

## INVISIBLE CITIES

### A. BRAINSTORM

**a. The phrase “invisible cities” brings to mind – tick one or several answers:**

- Ancient cities that have not been discovered or excavated yet
- The Atlantis and/or other mythical cities
- A book by Italo Calvino about fictitious cities
- Aspects of cities that tourists don't usually see
- Cities that are off the tourist trail / off the beaten path
- Cities that have little digital presence
- The hidden parts of cities, such as the underground parts or the parts that can't be accessed by tourists
- Cities generated by AI and/or designed in virtual environments
- ...

**b. In the list above, spot the English equivalents for**

- Fictif, fictive
- Conçu.e
- Fouillé.e, mis.e à jour
- Hors des sentiers battus (2 phrases)
- Sous-terrain.e
- Caché.e
- Mythique

**B. Watch this short video to learn more about “invisible cities.”** You might not be familiar with the accent of the person interviewed but listen to them and spot what words or arguments stand out.

Without subtitles:

[https://www.bbc.com/news/videos/cgk7nz2ynj2o?fbclid=IwY2xjawFy9eZleHRuA2FlbQlxMAABHYsLAC1u8e-p02RC6FYLGtGNpkgruu8QqsmsmCP-mPytyLy0l1EPrtipw\\_aem\\_dcCPK7hj-IYqSjcSR4neZw](https://www.bbc.com/news/videos/cgk7nz2ynj2o?fbclid=IwY2xjawFy9eZleHRuA2FlbQlxMAABHYsLAC1u8e-p02RC6FYLGtGNpkgruu8QqsmsmCP-mPytyLy0l1EPrtipw_aem_dcCPK7hj-IYqSjcSR4neZw)

With subtitles: <https://www.tiktok.com/@bbc/video/7421900784259878176>

- 1) Write down key information about what you see and hear. Try to identify the place and key information about the person interviewed and their life. What does “invisible cities” mean in this context?

2) Fill in the summary with words from the list:

flourish - homeless – homeless - homeless – project – show – showing - the ins and outs – tour - turnaround - underbelly – unofficial – vulnerable

At the start, Sonny Murray says: “I know all \_\_\_\_\_ everywhere; when you’re \_\_\_\_\_, you get to see all these wee\* places everywhere. Tourists usually see the city center but Edinburgh has an \_\_\_\_\_”

Sully is a walking \_\_\_\_\_ guide for invisible cities. One of his tours is about crime and punishment while the other is about his experience as a \_\_\_\_\_ person.

About his life before “invisible cities”, he says “I used to \_\_\_\_\_ people about. People would give me a tenner\*\* for \_\_\_\_\_ them the train station and helping them with their suitcases.” He was a sort of \_\_\_\_\_ tour guide.

Invisible cities is a \_\_\_\_\_ that helps \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ people. According to Sonny, compared to being in the streets and having nowhere to go and being addicted to drugs, working with Invisible cities has definitely been some \_\_\_\_\_. To him, “if everybody was given a chance at something they like doing, they would \_\_\_\_\_ a wee\* bit to be honest.”

\*wee = Scottish word that means little, small - \*\*£10

3) Match 4 of the words from exercise 2 with their definitions:

	a corrupt or sordid part
	characteristic peculiarities
	thrive, achieve success, prosper
	change or reversal of role, character or fortune

**C. Reading**

To get ready, match these words with their antonyms:

Very famous	Juicy
Glamorous	Least-known
Reveal	Gritty
Boring	Conceal

Then match these words with their definitions:

Be homeless	Run
Box in which a corpse in buried	Coffin
Textile design of Scottish origin	Missed
British slang meaning “stolen”	Tartan
Manage, operate	Head (up)
Not seen	Nicked
Something unattractive or unpleasant	Sleep rough
Move / go toward	Wart

# Edinburgh's dark corners: a walking tour of the city's hidden stories

Invisible Cities' tours take visitors to the Scottish capital's **juiciest** and **least-known** stories – and with guides who have known homelessness, they are rooted in real experience

*The Guardian - Stuart Kenny - Tue 24 Jan 2023*

I've lived in Edinburgh for over two decades now, but the centuries of stories hidden in the city's stones continue to surprise me. They reveal themselves only to those who know where to look.

Angus Stirling is one of those who knows: he's an expert on the architecture and the layers of stones that make up



Edinburgh's old town. He knows who put what where in the medieval era, and which Victorian personage paved over it in the 1800s in an attempt to modernise. Angus is a tour guide with Invisible Cities, a social enterprise that trains people who have experienced homelessness to lead walking tours. Started by Zakia Moulaoui Guery in Edinburgh in 2016, the company now runs four tours in Edinburgh, and also operates in Glasgow, Manchester and York. Norwich, Liverpool and Cardiff will be added later this year.

