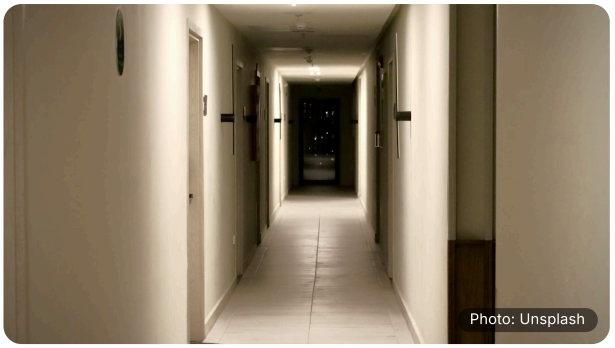
Maricarmen eviction renews Madrid housing debate

LEVEL B1


Photo: Unsplash

I. WARM-UP

1. How easy is it to find a home to rent in your city?
2. What help should older people get with housing costs?
3. Have you ever joined or seen a protest? What happened?

II. KEY VOCABULARY

eviction
the act of forcing someone to leave their home by law

tenant
a person who pays to live in a home owned by someone else

pension
money paid regularly to a retired person

investment
using money to buy something in order to make a profit

negotiate
to discuss something to try to reach an agreement

affordable
cheap enough for most people to pay

shortage
a lack of something that is needed

speculation
buying or acting mainly to make quick profit, with risk

III. READING

An 87-year-old tenant, Maricarmen, was evicted from the Madrid flat where she had lived for about 70 years. The home is in the Retiro area. The investment firm Urbagestión bought the building in 2018 and later raised her rent from €500 to €2,650.

It then cut the new rent to €1,650, but her pension was €1,350, so she could not pay. Supporters, including Carlos Bardem and singer Ana Belén, gathered to stop the eviction. Police cleared the entrance and the eviction went ahead.

An anonymous donor offered to cover most of the rent, but the company reportedly refused. The central government said it tried to negotiate with Urbagestión. The UN called for the eviction to stop and for affordable alternative housing. The city said she declined a place in a care home.

The case highlights Spain's housing shortage and rising prices. In Madrid, average rents have more than doubled in a decade, with a 10% rise last year. Some call the rises speculation. Others argue the country needs to build more homes.

Reading text adapted from reporting by **BBC News***: "Dramatic eviction of woman aged 87 highlights...". Original article linked at theenglishwire.com.*

IV. COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. Why could Maricarmen not pay the new rent?
2. Who owns the building and when did it buy it?
3. What happened outside the building on eviction day?
4. What offer was made to help, and what was the result?
5. What wider trend in Madrid does the case show?

V. DISCUSSION

1. Should governments cap rent rises? Why or why not?
2. How should cities protect elderly tenants like Maricarmen?
3. Do protests change housing decisions in your country? How?
4. What is a fair balance between owners' profit and tenants' security?

VI. GRAMMAR FOCUS

Question tags

Add a short question at the end of a sentence to check or confirm. Match the auxiliary verb and the pronoun to the main clause (past → didn't, present → don't/doesn't, be → isn't/aren't/wasn't/weren't).

"Rents in Madrid **are** *rising,* **aren't they?***"*
"The company **refused the offer**, **didn't it?***"*

VII. GRAMMAR EXERCISE

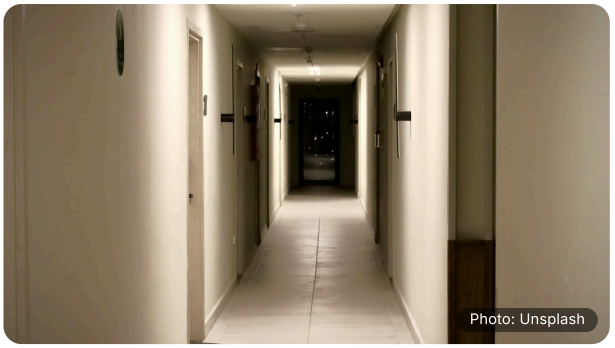
Circle the correct option in each sentence.

