

# 10 Creative Cities



**Theaster Gates**  
Social activist, TED speaker

“It was dirt. It was nothing. It was nowhere. And so we just started imagining, what else could happen in this building?”

## UNIT GOALS

In this unit, you will ...

- describe neighborhoods.
- read about someone who is using art to improve neighborhoods.
- watch a TED Talk about making positive changes in a neighborhood.

## WARM UP

▶ **10.1** Watch part of Theaster Gates’s TED Talk. Answer the questions with a partner.

- 1 What do you think Gates did with the building?
- 2 Does your neighborhood have many empty old buildings? Why or why not?



Young children playing in the colorful streets of Las Peñas, Ecuador

## 10A In the neighborhood

### VOCABULARY *Qualities of a neighborhood*

**A** Match the words in each set.

- |              |                                  |                                  |           |            |                       |                       |                       |
|--------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------|------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1 clean      | <input checked="" type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>            | traffic   | 5 low      | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | buildings             |
| 2 affordable | <input type="radio"/>            | <input checked="" type="radio"/> | streets   | 6 green    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | crime rate            |
| 3 heavy      | <input type="radio"/>            | <input type="radio"/>            | housing   | 7 reliable | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | space                 |
| 4 friendly   | <input type="radio"/>            | <input type="radio"/>            | neighbors | 8 vacant   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | public transportation |

**B** Which of the phrases above describe positive qualities of a neighborhood? Which describe negative qualities? Compare with a partner. Are there any you disagree on?

**C** Work with a partner. What are some other qualities of a good neighborhood? A bad neighborhood?

I think a good neighborhood needs a lot of stores nearby.

I agree. And there need to be nice places for young people to hang out.

## LISTENING The neighborhood where I grew up

### Identifying pros and cons

Taking notes using a chart can help you understand the pros (good points) and cons (bad points) of something.

- A** ▶ **10.2** Craig Albrightson is talking about his hometown in South Africa. Watch and circle the topics he mentions.

green space	crime	housing	traffic
nightlife	public transportation	neighbors	jobs

- B** ▶ **10.2** Watch again. Complete the chart with words from **A**. Add any extra details you hear.

Pros	Cons

Craig Albrightson,  
Pietermaritzburg

### C CRITICAL THINKING

**Evaluating** Does Albrightson generally like or dislike his neighborhood?

## SPEAKING Talking about your neighborhood

- A** ▶ **10.3** What doesn't speaker B like about her new neighborhood?

**A:** I hear you moved to a new place. apartment / house

**B:** Yeah, I did. I moved last month.

**A:** So how do you like your neighborhood?

**B:** Well, it's OK. The streets are really clean and there are a lot of parks nearby, but the traffic is really heavy. stores / restaurants

**A:** Yeah? Maybe you should take the train.

**B:** I thought about it, but I heard it's not very reliable.

**A:** So why don't you buy a bike? It's good exercise. how about buying / why not buy

**B:** Yeah, that's a good idea. I'll think about it. not a bad idea / a great idea

- B** Practice the conversation with a partner. Practice again using the words on the right.

- C** Think about your neighborhood. What are its pros and cons? Write notes in the chart. Work with a partner. Share what you like and don't like about your neighborhood.

Pros	Cons

# 10B Nice neighborhoods

## LANGUAGE FOCUS Giving advice and making suggestions

**A** ▶ **10.4** Read the information. Which things describe your neighborhood?

### WHAT MAKES A GREAT NEIGHBORHOOD?

What do people look for when choosing a neighborhood? A recent survey found that personal safety tops the list, but many other things also help.



**B** ▶ **10.5** A couple are talking about where to move. Watch and check [✓] the neighborhoods that each person likes.

	Brentwood	Crestview	Woodlands
The man			
The woman			


**C** ▶ **10.6** Watch and study the language in the chart.

Offering suggestions	
Let's Maybe (we/you) can (We/You) could One thing (we/you) could do is	move to a new neighborhood.
Why don't (we/you) move to a new neighborhood?	
How about moving to a new neighborhood?	
What should (I/we) do?	We/You should live in Crestview. We/You shouldn't move to Woodlands.

For more information on **should** and **shouldn't**, see Grammar Summary 10 on page 158.