I've signed up for the Royal Mile: Huts to High-Rises tour (£12), which takes in the city's most famous street and the old town around it on a 90-minute stroll. "Continually altered, adapted and restored, the Royal Mile is a living witness to Scottish history since the middle ages," Angus says. "Stones and cement. You don't get much more historic than that." But it's not the fascination with building materials that sets Angus's tour apart; it's that Invisible Cities tours also touch on the social landscape – teaching tourists about local social enterprises as they go.

Our visit starts in the heart of the old town, in the Grassmarket, a market since the 14th century and today best known for its wide choice of pubs. "Edinburgh is an old town, and it has a dark history," Angus says. He tells us how "Half-hangit Maggie" was hanged here in 1724 for **concealing** a pregnancy and then abandoning the body of her newborn baby – only to wake up a few hours later and climb out of her **coffin**. Maggie Dickson's pub (at no 92) is named after her. In 1736 one Captain John Porteous was lynched here by a mob after allegedly firing into a crowd during a riot.

Climbing up the colourful Victoria Street, we next stop at St Columba's, an easily **missed** church just off the Royal Mile. Angus tells us about Sparkle Sisters, a charity based here that runs events offering wellbeing services to vulnerable and homeless women. All profits from Invisible Cities go to community projects like this; other examples are street barber services and free tours for Ukrainian refugees. "We start from the Ukrainian Association, walk across Waverley Bridge and up to the castle, and I tell them about places they can take their kids or get cheap clothes," Angus says.

Angus became homeless after a downward spiral sparked by university debt and a broken relationship – and was offered the chance to train as a guide while working for the Big Issue\*.

"I thought it was a good opportunity for me to plug people full of Scottish history and language activism," he says. He speaks seven languages, and has a degree in language and history acquired after four years studying between Aberdeen, Edinburgh and the Swedish city of Linköping. Indeed, on his tour he laments the impact John Knox and the Reformation had on the Scots language.

"The Reformation brought with it the only English-language Bible which was acceptable at that time," Angus tells us. "In the 1500s, everybody had to go to church, so that meant they would have to listen to the language of the Bible for hours on end." Scots began to decline as a result, he says, and today its status is quite low: "This is one of the few countries where you're often thought to be more ignorant if you speak two languages rather than just one."

This is a tour free from the **tartan**-tinted viewpoint of many guides. [...]

Angus's tours are very much geared towards the fine details: the age of the bricks and the authenticity of the facades. Other Invisible Cities tours focus more on the guide's personal experiences with homelessness: Sonny Murray's Crime and Punishment tour (£15) fits this bill. [...]

45 Like Angus's tour, it also starts in the Grassmarket, but from there, it turns away from the Royal Mile and **heads up** to Greyfriars Kirkyard, best known for the story of the dog Greyfriars Bobby who guarded his former owner's grave for 14 years. It's also where Sonny used to sleep when he was homeless 17 years ago. "I'd carry my tent and my sleeping bag with me everywhere I went in case either got **nicked**," he says. "Then I'd climb the fence here at night."

50 As we walk, Sonny breaks up the history by pointing out social enterprises – the Grassmarket Community Project, which feeds homeless people and offers furniture-making classes, and Streetwork, which supports people experiencing, or at risk of, homelessness across the city. [...]

55 There are no restrictions on who can attend Invisible Cities' training programmes, which run in blocks of six to eight weeks and take an average of six months to complete. "It's open to everybody," says founder Zakia. "People could be in active addiction, be **sleeping rough** or have huge criminal records. If they have conditions that mean they can't work as a guide – their addiction isn't under control or they can't work with kids, for example – we'll try to find them other opportunities."

60 The training is designed to provide transferable skills. "So it's customer service, public speaking, confidence building, conflict resolution and first aid," Zakia adds. "Guiding requires you to have a lot of confidence. You're the centre of attention and everybody is looking at you, so it's the complete opposite of what often happens to people living on the streets."

For visitors, these tours provide a chance to learn about the real Edinburgh, from the **grit** and glamour of the past to the wonders and **warts** of the modern city. And in a city where tourists crowd the streets every day, Invisible Cities is a pioneering example of regenerative, urban tourism, directly benefiting local people. In turn, the tourist gets an unusually intimate insight into the city.

65 "They say everybody deserves a second chance, but most people we work with haven't had a first chance," Zakia tells me. "Our role is about storytelling, opportunities and education."

\* *The Big Issue* magazine is a fortnightly, independent magazine sold on the streets by people experiencing homelessness, marginalisation and disadvantage.

