



lingoda

# Berlin in the 90s

READING

LEVEL  
Advanced

NUMBER  
C1\_2053R\_EN

LANGUAGE  
English

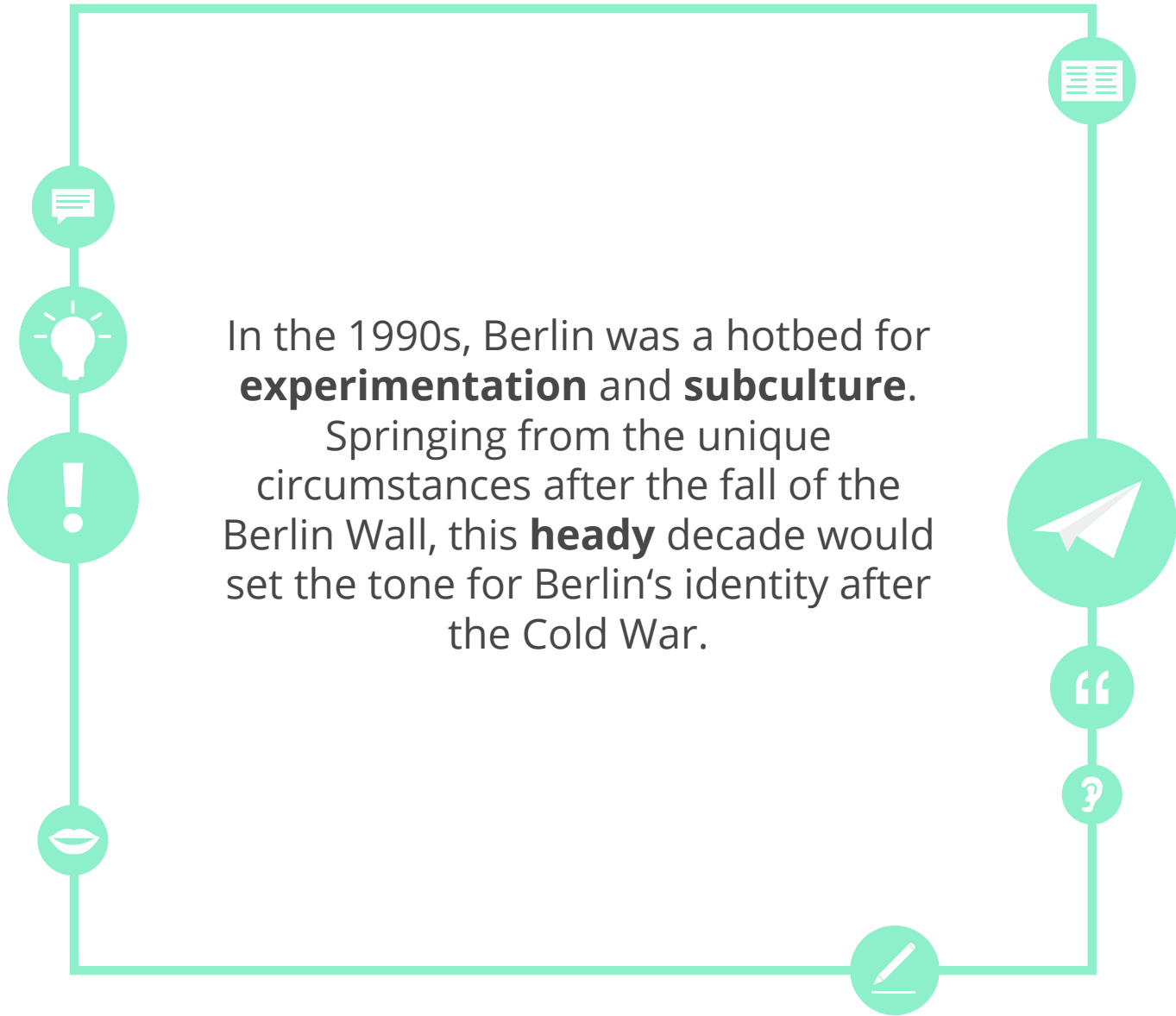




## Goals

- Can read and understand a text about Berlin in the 90s.
- Can present my own ideas clearly in a discussion about subcultured and gentrification.







