



GCSE

C700U20-1A



WEDNESDAY, 6 NOVEMBER 2019 – MORNING

**ENGLISH LANGUAGE – Component 2
19th and 21st Century Non-Fiction Reading
and Transactional/Persuasive Writing**

RESOURCE MATERIAL FOR USE WITH SECTION A

Is it the end of the road for London's traditional street markets? Meet the last stallholder in Hackney's Kingsland Road market.



For 40 years, Harry West has been selling second-hand goods from his east London market stall. “You could buy anything here,” he says, remembering a time in the 1970s when there were 150 stalls every Saturday, when there were so many people it was impossible to move.

These days, however, Harry West is one of only two permanent stallholders left on this once-buzzing street, after Hackney council stopped renewing licences. This is a decision which has all but closed the market. It seems

however that they did not bank on the staying power of 72-year-old West.

Despite the loss of other traders, he is fiercely determined to continue and his weekly stall continues to attract a crowd. Harry cheerfully greets a steady stream of regulars, many of whom have been coming to his stall for decades. He shares a joke with one man who talks about needing to buy the springy chairs for sale because he needs help getting up. Harry West specialises in selling second-hand household items, and each week these items are given the chance of a new life: old jigsaws, fold-up chairs, board games, glasses, records – a mass of objects to be picked up by his flow of regular customers.

The market began in the mid-19th century, when permission was given for local people to trade their unwanted goods, providing them with a way to make a living. For decades it was the place to go for spare parts and tools – everything needed to fix bikes, clocks, watches, radios or electrical items – and became one of the area's most diverse markets, full of clothes, furniture, books and music.

As one of only two remaining permanent licence holders (the other sells rolls of carpet and floor-covering), Harry West is understandably worried about whether people will continue to visit his stall. But he knows his regulars well and is on first-name terms with many. He chats to one man, the pair putting the world to rights before the man spends £3 on a mop and bucket and heads home. For West, buying and selling has always been part of his life and he has no plans to stop.

Each Saturday morning, he arrives at the market with trucks full of furniture and household goods – along with his grandson. By training his grandson to manage and sell, “what the youngsters want”, West has given the business a new lease of life, as well as a way of continuing a family tradition.

“He’s got the right idea,” says West, looking over at his grandson’s table displaying rows of smartphone accessories and computer games. “The people who fail are the people that don’t change with the times.”

West has, of course, witnessed huge changes in the local area. Wealthy people have been moving into this part of London for years. As property prices soar, Kingsland Road has become a part of London where increasing wealth is particularly obvious, with luxury flats and many million-pound properties nearby. West now trades in front of a row of new shops which includes a high-end Italian restaurant, a brand-new deli, a pop-up bar and a trendy hair salon.

West says he will continue selling second-hand household goods for as long as he can but, if the council decides to revamp the market, he will have to adapt and instead sell goods like antiques to the area’s wealthier bargain hunters. “Markets are changing and you have to change too,” he says. A street seller through and through, he has offered to meet the council to discuss how he can keep trading even as the landscape around his stall changes. He is not giving up without a fight.

Hackney council’s decision to stop renewing market licences certainly looked like the final blow in the long and proud history of Kingsland Road market. But, says West, “they have to get rid of me first!”

