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Leaving Cert Spanish

SAMPLE OPINION PIECE

TOPIC · THE HOUSING CRISIS

We all have the right to housing

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01 Sample Opinion Piece

TOPIC · OPINION

We All Have the Right to Housing

1 Estoy de acuerdo con esta afirmación. **Creo que** la vivienda es un derecho fundamental y que todos los seres humanos tienen derecho a una vivienda digna **que les permita** vivir bien.

2 En primer lugar, quiero decir que la vivienda es una parte esencial de nuestra vida. Si no tenemos un lugar donde vivir, es muy difícil estudiar, trabajar y tener una vida estable.

3 Desafortunadamente, hoy en día en Irlanda **no hay suficientes** viviendas para todos y muchas casas y pisos son demasiado caros para la gente normal. Esto afecta negativamente a la calidad de vida de muchas personas. Es muy triste ver a familias que **tienen muchas dificultades para** encontrar una casa o un piso adecuado. En mi opinión, esta situación tiene que cambiar.

4 Creo que garantizar el derecho a una vivienda digna **es responsabilidad** del Gobierno y de toda la sociedad. Tener una vivienda es muy importante para reducir la pobreza y ayudar a las personas a tener una vida mejor. En Irlanda **necesitamos construir** más casas y pisos cuanto antes. Además, **es urgente que** las autoridades ayuden a los jóvenes a encontrar una vivienda a un precio asequible. Un país desarrollado no debería tener tantas personas sin hogar.

*Phrases in **orange** are explained in the Grammar Notes (section 03).*

02 English Translation

1 I agree with this statement. I believe that housing is a fundamental right and that all human beings have the right to decent housing that allows them to live well.

2 First of all, I want to say that housing is an essential part of our lives. If we do not have a place to live, it is very difficult to study, work and have a stable life.

3 Unfortunately, nowadays in Ireland there are not enough homes for everyone, and many houses and flats are too expensive for ordinary people. This affects the quality of life of many people. It is very sad to see families who have great difficulty finding a suitable house or flat. In my opinion, this situation has to change.

4 I believe that guaranteeing the right to decent housing is the responsibility of the Government and society as a whole. Having a home is very important to reduce poverty and help people have a better life. In Ireland, we need to build more houses and flats as soon as possible. In addition, it is urgent that the authorities help young people find affordable housing. A developed country should not have so many homeless people.

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03 Grammar Notes

1. Creo que + indicative (paragraph one)

We use the indicative after ***creo que*** when expressing what we believe to be true.

• **Creo que la vivienda es un derecho fundamental.**	I believe housing is a fundamental right.
• **Creo que el problema es muy grave.**	I think the problem is very serious.

Compare this with ***no creo que***, which normally takes the subjunctive:

• **No creo que la situación sea justa.**	I don't think the situation is fair.

2. The subjunctive in «que les permita» (paragraph one)

We use the subjunctive because ***una vivienda digna que les permita vivir bien*** describes the type of housing people need or are entitled to, rather than referring to one specific home.

• **Busco una casa que tenga tres habitaciones.**	I'm looking for a house that has three bedrooms.
• **Necesitamos una vivienda que sea asequible.**	We need housing that is affordable.

3. Hay / No hay + tener dificultades para (paragraph three)

Hay means “there is” or “there are”. It stays the same whether the noun is singular or plural.

• **No hay suficientes viviendas para todos.**	There aren't enough homes for everyone.
• **Hay demasiados problemas.**	There are too many problems.

We use ***tener dificultades para*** + infinitive to say that someone finds something difficult to do.

• **Muchas familias tienen dificultades para encontrar una vivienda.**	Many families have difficulty finding a home.
• **Los jóvenes tienen dificultades para comprar una casa.**	Young people have difficulty buying a house.

4. Ser responsabilidad de + necesitar / deber (paragraph four)

We use ***ser responsabilidad de*** to say who is responsible for something. We use ***necesitar*** + infinitive to express what we need and ***deber*** + infinitive to express duty or obligation.

• **Es responsabilidad del Gobierno.**	It is the government's responsibility.
• **Necesitamos construir más casas.**	We need to build more houses.
• **El Gobierno debe construir más viviendas.**	The government should build more homes.

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5. Es urgente que + subjunctive (paragraph four)

We use the subjunctive after ***es urgente que*** because the expression communicates urgency or the need for something to happen.

• **Es urgente que las autoridades ayuden a los jóvenes.**	It is urgent that the authorities help young people.
• **Es importante que todos colaboren.**	It is important that everyone cooperates.

We can also express this idea without the subjunctive by using ***deber*** + infinitive:

• **Las autoridades deben ayudar a los jóvenes.**	The authorities should help young people.

04 Key Ideas

The Housing Crisis

WHY IS HOUSING IMPORTANT?