# Berlin

**What do you already know about Berlin?  
Have you ever been to the city before?**





## Adjectives

**How would you describe Berlin?  
Produce a list of adjectives in the list below.**

international

nocturnal



A vertical list of seven horizontal lines on a white background, intended for writing adjectives. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the form area.



## Vocabulary



My roommate works for a **dynamic** start-up company.

In the 1960s he was a political **dissident**.



The anarchists turned the abandoned flat into a **squat**.

My politics professor holds some **radical** ideas.



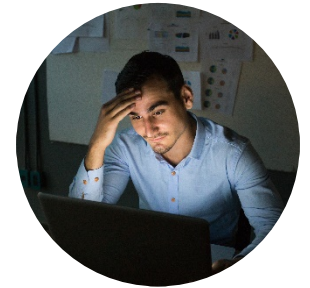


## Vocabulary



This company really needs some young **visionaries** to guide it into the next decade.

Ever since he started that new job, he has been a very **nocturnal** creature.



The United States is blessed with its **geopolitical** position.

The baguette and stripy shirt are **synonymous** with Paris.





## Berlin in the 90s



If someone is asked to produce a list of cities which are edgy, cool and full of culture, chances are Berlin will appear somewhere close to the top. The name Berlin is **synonymous** with the hip and cool. Not rich but **vibrant** – the city's subculture and **nocturnal** energy rose from one event. In November 1989 the Berlin Wall fell, through a combination of social pressure and **geopolitical** realities. Citizens in the GDR found themselves with access to the liberal, westernised other half of the city, and streamed across the newly opened border in **droves**. After a lifetime living under the restrictive curtain of communism many were hungry for the fruits and opportunities of capitalism.





## Berlin in the 90s



The city, no stranger to social or political **upheaval**, found itself reunified. Neighbourhoods in former East Berlin were abandoned – flats and apartments were left deserted, the streets were desolate, and human life seemed to have left the eastern districts behind.



## Berlin in the 90s

This vacuum set the scene for what was to come. Berlin's experience of the 90s was to be one of experimentation and unchecked freedom.

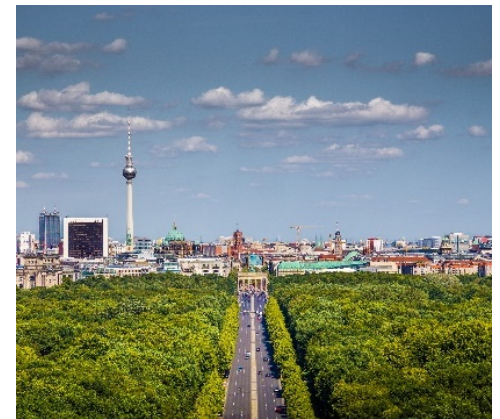
Sprawling districts of uninhabited flats became a magnet for young creatives, who were attracted by the low cost of living and opportunities for social and artistic freedom. Friedrichshain and Prenzlauer Berg presented a clean slate for artists, musicians and punks who saw the potential, forming **squats** and organising warehouse parties in run down empty spaces.





## Berlin in the 90s

Berlin had found itself in a similar situation before – its experience of the 20<sup>th</sup> century reveals a city well-versed in shifting with the times. After the Second World War, the city had to rebuild both its infrastructure and identity after having been largely destroyed by the bombs of the Allies. The city in 1990 found itself a blank **canvas** once more, but this time the new architects of the city would be the creative **visionaries** occupying and exploring the spaces left behind **in the wake of** reunification.





## New words

**synonymous**

For many tourists, Australia is **synonymous** with sun, sand and deadly animals.

**upheaval**

The 20<sup>th</sup> century was a time of social and political **upheaval** in Europe.

**visionaries**

Berlin's start-up scene is dominated by technological **visionaries**.