**D** Match the sentence parts to make suggestions.

- 1 You should   walk alone at night. It's not safe.
- 2 Why don't you   check out the local nightlife together sometime.
- 3 How about   get a bike and use the bike lanes?
- 4 You shouldn't   planting some flowers to make your yard prettier?
- 5 Let's   use public transportation so that you can save money.

**E**  **10.7** Circle the correct words in the conversation. Listen and check your answers.

- A:** I really like living in Ottawa, but I don't like where we live now.
- B:** I know what you mean. Well, how about <sup>1</sup>(**find** / **finding**) a new neighborhood?
- A:** Yeah. We could <sup>2</sup>(**move** / **moving**) downtown. The shopping is great there.
- B:** Yeah, but housing isn't very affordable. Maybe we could <sup>3</sup>(**move** / **moving**) near the Greenbelt.
- A:** That's not a bad idea. I have a few friends in that area.
- B:** Great. Why don't you <sup>4</sup>(**ask** / **asking**) them what it's like?



The Greenbelt surrounding Ottawa's downtown area

**F** Complete each suggestion with your own ideas.

- 1 **A:** I want to live in a fun, exciting part of the city.  
**B:** You should \_\_\_\_\_.
- 2 **A:** I'd love to move to an area with a lot of green space.  
**B:** Maybe you could \_\_\_\_\_.
- 3 **A:** I want to find a cheap apartment downtown as quickly as possible.  
**B:** Why don't you \_\_\_\_\_?

**SPEAKING** The right neighborhood


**A** Read the descriptions below. Three people are moving to your city and are looking for a suitable neighborhood.

John	Makiko	Miguel
"I'm a student, and I'd like a quiet neighborhood with affordable housing. I want to live near the university. It would be nice to have some green space or a park nearby."	"I just started a job in the city, so I'd like to live in a fun neighborhood close to downtown with good public transportation. I want to be close to nice cafés and restaurants."	"I'm an artist and would like to live in an older part of the city. I'd love to find a place with huge rooms for my studio. I don't have much money, so it needs to be affordable."

**B** Work with a partner. Recommend a neighborhood in your city that would be suitable for each of the people above. Give reasons for your recommendations.

I think John should live in Rochworth. It's quiet, cheap, and near the university.

Good idea. Or maybe he could live in Whitdale. There are a lot of parks.



Theaster Gates's first art project in the UK saw nonstop musical performances held in the ruins of an old church.

## 10C Reshaping a city

### PRE-READING **Previewing**

Read the first paragraph. What problems on the South Side of Chicago are mentioned? Discuss with a partner.

#### ▶ 10.8

- The South Side of Chicago is a part of the city that has seen better days. Crime is a problem, and there are few jobs. Many **blocks** contain vacant buildings. But one **resident** is using his art to bring new life to the place.
- Theaster Gates saw the **decline** of his neighborhood firsthand. As he grew up, he watched as buildings were demolished<sup>1</sup> by the local government or abandoned<sup>2</sup> by their owners. But as a potter,<sup>3</sup> Gates knew how to make beautiful things from very little. In 2008, he decided to buy a vacant house not far from his own home, and he started to **renovate** it.
- He used the house to **stage** exhibitions<sup>4</sup> and meetings, and the site soon attracted many visitors. The success of the project led Gates to buy more properties—turning them into cultural centers and meeting places. As Gates says, “We were slowly

starting to reshape how people imagined the South Side of the city.”

- One building, named Listening House, has a collection of old books that were donated by publishing companies<sup>5</sup> and bookstores. Another building was turned into a movie theater and named Black Cinema House. It became so popular that soon there wasn't enough room for all the visitors and a new **location** needed to be found.
- Gates is now a well-known international artist. He has taken part in art shows in Germany and the United Kingdom, and in 2014, he was named as one of the most powerful people in contemporary art<sup>6</sup> by *Art Review* magazine. But Gates hasn't forgotten his neighborhood, and his work in Chicago continues. Gates has helped design a million-dollar art project for one of the South Side's subway stations.