1. Maricarmen was evicted from the flat, (wasn't they? / wasn't she?) _____
2. Her pension was €1,350, (wasn't it? / didn't it?) _____
3. Police cleared the entrance, (didn't it? / didn't they?) _____
4. The home is in the Retiro area, (doesn't it? / isn't it?) _____
5. The case shows the housing shortage, (doesn't it? / didn't it?) _____

Teacher's Notes

TEACHERS ONLY

These notes are designed to help you get the most out of this lesson. Please do not share this page with students.


Photo: Unsplash

I. LESSON GUIDE

- Timing: 8–10 minutes warm-up, 10 minutes vocabulary, 12–15 minutes reading and comprehension, 8–10 minutes grammar, 10–12 minutes discussion.
- Pre-teach terms and names: Retiro, Urbagestión, tenant, eviction, pension, speculation, affordable.
- Run reading in two passes: gist first, then details (figures, names). Sensitivity: the story involves eviction of an elderly person and police action; start the discussion in pairs and allow students to respond about the news rather than personal cases.
- Differentiate: stronger students add one extra fact from the text to each answer; others highlight the eight vocabulary words in the reading and paraphrase the sentences they appear in.

II. DISCUSSION FACILITATION TIPS

1. Take a quick show of hands, then pair students with opposing views to swap reasons.
2. Elicit concrete ideas (rent caps, mediation, legal aid) and have students rank them.
3. If answers stall, ask for a recent example and what result people expected vs. saw.
4. Set up a mini-debate: half argue for stronger controls, half for market freedom.

III. EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

Writing: In pairs, write a 90-word news update on the case one month later, using four vocab words.

Debate: Split into two teams to draft a 60-second statement from either the government or the firm Urbagestión.

IV. ANSWER KEY OVERVIEW

Comprehension questions: short factual answers from the text.

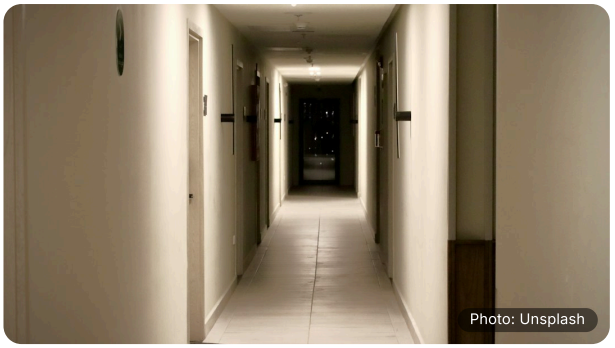
Grammar exercise: Question tags

Discussion: open-ended. Accept any reasonable ideas supported by examples and reasoning.

Answer Key

TEACHERS ONLY

These answers are for teachers only. Please do not share this page with students.


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IV. COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. Why could Maricarmen not pay the new rent?
   Her rent was €1,650 but her pension was €1,350.
2. Who owns the building and when did it buy it?
   Urbagestión owns it and bought it in 2018.
3. What happened outside the building on eviction day?
   Supporters protested, police cleared the entrance, and it went ahead.
4. What offer was made to help, and what was the result?
   An anonymous donor offered most of the rent, but the firm refused.
5. What wider trend in Madrid does the case show?
   A housing shortage and rents more than doubling, up 10% last year.

V. DISCUSSION

Open answers. Accept any reasonable ideas supported by examples and reasoning.

VII. GRAMMAR EXERCISE

Circle the correct option in each sentence.

1. Maricarmen was evicted from the flat, (wasn't they? / wasn't she?) **wasn't she?**
2. Her pension was €1,350, (wasn't it? / didn't it?) **wasn't it?**
3. Police cleared the entrance, (didn't it? / didn't they?) **didn't they?**
4. The home is in the Retiro area, (doesn't it? / isn't it?) **isn't it?**
5. The case shows the housing shortage, (doesn't it? / didn't it?) **doesn't it?**

VI. GRAMMAR FOCUS

Key point: Add a short question at the end of a sentence to check or confirm. Match the auxiliary verb and the pronoun to the main clause (past → didn't, present → don't/doesn't, be → isn't/aren't/wasn't/weren't). (Examples constructed.)

> *"Rents in Madrid* **are** *rising,* **aren't they?***"*
> *"The company* **refused the offer**, **didn't it?***"*