

A House for €1: Too Good to Be True? — Answer Key

B2 Business English | Fluency Space | Answers for Exercises 1–3

Exercise 1 — Key Words from Context

Answers to the matching and example-sentence gap-fill in the vocabulary exercise, in the order they appear on the worksheet. Some forms change slightly to fit the example sentence (e.g. tense, form).

No.	Answer
1	putting off — “I suspect it’s the high set-up fee that’s putting off new clients.”
2	be attributed to — “The drop in Q3 revenue can largely be attributed to delays in our supply chain.”
3	contingency — “Let’s set aside 10% of the budget as a contingency fund in case costs overrun.”
4	soared — “Energy costs have soared this year, so we need to review our pricing.”
5	came across — “I came across an interesting market report last week that I’d like to share with the team.”
6	be wary of — “We should be wary of signing a long-term contract before we’ve tested the supplier.”
7	assume — “I assume that everyone has had a chance to look at the figures before today.” / “We shouldn’t just assume the client will renew — let’s call them this week.”
8	add up to — “With shipping and insurance, the extra costs could add up to €50,000 a year.”
9	drawn — “The new campaign has already drawn a lot of interest from potential investors.”
10	At first glance — “At first glance, the figures look positive, but our margins are actually shrinking.”
11	crumbling — “Our IT infrastructure is crumbling, and it’s starting to slow the whole team down.”
12	seeking — “We’re currently seeking a partner to help us expand into the Polish market.”

Exercise 2 — Comprehension

Model answers only — learners’ own wording will vary. Look for the key facts below rather than exact phrasing.

1. According to the text, who is credited with starting the €1 house scheme, and what effect did it have on Salemi?

Model answer: Vittorio Sgarbi, an Italian art critic who became mayor of Salemi in 2008. His scheme drew new people to the town, boosted local construction work, filled empty houses and brought restaurants, bars and cultural life back to Salemi.

2. What reasons does the article give for Italy's falling population?

Model answer: An ageing population, record-low birth rates, and young people seeking work in bigger cities. As a result, nearly 30% of Italian homes are now unoccupied.

3. According to the article, why might a €1 house end up costing much more than €1?

Model answer: Houses often go to auction, where €1 is only the starting price and popular homes can sell for over €10,000. Buyers must also renovate the property within three years — a huge task given the poor condition of many homes — and legal fees can add up to €2,500, on top of endless paperwork.

4. What danger do newcomers pose to these towns, and how do elderly residents of Sambuca feel about them?

Model answer: The arrival of too many foreigners could cause these towns to lose their character and heritage. However, elderly men in Sambuca say the newcomers respect the town's heritage and have brought it back to life.

Exercise 3 — Fill in the Gaps: Answers

"A Retreat in Sicily?" — correct form of each key word/phrase, in order.

No.	Answer
1	soared
2	draw
3	came across
4	seeking
5	be wary of
6	assume
7	add up to
8	contingency