

Listening Practice

One Residence, Two Different Worlds

Do you know these expressions? Listen for context.

1. Brandon Deese **beat out** thousands of applicants...
2. ... buildings that have **set-asides** for low and moderate-income tenants.
3. In return, developers get **lucrative** tax breaks.
4. If the music was constantly **thumping** next to my apartment...
- 5 & 6. Despite some **tension**, Mr. Deese says that this apartment has helped **shore up** his financial future.



The Westminster, on West 20th street.

With your partner, discuss the following questions.
Write down their answers:

- A. What do you think about mixed-income housing?
- B. Does your country deal with this issue? If so, how?
- C. Would you live in mixed-income housing? Why/why not?
- D. Do you think gentrification is good or bad?



Farse Omar lives at the AVA High Line on West 28th Street. Mr. Omar is one of 142 low-income tenants of the building, which has 710 market-rate tenants.

Transcript

“One Residence, Two Different Worlds”

“I used to live down a block in the projects. Every time I come to my building, I just put this smile on my face. Like wow, I actually made it out of my environment.”

Brandon Deese beat out thousands of applicants for a below market rate studio in Chelsea. In the past decade, developers have built more than one hundred mixed income buildings that have set-asides for low and moderate-income tenants. In return, developers get lucrative tax breaks and other benefits. Mayor Bill de Blasio says he wants more.

“I have a bigger view, like my windows are a lot bigger, so when I look out the window I see a bigger picture. When I was in my mom’s house it was just a small little square. You didn’t see much, you know, so your perception of life was different. When I first moved in to here it was a little weird. People was looking at me like “Oh who’s this kid?” Number one cause I’m young. And I’m minority. You know, that’s something that comes into play.”

In such a dense city, the difference between tenants becomes apparent when it comes to amenities. In Brooklyn’s Schaeffer Landing, for example, low-income tenants live in an entirely separate building.

“It’s two different communities, a lot of the times we don’t mingle. If we sit outside, the security guards tell us that we aren’t allowed to sit there because that’s private property for only the tenants of those two back buildings.”

“I love this building. I love my house. They’re changing the neighborhood for the better, but this is my home. I grew up here. Some people can’t afford to make it on their own. The government supplies help to these people. I’m not saying it’s fair, but it’s not unfair either because these people need help.”

“Honestly, like, I have no issues with mixed income tenants being in the building at all, but the other tenants have noise issues where they constantly complain to the manager. They spend a lot of money to live in a place. They shouldn’t have to deal with this stuff. If the music was constantly thumping next to my apartment, I’d be annoyed to.”

Despite some tension, Mr. Deese says that this apartment has helped shore up his financial future. And the mayor’s office says that’s one of the goals of mixed-income housing: to foster more economically diverse neighborhoods.

“And now I am on my own and I’m doing it. Being here taught me responsibility. It’s just an avenue difference, but I feel like I am so far away.”