**canvas**

I'll try to fit you into the busy **canvas** of my life.



## Choose the best answer

1. The Berlin Wall fell in \_\_\_\_\_.

- a. 1999                      b. 1987                      c. 1989                      d. 1990

2. \_\_\_\_\_ parties sprung up in disused spaces all around the city.

- a. Warehouse              b. House                      c. Rave                      d. Drum and bass

3. Many of the newcomers to Berlin were punks, artists and creatives who wanted to \_\_\_\_\_

- a. learn German              b. emigrate                      c. experiment                      d. become capitalists

4. Citizens from the \_\_\_\_\_ streamed across the border, abandoning their flats and neighbourhoods.

- a. north                      b. south                      c. east                      d. west



## Choose the best answer

1. Berlin is a city which is no stranger to social \_\_\_\_\_.

- a. cohesion                      b. upheaval                      c. events                      d. occasions

2. Berlin once had to rebuild itself in the past after being largely destroyed in the \_\_\_\_\_.

- a. Fall of The Wall              b. First World War              c. Second World War              d. Cold War

3. Districts such as Prenzlauer Berg and Friedrichshain were left largely \_\_\_\_\_ in the wake of reunification.

- a. repopulated                      b. destroyed                      c. abandoned                      d. populated

4. The city found itself a blank \_\_\_\_\_ in 1990

- a. cassette                      b. canvas                      c. map                      d. district



## Fill in the gaps and continue the dialogue



Hey Anna, this flat will be perfect! I can't believe they just left this \_\_\_\_\_ abandoned!

It looks like the kitchen is in working order. The other rooms are empty – it's a real blank \_\_\_\_\_.

We should try to make some connections with the punks and \_\_\_\_\_ in the squat across the street.

Yes it's a perfect space to start a \_\_\_\_\_. We can take that old sofa from the street and put it in this room.

You're right. There are so many possibilities. If we get a sound system we can even put on some \_\_\_\_\_.



## Picture the scene

**It is 1990 and you have just moved to Berlin to pursue your artistic dreams. You and your friend have just found a perfect place to start a squat and are starting to put your plans into action.**

**Describe your new home to the teacher, and explain what kind of projects you are excited to work on.**







## Berlin in the 90s



This fertile atmosphere quickly developed a **dynamic** subculture. Edgy parties and nightclubs sprang up in disused warehouses and industrial spaces allowing Berlin's new community to experiment with **radical** ideas and sounds. Very quickly an underground scene developed as parties lasting days sprang up across the city.

These spaces functioned as the cradle of a new style of music – techno. 25 years later, the techno scene is still synonymous with Berlin and some of the early techno clubs such as Tresor and Berghain still retain their industrial and cavernous atmosphere to this day.



## Berlin in the 90s

The parties proliferating across the city attracted a heady mix of the alternative and anti-conformist. Punks, **dissidents**, dropouts, artists and **hedonists** suddenly were thrown together into an extremely progressive environment. The LBGT scene thrived, **recreational** drug use flourished and Berlin's now famous liberal atmosphere was established.





## Berlin in the 90s

Many of Berlin's new residents were searching for a new way of life, attempting to build the utopias and experiment in **communal** living. For the first three years after the fall of The Wall there was no control by the authorities, allowing groups to move in and form squats without limitation. Streetscapes were transformed as the **facades** of houses were draped with flags and banners, and squatters would gather on the street drinking, chatting and playing music.





## New words

**recreational**

Thomas began experimenting with **recreational** drug use when he moved to college.

**communal**

Josie encouraged her housemates to live in a **communal** way.

**hedonist**

Stop behaving like a **hedonist** and help me clean up this house!

**facade**

Lisbon's **facades** are beautifully detailed and intricate.



## Tell your teacher

What factors helped contribute to the rise of Berlin's vibrant subculture and party scene?



Living conditions

Lack of authority

Social diversity

Open-mindedness



## Compare and contrast

**In what ways  
does Berlin differ  
from your home  
town?**

Berlin has  
nothing in  
common with...

My town  
shares...

One thing that  
differs is...

