- C** she would have liked to live in Goldmark.
- D** Babylon was desirable because it was populated mainly by young people.

17. Concerning finance, Jasmine says...

- A** they were collectively unable to pay the rent.
- B** Paul had to subsidise his flatmates.
- C** Paul's employment was decisive in getting the flat.
- D** they were able to rent their flat only by lying.

18. Concerning the quality of rented accommodation Janice says...

- A** the maintenance level of the flats was not the most pressing issue.
- B** no furniture was provided.
- C** there was nothing good to choose from.
- D** she was pleased with their final choice.

19. After moving in...

- A** they were unable to pay the landlord the amount demanded.
- B** some of them will have to share a room.
- C** the allocation of rooms was done unfairly.
- D** somebody will sleep in the kitchen.

20. Jasmine could best be described as...

- A** practical
- B** selfish
- C** naive
- D** pessimistic

Answer key: 14-B, 15-B, 16-B, 17-D, 18-C, 19-D, 20-A