



ABOUT YOU

Answer the questions and compare your ideas.

- 1 Are there different kinds of houses where you live? What makes them different – the size, shape, colour, etc.?
- 2 What makes neighbourhoods different from each other?
- 3 If you had to choose between living in the centre of a city or on the outskirts, which would you choose? Why?
- 4 Do you think it is interesting to look out of the window when you are on a train or bus or in a car? Why?/ Why not?

Shirley Hollister is a young woman who works long hours in an office. Her family don't have much money and they have been told they must leave their little house in the city centre. As the oldest child, and because her mother is sick and her father is dead, Shirley feels responsible for and worried about her family. One day, she gets on a trolley car (a type of public transport) in order to have a break and relax. She buys a ticket and sits looking out of the window as the car goes from the centre to the outskirts.

- 1 Read the text. As you read the text think about this question.
For how long do you think Shirley travels in this extract?

The Enchanted Barn Grace Livingston Hill Lutz

She looked at the great windows and thought what it would be like if she were able to take her mother and the children to such a home as one of those. Why, if she could afford that, George could go to college, and Doris wear a little

- 5 **velvet** coat with roses in her bonnet, like the child on the sidewalk with her nurse and her collection of dolls.
But a thing like that could never come to her. There were no rich old uncles to leave them a fortune; she was not bright and gifted to invent some wonderful toy or write a book or
- 10 paint a picture that would bring the fortune; and no one would ever suddenly appear with a fortune to marry her. Those things happened only in storybooks, and she was not a storybook girl; she was just a practical, every-day, hard-working girl with a fairly good **complexion**, good blue
- 15 eyes and a firm chin. She could work hard and was willing; but she could not bear anxiety. It was **eating into** her soul.

- The train moved on, and the houses grew less **stately** and farther apart. They were not so **pretentious** now, but they were still substantial and comfortable, with no room for
- 20 **newcomers**. Now and then would come a nucleus of shops and an old bar with a group of new food shops. Here busy, hurried people would gather, and children ran and shouted; but every house they passed seemed full to **overflowing**,



- and there was nowhere any place that seemed to say,
- 25 "Here you may come and find room!"
And now the car left the busy and built-up streets, and wandered out between the open fields, where lots of trees stretched overhead, and little new green things lifted up hopeful heads, and dared to grow in the sunshine.
- 30 A new smell, the smell of rich earth and young green growing things ... Ah! This was a new world! This indeed was heaven! What a contrast to the office, and the little **stuffy** brick house where mother lay, and Doris cut strings of paper dolls from an old newspaper and sighed to go out
- 35 in the Park! What a contrast! Truly, this was heaven! If she could but stay, and all the dear ones come!
She had spent summers in the country, of course; and she knew and loved nature, but it had been five years since she had been free to get outside the city limits for more than
- 40 a day, and then not far. It seemed to her now that she had never sensed the beauty of the country as today; perhaps because she had never needed it as now.

GLOSSARY

velvet	cloth that has a thick, soft surface on one side
complexion	the colour and appearance of the skin on someone's face
eating into	using or taking away a large part of something valuable
stately	formal and impressive
pretentious	trying to seem more important or clever than you really are
newcomers	people who have only recently arrived
overflowing	coming out of a place because it is too full
stuffy	hot and unpleasant and the air is not fresh

2 Read the text again and answer the questions.

- 1 How would you describe the emotions Shirley feels as she makes this journey?

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- 2 What does Shirley notice about how the city changes during the journey?

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- 3 Do you think Shirley is a dreamer? Why? / Why not?

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- 4 Do you think it would be possible to make a film version of this extract? Why? / Why not?

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- 5 What do you think will happen later in the story?

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VOCABULARY

- 3 Complete the text with the correct word from the box. There is one word you do not need to use.

complexion newcomers overflowing
stately stuffy velvet

Although from the outside the building looked very
¹, as if someone very important
lived there, the rooms inside were actually very
² – the windows had not been
opened for months. The large tables were covered
with a kind of red ³ material
that look really old and dirty. Janet and Ross walked
around the house opening windows and looking in
cupboards ⁴ with old clothes
and shoes that must have been there for years. As
⁵, they knew nothing about the
history of the family who once lived there.

- 4 Replace the words and phrases in *italics* in the sentences with a word or phrase from the box.

complexion eating into overflowing
pretentious

- 1 The rising cost of electricity was really *using a lot of* the money they earned.

- 2 Does he really speak eight languages or was he just being *a show off*?
- 3 There were so many people in the café it was actually *too full*!
- 4 Because of her fair *skin* she gets sunburnt really quickly.

WRITING

- 5 Write a description of a journey you are very familiar with – it could be from your home to school, to the house of a friend or relative, to somewhere you go for weekend breaks or holidays, or to somewhere you go to do sport, shop or meet up with friends.

Think about what you can see on this journey – the buildings, people, places, etc. What do you usually think about when you make this journey? Do you do this journey alone or with others? Using these ideas, write your description in 200–220 words.

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SPEAKING

- 6 Work in groups of six. Look at the following question.

‘Is it better to live in the centre of a city or on the outskirts of a city?’

Divide the group into two teams. Team A argues for living in the centre, Team B argues for living on the outskirts.

Decide which reasons and arguments you will use to support your opinions. Spend about 15 minutes preparing your ideas with your partners. Then work with the other half of your group and discuss your ideas.