#### D. Answer the following questions about the text.

1. Use the information from the text to present "Invisible Cities": *what, who, when, where, conditions, objectives, etc.* Be concise.
2. How does it benefit guides on the one hand and tourists on the other hand? Cite several benefits.
3. "This is a tour free from the tartan-tinted viewpoint of many guides." According to the Cambridge dictionary, to look at/see something through rose-colored/rose-tinted glasses/spectacles means "to see only the pleasant things about a situation and not notice the things that are unpleasant." What does the journalist mean when he writes "a tour free from the tartan-tinted viewpoint of many guides?"

E. This is part of a movement called “regenerative tourism”. Learn more about it:

## Regenerative Tourism: Revolutionary Paradigm or Trendy Buzzword?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yhr7O59L7pg>

On July 24, Skift Research analyst Robin Gilbert-Jones and Skift Travel Experiences Reporter Jesse Chase-Lubitz discussed the emergence of regenerative tourism and the potential impact of the post-pandemic "build back better" concept. Here are five key takeaways from the discussion:

1. Definition and Scope of Regenerative Tourism: Regenerative tourism is a concept that goes beyond sustainable tourism. While sustainable tourism focuses on mitigating negative impacts, regenerative tourism aims to leverage\* tourism to maximize positive impacts, benefiting the environment, communities, and society as a whole. [...]
2. Challenges and Frameworks: There are significant challenges in defining, measuring, and managing regenerative tourism. Unlike sustainable tourism, regenerative tourism lacks a broadly accepted definition and standardized metrics. [...]
3. Consumer Demand and Market Appetite: There is a growing consumer demand for tourism practices that align with the values of regenerative tourism. Research shows that post-COVID-19, travelers are more concerned about the impacts of tourism on local communities, cultural preservation, and environmental sustainability. Younger generations, in particular, are more skeptical of greenwashing and are willing to pay a premium for more sustainable and regenerative travel options.
4. Examples of Regenerative Tourism: Several innovative examples of regenerative tourism were discussed, such as the Eden Project in the UK, which transformed an abandoned clay pit into a world-renowned botanical garden and education center. New Zealand's Bay of Plenty and Queensland's eco-tourism projects also illustrate how regenerative tourism can be site-specific and leverage local cultural heritage and indigenous wisdom.
5. Greenwashing and Credibility: Greenwashing remains a significant concern in the travel industry, with many companies facing scrutiny for making unsubstantiated sustainability claims. To gain credibility and consumer trust, travel businesses should commit to science-based CO2 targets and possibly third-party certifications. These actions demonstrate a genuine commitment to sustainability and can help differentiate serious efforts from mere marketing claims.

\*use



<https://mize.tech/blog/regenerative-tourism-101-what-it-is-examples-implementation-more/>

a) Now, use the text and the infographic above to compare and contrast regenerative tourism and sustainable tourism, using the appropriate expressions and structures.

Examples from the text:

- **While** sustainable tourism focuses on mitigating negative impacts, regenerative tourism aims to leverage tourism to maximize positive impacts (...).
- **Unlike** sustainable tourism, regenerative tourism lacks a broadly accepted definition and standardized metrics.

[Click here to revise some useful structures to make contrasts.](#)

[Also visit this page to learn more useful phrases to compare and contrast.](#)

b) From what you have learnt, which is more empowering? Explain.

> [Read a definition of “empowerment”](#)

## F. Grammar

- used to / would

Examples from the text:

It's also where Sonny **used to** sleep when he was homeless 17 years ago. “**I'd carry** my tent and my sleeping bag with me everywhere I went in case either got nicked,” he says. “Then **I'd climb** the fence here at night.”

If you are not sure about when to use would to describe a past habit, do this test:

- <https://cours.univ-paris1.fr/mod/quiz/view.php?id=989177>

If you want to practise used to, do these other tests:

- <https://cours.univ-paris1.fr/mod/quiz/view.php?id=989241>
- <https://cours.univ-paris1.fr/mod/quiz/view.php?id=994665>

## RULES

- Do not employ USED TO for events that happened only once.
- USED TO is enough to make it clear that the actions happened regularly in the past or were true in the past and do not happen anymore.
- When using WOULD on the other hand, make the past time clear: use a time expression, a simple past verb or used to.

## PRACTICE

1. Conjugate the verbs in brackets using USED TO or WOULD.

- When he was homeless, people \_\_\_\_\_ him a tenner to show them the way to the train station. (*give*)
- He \_\_\_\_\_ rough. (*sleep*)
- Invisible Cities \_\_\_\_\_ only in Edinburgh. (*operate*)
- Until recently, charities and social enterprises \_\_\_\_\_ much visibility. (*not – get*). They definitely \_\_\_\_\_ pointed out in guided tours! (*not – be*)

2. Now propose an ending to the following sentences

- There used to be ...
- Before he started working with Invisible Cities, he ...