Everyone has the right to a safe and decent home.	*Todos tenemos derecho a una vivienda segura y digna.*
Having a home allows people to study, work and have a stable life.	*Tener una vivienda permite estudiar, trabajar y tener una vida estable.*
Young people need affordable housing to become independent.	*Los jóvenes necesitan viviendas asequibles para independizarse.*

MAIN PROBLEMS

Houses and flats are too expensive.	*Las casas y los pisos son demasiado caros.*
There are not enough affordable homes.	*No hay suficientes viviendas asequibles.*
Many young people cannot afford to move out of their parents' homes.	*Muchos jóvenes no pueden permitirse dejar la casa de sus padres.*
Homelessness is a serious social problem.	*El sinhogarismo es un problema social grave.*

DIFFERENT POINTS OF VIEW

Arguments for greater government intervention:

The government should help people who cannot afford housing.	*El Gobierno debería ayudar a las personas que no pueden permitirse una vivienda.*
More affordable homes should be built.	*Se deberían construir más viviendas asequibles.*

Arguments against excessive government intervention:

Building social housing is expensive.	*Construir viviendas sociales es caro.*
Too many restrictions could discourage landlords from renting out their properties.	*Demasiadas restricciones podrían desanimar a los propietarios a alquilar sus viviendas.*

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POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Build more houses and flats.	*Construir más casas y pisos.*
Make housing more affordable.	*Hacer que la vivienda sea más asequible.*
Help young people with rental costs.	*Ayudar a los jóvenes con los gastos del alquiler.*
Take measures to reduce homelessness.	*Tomar medidas para reducir el sinhogarismo.*

05 Vocabulary List

The Housing Crisis

HOUSING AND ACCOMMODATION

la vivienda	housing / home	**quedarse sin hogar**	to become homeless
la casa / el piso	house / flat	**las personas sin hogar**	homeless people
el alquiler	rent	**una vivienda asequible**	affordable housing
el propietario / la propietaria	landlord / landlady	**una vivienda digna**	decent housing
el inquilino / la inquilina	tenant	**una vivienda de alquiler**	a rented home

MONEY AND HOUSING COSTS

el precio del alquiler	the cost of rent	**ahorrar dinero**	to save money
los gastos	expenses	**ganar un sueldo**	to earn a salary
pagar el alquiler	to pay the rent	**caro / barato**	expensive / cheap
permitirse algo	to be able to afford something	**no llegar a fin de mes**	to struggle to make ends meet

YOUNG PEOPLE AND INDEPENDENCE

independizarse	to become independent / move out	**encontrar un lugar donde vivir**	to find somewhere to live
vivir con los padres	to live with one's parents	**tener dificultades para**	to have difficulty doing something
compartir piso	to share a flat	**poder permitirse**	to be able to afford
buscar una vivienda	to look for somewhere to live	**marcharse de casa**	to leave home

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PROBLEMS AND CONSEQUENCES

la falta de viviendas	the shortage of homes	**la pobreza**	poverty
los precios desorbitados	sky-high prices	**la desigualdad**	inequality
quedarse en la calle	to end up on the streets	**afectar a la calidad de vida**	to affect quality of life
tener dificultades económicas	to struggle financially	**llevar una vida estable**	to lead a stable life

SOLUTIONS AND USEFUL VERBS

construir más viviendas	to build more homes	**tomar medidas**	to take action
ayudar a los jóvenes	to help young people	**proteger a los inquilinos**	to protect tenants
facilitar el acceso a la vivienda	to make housing more accessible	**fomentar el alquiler**	to encourage renting
bajar los precios	to lower prices	**hacer frente a un problema**	to tackle a problem
ofrecer ayudas económicas	to provide financial assistance	**mejorar las condiciones de vida**	to improve living conditions

USEFUL ADJECTIVES

asequible	affordable	**estable**	stable
digno/a	decent	**necesario/a**	necessary
caro/a	expensive	**preocupado/a**	worried
seguro/a	safe	**sin hogar**	homeless

06 Useful Expressions

for an Opinion Piece

INTRODUCTION – INTRODUCING THE TOPIC

Hoy en día…	Nowadays…	**Estoy de acuerdo con esta afirmación.**	I agree with this statement.
En mi opinión…	In my opinion…	**Creo que…**	I believe that…

DEVELOPING YOUR ARGUMENT

En primer lugar…	Firstly…	**Por ejemplo…**	For example…
Además…	Furthermore / In addition…	**Esto significa que…**	This means that…
Por otro lado…	On the other hand…		

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EXPLAINING PROBLEMS AND CONSEQUENCES

Desafortunadamente…	Unfortunately…
Esto afecta a muchas personas.	This affects many people.
Como resultado…	As a result…
Uno de los principales problemas es…	One of the main problems is…

SUGGESTING SOLUTIONS

Es importante que…	It is important that…
El Gobierno debería…	The government should…
Tenemos que tomar medidas.	We have to take action.

CONCLUSION – FINISHING YOUR OPINION PIECE

En conclusión…	In conclusion…
Por estas razones, creo que…	For these reasons, I believe that…

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