There are many  
similarities,  
such as...

Some  
similarities  
between Berlin  
and my home  
are...



## Write a letter

**Write a letter to your friend describing your new life in Berlin. Your friend loves to party. Try to convince them to come and visit you soon. Use your language to try to persuade them to come to the city.**

A rectangular box containing a template for writing a letter. It features a horizontal line near the top right corner, likely for an address. Below this, there are several horizontal lines for writing the body of the letter. At the bottom left, there are two short horizontal lines, likely for a signature and a return address.



## Berlin in the 90s



For a time after The Wall fell there was a vacuum of authority, allowing groups of squatters to become organised and established in their new spaces. Many of these spaces would double as nightclubs at the weekend, as groups set up sound systems and invited their friends. Many of these groups exchanged ideas and information, cooperating and strengthening the ties of Berlin's new community.

As the 90s went on, the subculture evolved. The progressive new world created by Berlin's new residents faced increasing resistance from the authorities, who were starting to become aware of what was going on. Many squats were **evicted** while others resisted the police and **eviction** notices by joining forces in solidarity.





## Berlin in the 90s

Today, only a handful of squats remain in Berlin as the city faces continuing **gentrification** and rising rents.

Techno, on the other hand, continues to define the city's subculture, with clubs such as Berghain, Kater Blau and Tresor continually ranked among the world's best. Berlin is still a city where the spirit of the subculture in the 90s can be easily found – the influence of that decade defines the city more than anything else.



gentrification

eviction

**Gentrification** refers to the renovation of deteriorated neighbourhoods by the middle and upper class. It can lead to the displacement of lower income residents, who often face **eviction** when they are unable to meet the expensive rents.



The residents faced **eviction** as they couldn't afford the expensive rents brought about by **gentrification** in their neighbourhood.



## Gentrification



Can you think of another city which has changed as a result of gentrification?

Describe some of the changes that have taken place there.



## Over to you

**Talk with your teacher about the pros and cons of gentrification.**

**Respond to the statements below.**

Increased revenues and tourism makes cities wealthier.

Social change is a natural and inevitable process for modern cities.

Rising rents mean long term residents can be priced out of their neighbourhoods.

A vertical sheet of lined paper with a blue margin on the left and a vertical line on the right, intended for writing responses. The paper has several horizontal lines for writing.



## Debate with your teacher

**Gentrification  
is a great thing  
for a city,  
bringing more  
prosperity,  
wealth and  
opportunity.**



Agree?



Disagree?



## Reflect on the lesson

Take a moment to review any new **vocabulary, phrases, language structures** or **grammar points** you have come across for the first time in this lesson.

Review them with your teacher one more time to make sure you don't forget!