<sup>1</sup> **demolish**: v. to completely destroy something

<sup>2</sup> **abandon**: v. to leave something

<sup>3</sup> **potter**: n. a person who makes pots, dishes, etc., from clay

<sup>4</sup> **exhibition**: n. an event in which art is shown to the public

<sup>5</sup> **publishing companies**: n. companies that make books

<sup>6</sup> **contemporary art**: n. art made by artists in the modern period

## UNDERSTANDING PURPOSE

Read the passage. Match each paragraph with its purpose.

- |             |                       |                       |  |
|-------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|--|
| Paragraph 1 | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | explains why Gates started his first renovation project.                     |
| Paragraph 2 | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | describes how Gates's first project led to more.                             |
| Paragraph 3 | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | introduces and describes Chicago's South Side.                               |
| Paragraph 4 | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | gives examples of two of Gates's projects in Chicago.                        |
| Paragraph 5 | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | describes how Gates continues to work in Chicago despite international fame. |

## UNDERSTANDING DETAILS

Are the following statements true, false, or not given according to the passage?

Circle **T** for true, **F** for false, or **NG** for not given.

- |   |                       |                       |                       |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1 Theaster Gates grew up in Chicago.                      | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 2 The first house Gates renovated was near his home.      | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 3 Listening House is much bigger than Black Cinema House. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 4 Few people visited Black Cinema House.                  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 5 Gates has had art shows in Europe.                      | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 6 Gates continues to work in Chicago.                     | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

## BUILDING VOCABULARY

**A** Match the words in **blue** from the passage to their definitions.

- |                   |                       |                       |  |
|-------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|--|
| 1 <b>block</b>    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | to produce a play, performance, musical, etc.  |
| 2 <b>resident</b> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | to make repairs to improve a place's condition |
| 3 <b>renovate</b> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | someone who lives in a particular place        |
| 4 <b>stage</b>    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | an area of land with streets on all its sides  |
| 5 <b>location</b> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | a decrease in quality or importance            |
| 6 <b>decline</b>  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | a place where something happens                |

## **B** CRITICAL THINKING

**Applying** In what other ways could you **renovate** a vacant building to create community gatherings? Discuss with a partner.



Theaster Gates's first renovated property in his neighborhood

# 10D How to revive a neighborhood



## TED TALKS

**Theaster Gates** decided to **tackle** his Chicago neighborhood's problems by **reshaping** and reimagining **abandoned** buildings. His idea worth spreading is that art can be a force for social change, bringing new life to buildings, neighborhoods, and entire cities.

### PREVIEWING

Read the paragraph above. Choose the correct meaning of each **bold** word. You will hear these words in the TED Talk.

- 1 When you **tackle** a problem, you (**ignore** / **deal with**) it.
- 2 To **reshape** something means to (**make a copy** / **change the structure**) of it.
- 3 An **abandoned** building is one that the owner (**left** / **just bought**).

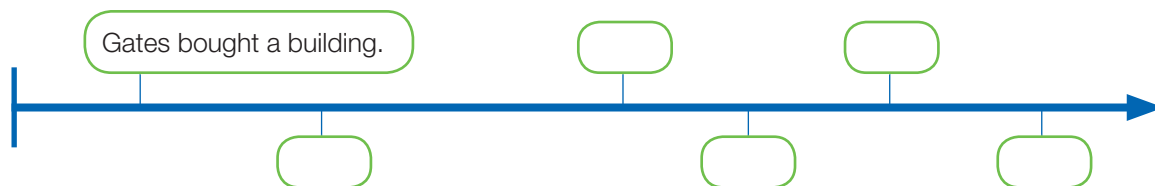
### VIEWING

**A** ▶ **10.9** Watch Part 1 of the TED Talk. What problem in his neighborhood does Gates talk about?

- a high crime                      b vacant buildings                      c not many jobs

**B** ▶ **10.10** Watch Part 2 of the TED Talk. Put the events in the order they happened. One option is extra.

- a Gates renovated the building.                      d Gates began to sweep as a kind of performance art.  
b Gates bought other buildings.                      e People started to come to Gates's building.  
c Gates got a new job to earn money.                      f Gates used the building to stage exhibitions.



