

THE ARTICLE

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2102/210211-london-property.html>

Even though house prices are sky-rocketing around the world, one property's price tag in London is raising eyebrows. A house billed as "the skinniest" in London is on the market for \$1.3 million. In other areas of the UK, one could purchase a spacious seven-bedroom mansion with sprawling grounds for that sum. However, the skinny house is just 2 metres wide, although it does have five floors. The two-bedroom house is in west London and is being sold by real estate agent Winkworth. The agent said: "It started life as a hat shop and was converted by a fashion photographer - the ultimate designer house....It's quirky and charming and great for entertaining."

The eye-catching property is just 1.6 metres at its narrowest point and is 8 metres long. There is a kitchen, dining room and patio garden on the first floor. On the second floor there is a living room, with a spiral staircase that leads up to the third floor, which has a study, bedroom and roof terrace. The main bedroom is on the fifth floor. Despite its cramped space, Winkworth says it is a one-of-a-kind abode. It said: "The interior design has the bespoke approach of a luxury yacht, making the most of small spaces." It added that: "The house is ideal for a young couple or an individual who sees the beauty for what it is and will snap it up. It is a unique part of London history. It's a bit of London magic."

Sources: <https://edition.cnn.com/style/article/london-thinnest-house-sale-scli-intl-gbr/index.html>
<https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/13989405/londons-narrowest-house-950000/>
<https://www.winkworth.co.uk/>

WARM-UPS

1. PROPERTY: Students walk around the class and talk to other students about property. Change partners often and share your findings.

2. CHAT: In pairs / groups, talk about these topics or words from the article. What will the article say about them? What can you say about these words and your life?

house prices / sky-rocketing / eyebrows / spacious / mansion / skinny / hat shop / kitchen / dining room / staircase / terrace / luxury / yacht / young couple / magic

Have a chat about the topics you liked. Change topics and partners frequently.

3. HOUSE PRICES: Students A **strongly** believe the government should control house prices so everyone can afford a house; Students B **strongly** believe that's not good. Change partners again and talk about your conversations.

4. ABODE: What are the pros and cons of these abodes (places to live)? Complete this table with your partner(s). Change partners often and share what you wrote.

	Pros	Cons
Mansion		
Apartment		
Igloo		
House		
Tree house		
Tent		

5. MANSION: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word "mansion". Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

6. ROOMS: Rank these with your partner. Put the best rooms at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- Living room
- Bedroom
- Toilet
- Bathroom
- Kitchen
- Dining Room
- Games Room
- Study

VOCABULARY MATCHING

Paragraph 1

- | | |
|---------------------|--|
| 1. sky-rocketing | a. Causing people to be surprised or disapproving. |
| 2. tag | b. A price, rate, or amount that is increasing very steeply or rapidly. |
| 3. raising eyebrows | c. Acquire something by paying for it; buy. |
| 4. purchase | d. Having lots of room; covering a wide area. |
| 5. spacious | e. A label attached to someone or something for the purpose of identification or to give other information (like price). |
| 6. sprawling | f. Characterized by peculiar or unexpected features or qualities. |
| 7. quirky | g. Spread out over a large area. |

Paragraph 2

- | | |
|-----------------|--|
| 8. eye-catching | h. Constantly turning in one direction as it rises. |
| 9. spiral | i. Made for a particular customer or user. |
| 10. study | j. Immediately appealing or noticeable; striking. |
| 11. cramped | k. A room used or designed for reading, writing, or academic work. |
| 12. bespoke | l. A way of dealing with something. |
| 13. approach | m. Uncomfortable because of a lack of space. |
| 14. unique | n. Being the only one of its kind; unlike anything else. |

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2102/210211-london-property.html>

1. TRUE / FALSE: Read the headline. Guess if a-h below are true (T) or false (F).

- a. The article says house prices are sky-rocketing around the world. **T / F**
- b. The house for sale in London has seven bedrooms. **T / F**
- c. The house for sale in London is five floors high. **T / F**
- d. The house in London used to be a tie shop. **T / F**
- e. The skinny house is 8 metres in length. **T / F**
- f. The house has a spiral staircase that connects two of the floors. **T / F**
- g. The agent said the house is good for old people. **T / F**
- h. The agent said a magician used to live in the house. **T / F**

2. SYNONYM MATCH:

Match the following synonyms. The words in **bold** are from the news article.

- | | |
|-------------------------|----------------|
| 1. sky-rocketing | a. perfect |
| 2. spacious | b. extending |
| 3. sprawling | c. method |
| 4. real estate | d. distinctive |
| 5. quirky | e. roomy |
| 6. eye-catching | f. charm |
| 7. cramped | g. eccentric |
| 8. approach | h. shooting up |
| 9. ideal | i. confined |
| 10. magic | j. property |

3. PHRASE MATCH: (Sometimes more than one choice is possible.)

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. house prices are sky-rocketing | a. "the skinniest" in London |
| 2. raising | b. of London history |
| 3. A house billed as | c. and charming |
| 4. a spacious seven-bedroom mansion | d. staircase |
| 5. It's quirky | e. eyebrows |
| 6. The eye- | f. kind abode |
| 7. a spiral | g. around the world |
| 8. it is a one-of-a- | h. of small spaces |
| 9. making the most | i. with sprawling grounds |
| 10. a unique part | j. catching property |

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2102/210211-london-property.html>

1. What does the article say is happening to house prices?
2. What does the article say you could buy for the price of the thin house?
3. How many floors does the thin house have?
4. Who or what is Winkworth?
5. What was the house before it was a house?
6. How long is the house?
7. What connects the second and third floors of the house?
8. What is on the fifth floor of the house?
9. Who did the real estate agent say the house was ideal for?
10. What did a real estate agent say the house was a unique part of?

AFTER READING / LISTENING

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2102/210211-london-property.html>

1. WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionary / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words 'thin' and 'house'.

thin	house

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS: Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

3. GAP FILL: In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the activity. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

4. VOCABULARY: Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

5. TEST EACH OTHER: Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall how they were used in the text:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• sky• areas• sum• five• hat• great	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• eye• 8• third• main• ideal• magic
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PROPERTY DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

1. What did you think when you read the headline?
2. What images are in your mind when you hear the word 'property'?
3. What are property prices like in your town?
4. What do you think of a house that is 2 metres wide?
5. What was the last thing that made you raise your eyebrows?
6. Is it better to own your own house or rent?
7. Would you like a seven-bedroom mansion?
8. Would you like to live in the property in the article?
9. What is the best city to live in?
10. How would you describe your house?

London's thinnest house sells for \$1.3 million – 11th February, 2021
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PROPERTY DISCUSSION

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

11. Did you like reading this article? Why/not?
12. What do you think of when you hear the word 'house'?
13. What do you think about what you read?
14. What are the good and bad things about a five-storey house?
15. Is it better to have a spacious house?
16. Would you like a bespoke house?
17. What do you think of your current abode?
18. What is your ideal house?
19. What three adjectives best describe this story?
20. What questions would you like to ask the real estate agent?