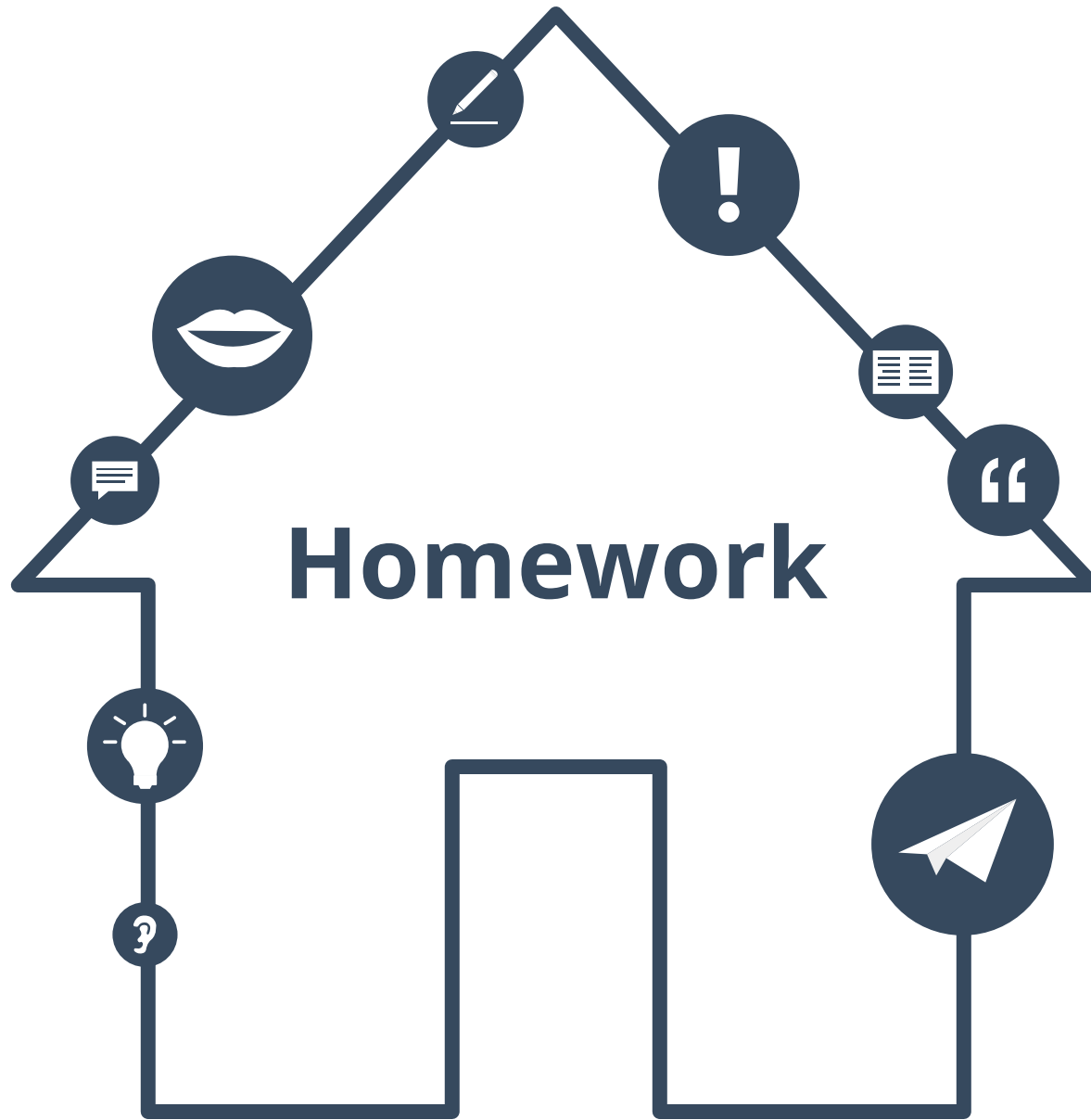
## Answer key

**Exercise p. 15**

1 neighbourhood/district, 2. squat, 3. canvas, 4. parties, 5. musicians/artists

**Exercise p. 14**  
1b, 2c, 3c, 4b

**Exercise p. 13**  
1c, 2a, 3c, 4c







## Match the vocabulary to the correct sentence

1. gentrification

2. synonymous

3. canvas

4. recreational

5. upheaval

6. eviction

7. visionary

a. The family couldn't meet their rent payments and faced \_\_\_\_\_.

b. Jane went through a period of \_\_\_\_\_ after her divorce.

c. Salvador is a \_\_\_\_\_ artist.

d. London is \_\_\_\_\_ with red buses and rainy weather.

e. I think your \_\_\_\_\_ drug use is getting out of hand.

f. When I got to this city my life was a blank \_\_\_\_\_.

g. Flushed with upper and middle class investment, Berlin is slowly succumbing to \_\_\_\_\_.



## Cause and effect

Today, Prenzlauer Berg and Friedrichshain are in the process of transformation. The squats are almost all cleared out, and the punks and artists have cleaned themselves up. Instead of street parties you are more likely to find middle-class families enjoying breakfast in cafes.

**Write a paragraph about why this change has occurred. Try to use some of the vocabulary used in this lesson.**





## Homework answer key

**Exercise p. 33**  
1g, 2d, 3f, 4e, 5b, 6a, 7c



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