

Killing Istanbul Softly

Level: Intermediate & Up

Objective: To understand words from context
To infer meaning based on vocabulary
To discuss the value of architectural renewal projects

Plan: Show the picture of Haydarpaşa. Ask students to tell you as much as they know about it.

Ask them if they are aware that there are plans in the work to reconstruct it. Ask them how they feel about this.

Give the students the worksheet. Ask them to match the words on the left with words on the right.

Then ask them to do the questions. You may need to help the students here. You could highlight the important parts and ask them to figure out how this allows you to infer meaning.

Open up the class to a general discussion on renewal projects. You can get their reactions and see how the discussion develops. If there is trouble getting it off the ground, stop and have students write out a number of questions to ask about the topic. You could bring up the unending reconstruction of such places as the Blue Mosque and Hagia Sophia as well.

Killing Istanbul Softly

Posted on December 28th, 2009 by Jenny White
<http://www.kamilpasha.com/2009/12/28/killing-istanbul-softly/>



Image from Infovilag.hu

The government has planned another heavy-handed, history-blind, income-maximizing "revitalization" for one of Istanbul's architectural classics and its environs, this time the century-old Haydarpaşa Train Station.

A major architectural transformation project that will reconstruct the historic Haydarpaşa train station, the Haydarpaşa port and the surrounding area has caused a stir in Kadıköy. Although Istanbul authorities have accepted a plan to rezone the area, the details of the plan are still unknown to the public. Architects, NGOs and urban planners are concerned...

Although no information about the reconstruction plan has been released, projects have already begun, the most controversial of which is from the Çalık group, a firm known for its close relationships with the ruling Justice and Development Party, or AKP.

The project's architect, Sefik Birkiye, said they will create convention and sports centers, hotels, restaurants, shopping malls, cinemas and cultural centers.

"We want to design the whole area in a contemporary Ottoman style," said Birkiye in an interview. "And we also want to develop an artificial strait with artificial canals, like the ones in Venice. And we also want to build seven copper towers to become the symbols of Istanbul..."

Match the words from the text on the left with their definitions or synonyms on the right:

A transformation	To make people upset or excited
To cause a stir	An adjective describing something people argue about
Concerned	A man-made waterway used for travel
To begin	An adjective that means “in power”
Controversial	Worried
Ruling	An adjective that means “modern”
Contemporary	A change
Artificial	To start
A canal	An adjective that means “fake” or “not real”

In groups, answer the questions below about the reading:

1. Look at the first sentence. Notice the adjectives “heavy-handed,” “history-blind,” and “income-maximizing.” Do you think these words are negative or positive in meaning?
2. How does the author feel about this project?
3. What other words or sentences help you understand the author’s attitude?
4. Why does the author mention that the Çalık Group has close ties to the AKP party?

Answer Key

Match the words from the text on the left with their definitions or synonyms on the right:

A transformation	A change
To cause a stir	To make people upset or excited
Concerned	Worried
To begin	To start
Controversial	An adjective describing something people argue about
Ruling	An adjective that means “in power”
Contemporary	An adjective that means “modern”
Artificial	An adjective that means “fake” or “not real”
A canal	A man-made waterway used for travel

In groups, answer the questions below about the reading:

1. Look at the first sentence. Notice the adjectives “heavy-handed,” “history-blind,” and “income-maximizing.” Do you think these words are negative or positive in meaning?

Negative. If anything, blind should be a dead giveaway here as long as the students know it.

2. How does the author feel about this project?

She’s not impressed.

3. What other words or sentences help you understand the author’s attitude?

“the details of the plan are still unknown” and “although no information has been released..” both indicate that the author thinks the situation is not being handled well. The use of “caused a stir” and “...are concerned” indicates people are upset. Her insinuation of a link between the project and beneficiaries of the AKP are also indicative of a general distaste.

4. Why does the author mention that the Çalık Group has close ties to the AKP party?

To further indicate that she doesn’t think the project is a good idea. She is probably trying to insinuate that the project has as much as or more to do with politics than it does to do with restoring cultural treasures.