**C** ▶ **10.11** Watch Part 3 of the TED Talk. Circle the correct option to complete each sentence.

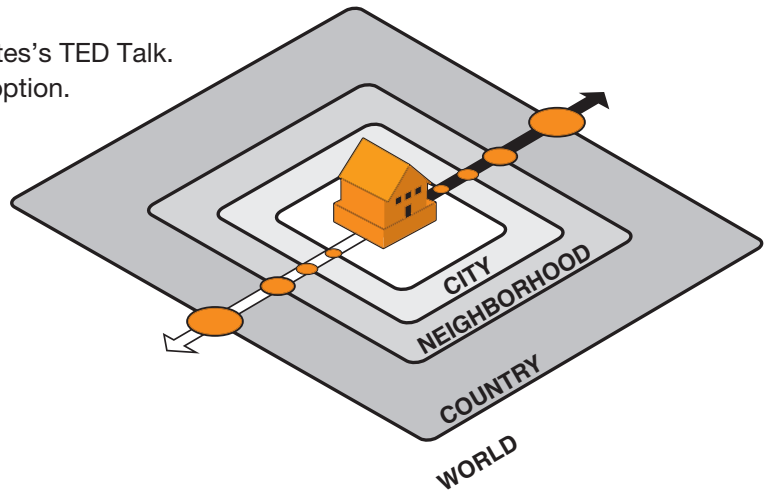
- 1 The Arts Bank project was difficult to finance because (**no one was interested in the neighborhood** / **the costs were very high**).
- 2 The Arts Bank is now used as a (**free school for adults** / **place for exhibitions and performances**).
- 3 Gates is now (**giving advice to others** / **doing art exhibitions**) around the country.



**D CRITICAL THINKING**

**Interpreting** Look at the diagram from Gates’s TED Talk. What does it show? Choose the correct option.

- a how Gates’s project faced difficulties
- b how Gates’s project grew in size
- c how news about Gates’s block spread



**VOCABULARY IN CONTEXT**

**10.12** Watch the excerpts from the TED Talk. Choose the correct meaning of the words.

**PRESENTATION SKILLS** Paraphrasing key points

When giving a presentation, speakers often paraphrase their key points to make sure their audience understands. When you paraphrase, you repeat the same point but use different words.

**A** **10.13** Watch part of Theaster Gates’s TED Talk. Complete the sentence with the words you hear. Notice how Gates paraphrases his key point.

“In some ways, it feels very much like I’m a potter, that we tackle the things that are at our wheel, we \_\_\_\_\_ with the \_\_\_\_\_ that we have to think about this next bowl that I want to make.”

**B** Match the phrases below to make sentences from Gates’s TED Talk.

**10.14** Watch the excerpt to check your answers.

- |                                    |                       |                       |   |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|---|
| 1 “It was dirt. It was nothing.    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | a how to start with the things that are in front of you.” |
| 2 “We tricked it out.              | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | b It was nowhere.”  |
| 3 “We brought some heat,           | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | c We made it as beautiful as we could.”                   |
| 4 “how to start with what you got, | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | d ... we kind of made a fire.”                            |

**C** Write a sentence to paraphrase each of the points below. Compare your ideas with a partner.

- 1 The most important thing about a neighborhood is safety.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 2 My neighborhood is really green.  
\_\_\_\_\_



A mural painted on the side of the Cultural Museum in Santa Fe, United States

# 10E A better neighborhood

## COMMUNICATE Planning neighborhood improvements

- A** A city has some problems in one of its neighborhoods, and many of the residents are unhappy. You have been asked by the local government to plan some changes to solve the problems. Turn to page 146, look at the map, and read about the problems.
- B** Work in a group. Brainstorm ideas together and choose the best suggestions to make a plan. Sketch the changes you want to make on the map.

OK. I think we should build a park somewhere.

Good idea. How about here, near the river?

- C** Work with a member from another group. Explain the changes that your group wants to make. Did you have any different ideas?

**Describing steps**  
*First, ... / Firstly, ...      Second, ... / Secondly, ...      Third, ... / Thirdly, ...*

## WRITING Creative suggestions

Imagine your town or city wants to renovate a large old building downtown. The local government has set up a website to ask the community to suggest creative ideas for how to use the building. Write some suggestions to post on the website.

I have a good idea for how to use the building. We could turn it into an eco-aquarium. We could include endangered species from around the world and power the whole place with solar energy ...