

## Los Angeles wildfires lead to sky-high rents

16th January 2024



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There are reports that landlords in Los Angeles are profiting from the wildfires that have destroyed many communities and thousands of homes. Many people lost their homes in the fires. They now have nowhere to live. Tens of thousands of people are trying to find a house to rent. However, some landlords are suddenly raising their rents by thousands of dollars. Local newspapers are reporting that some rents in L.A. have doubled since the wildfires began. Trying to make a profit in a crisis is called price gouging. California Governor Gavin Newsom said he would introduce price-gouging laws on January the 7th. This was after he declared a state of emergency.

The wildfires have shocked America. More than 105,000 people had to leave their homes. The fires have destroyed large parts of some of the most exclusive areas of Los Angeles. Many celebrities have lost their beachfront properties. Model, singer and actress Paris Hilton lost her house in the upmarket area of Malibu. She wrote on social media: "It feels like my heart has shattered into a million pieces." Tina Knowles, the mother of Beyonce, also lost her house. She wrote on Instagram: "It was my favourite place, my sanctuary, my sacred happy place. Now it is gone." Many people are blaming climate change for the fires. A lack of rain has left Los Angeles unusually dry. The risk of wildfires is high.

Sources: [newsweek.com](https://www.newsweek.com) / [cbsnews.com](https://www.cbsnews.com) / [yahoo.com](https://www.yahoo.com)

### Writing

Rents should be fair and controlled by the government. Discuss.

### Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

reports / landlords / communities / homes / wildfires / rent / profit / crisis / gouging / exclusive areas / Los Angeles / celebrities / beachfront properties / climate change

### True / False

- 1) The article says landlords across the USA are raising rents. T / F
- 2) Some landlords in Los Angeles have doubled their rent. T / F
- 3) Price gouging is when people make a profit out of a crisis. T / F
- 4) California introduced price-gouging laws and then a state of emergency. T / F
- 5) More than 150,000 people in L.A. had to leave their home. T / F
- 6) The Paris Hilton hotel donated money to people affected by the fires. T / F
- 7) Beyonce's mother lost her house in the wildfires. T / F
- 8) Los Angeles has been unusually dry. T / F

### Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- |                      |                 |
|----------------------|-----------------|
| 1. <b>profiting</b>  | a. bring in     |
| 2. <b>raising</b>    | b. emergency    |
| 3. <b>crisis</b>     | c. broken       |
| 4. <b>introduce</b>  | d. homes        |
| 5. <b>declared</b>   | e. making money |
| 6. <b>destroyed</b>  | f. shelter      |
| 7. <b>properties</b> | g. announced    |
| 8. <b>shattered</b>  | h. chance       |
| 9. <b>sanctuary</b>  | i. increasing   |
| 10. <b>risk</b>      | j. wrecked      |

### Discussion – Student A

- a) What do you think about what you read?
- b) What images of the wildfires have you seen?
- c) Is it better to rent or buy a house?
- d) Where would you go if you suddenly had to leave your home?
- e) How important is your house to you?
- f) Where is your happy place?
- g) Do you worry about climate change and natural disasters?
- h) What questions would you like to ask a climate expert?

## Phrase Match

- |                                       |                          |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. profiting                          | a. crisis                |
| 2. rents in L.A. have                 | b. of emergency          |
| 3. Trying to make a profit in a       | c. climate change        |
| 4. he would introduce price-          | d. areas of Los Angeles  |
| 5. This was after he declared a state | e. doubled               |
| 6. some of the most exclusive         | f. gouging laws          |
| 7. celebrities have lost their        | g. into a million pieces |
| 8. my heart has shattered             | h. from the wildfires    |
| 9. Many people are blaming            | i. is high               |
| 10. The risk of wildfires             | j. beachfront properties |

## Discussion – Student B

- What do you know about the L.A. wildfires?
- What do you think about rent?
- What are the good things about renting?
- What are the bad things about renting?
- What do you think of landlords who raise their rents in a crisis?
- How important is your community to you?
- Is it easy to rent a house where you live?
- How can we stop wildfires?

## Spelling

- ifoingptr from the wildfires
- many ommciniutes
- landlords are suddenly jagsrin their rents
- rents in L.A. have ledubdo
- in a icrssi
- he declared a state of gmyreecne
- The fires have setoeddry large parts
- some of the most lcsiveuxe areas
- beachfront peipoterrs
- in the ptrkumea area of Malibu
- people are mbglain climate change
- allsunyuu dry

### Answers – Synonym Match

1. e	2. i	3. b	4. a	5. g
6. j	7. d	8. c	9. f	10. h

## Role Play

### Role A – Wildfires

You think wildfires are the worst natural disaster. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their disaster isn't as bad Also, tell the others which is the least scary of these (and why): hurricanes, floods or earthquakes.

### Role B – Hurricanes

You think hurricanes are the worst natural disaster. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their disaster isn't as bad Also, tell the others which is the least scary of these (and why): wildfires, floods or earthquakes.

### Role C – Floods

You think floods are the worst natural disaster. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their disaster isn't as bad Also, tell the others which is the least scary of these (and why): hurricanes, wildfires or earthquakes.

### Role D – Earthquakes

You think earthquakes are the worst natural disaster. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their disaster isn't as bad Also, tell the others which is the least scary of these (and why): hurricanes, floods or wildfires.

## Speaking – Disasters

Rank these with your partner. Put the worst at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- |                      |               |
|----------------------|---------------|
| • Heatwaves          | • Wildfires   |
| • Droughts           | • Snow storms |
| • Earthquakes        | • Hurricanes  |
| • Volcanic eruptions | • Floods      |

### Answers – True False

1	F	2	T	3	T	4	F	5	F	6	F	7	T	8	T
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.