>> **For more practice on “used to” and “would”, see dossier “Overtourism in Cornwall”**

- little / few

If you are not sure about when to use **few, a few, little, a little**, do these two activities first:

- <https://cours.univ-paris1.fr/mod/quiz/view.php?id=968597>
- <https://cours.univ-paris1.fr/mod/quiz/view.php?id=968598>
- Then use few, a few, little or a little to make sentences that reflect the contents of the article.
  - Most tourists gain \_\_\_\_\_ knowledge of the places they visit.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ people know or visit the underbelly of Edinburgh.
  - Thanks to invisible cities, people like Sully get \_\_\_\_\_ more visibility and respect and probably make \_\_\_\_\_ more money.
  - There are now \_\_\_\_\_ cities in the UK that organise this type of tour.
  - Without this type of tour, there is \_\_\_\_\_ chance you will get to see the real city.
  - “[Scotland] is one of the \_\_\_\_\_ countries where you’re often thought to be more ignorant if you speak two languages rather than just one.”

## G. WRITTEN EXPRESSION

- Discussion topics: choose one topic and write a coherent essay (using the appropriate linking words) with strong arguments and relevant examples.

1. To what extent can regenerative tourism be seen as revolutionary / a gamechanger? What challenges or difficulties can you think of?

2. “There is a growing consumer demand for tourism practices that align with the values of regenerative tourism. Research shows that post-COVID-19, travelers are more concerned about the impacts of tourism on local communities, cultural preservation, and environmental sustainability. Younger generations, in particular, are more skeptical of greenwashing and are willing to pay a premium for more sustainable and regenerative travel options.”

Discuss this passage from the text page 5. Explain to what extent this sounds true, from your perspective. Give examples to support your arguments.

- Creative writing

3. Write a description for an “Invisible Cities” tour of a well-trodden (=touristic) city you are familiar with. Your “tour” will be added to the “Our Tours” page of the Invisible Cities website\*. Explain what theme / aspects your tour addresses / highlights, which marginalized group the tour benefits and what you want the tourists to learn from it. Make sure your writing is clear and your text coherent.

\* <https://invisible-cities.org/our-tours/>

**>> Read the document “Rédiger un essai argumentatif” in the methodology section of the EPI level 4 to help you structure your ideas.**

## ANSWER KEYS

### Exercise B. 2) page 1

At the start, Sonny Murray says: “I know all **the ins and outs** everywhere; when you’re **homeless**, you get to see all these wee places everywhere. Tourists usually see the city center but Edinburgh has an **underbelly**”

Sully is a walking **tour** guide for invisible cities. One of his tours is about crime and punishment while the other is about his experience as a **homeless** person.

About his life before “invisible cities”, he says “I used to **show** people about. People would give me a tenner\* for **showing** them the train station and helping them with their suitcases.” He was a sort of **unofficial** tour guide.

Invisible cities is a **project** that helps **homeless** and **vulnerable** people. According to Sonny, compared to being in the streets and having nowhere to go and being addicted to drugs, working with Invisible cities has definitely been some **turnaround**. To him, “if everybody was given a chance at something they like doing, they would **flourish** a wee\*\* bit to be honest.”

### Vocabulary exercises page 2

Match 4 of the words from exercise 2 with their definitions

<b>the underbelly</b>	a corrupt or sordid part
<b>the ins and outs</b>	characteristic peculiarities
<b>flourish</b>	thrive, achieve success, prosper
<b>turnaround</b>	change or reversal of role, character or fortune

To get ready, match these words with their antonyms:

Very famous	Juicy
Glamorous	Least-known
Reveal	Gritty
Boring	Conceal

Then match these words with their definitions:

Be homeless	Run
Box in which a corpse is buried	Coffin
Textile design of Scottish origin	Missed
British slang meaning “stolen”	Tartan
Manage, operate	Head (up)
Not seen	Nicked
Something unattractive or unpleasant	Sleep rough
Move / go toward	Wart



- Used to / would

1. Conjugate the verbs in brackets using USED TO or WOULD. Add the notion of obligation in one of the sentences.

- When he was homeless, people **would give** him a tenner to show them the way to the train station. (*give*)
- He **used to sleep** rough. (*sleep*)
- Invisible Cities **used to operate** only in Edinburgh. (*operate*)
- Until recently, charities and social enterprises **didn't use to get** much visibility. (*not – get*). They definitely **didn't use to be** / **wouldn't be** pointed out in guided tours! (*not – be*)

- little / few

- Then use few, a few, little or a little to make sentences that reflect the contents of the article.

- Most tourists gain **little** knowledge of the places they visit.
- **Few** people know or visit the underbelly of Edinburgh.
- Thanks to invisible cities, people like Sully get **a little** more visibility and respect and probably make **a little** more money.
- There are now **a few** cities in the UK that organise this type of tour.
- Without this type of tour, there is **little** chance you will get to see the real city.
- “[Scotland] is one of the **few** countries where you’re often thought to be more ignorant if you speak two languages rather than just one.”