

Name: _____ The many problems of San Francisco

- ① **Read** the text and **mark** key information and unknown vocabulary.
- ② **Search online** for translations to the words below and add five more words to the table that are important for your understanding of the text.

wreak havoc	
public defecation	
property	
office vacancy	
abandon	
real estate	

- ③ **List** the four major problems that San Francisco is facing today.

- ④ **Decide** whether the following statements are true (t), false (f) or not mentioned in the text (n). If they are mentioned in the text, **add where you found the information** and **correct** the statements, if they are wrong.

1. The problems of homelessness and drug abuse are closely connected.
2. The homeless people commit more crimes than normal residents.
3. In San Francisco, the occupancy rate of office buildings is very high.
4. San Francisco has a growing population, which will lead to higher rents.
5. Having too few houses in San Francisco has been a problem for a long time.
6. Overdose-related deaths could be reduced, if fewer drugs get into the city.

- ⑤ **Summarise** the key information from the text in a short text about the city. If possible, use quotes and specify what lines from the text, the information is from.

- ⑥ **Research online** to find out, what is being done to fix the issues mentioned in the text and **explain** the approaches you find.

Drugs, homelessness, and real estate crisis put San Francisco on slippery slope to decline (Source: aa.com.tr/en)

San Francisco, formerly one of the most popular and thriving cities of the US and California, an economic powerhouse and one of its biggest states, is facing a host of serious issues, with a shrinking population reflecting its multiple woes.

A drug epidemic and a rise in the number of homeless, due in large part to rents that are out of reach for most people, have led to future prospects for the bustling city to be mixed at best.

Fentanyl proves deadly

- 10 Fentanyl, a highly potent opioid drug 50-100 times more powerful than morphine, has wreaked havoc nationwide but hit San Francisco harder than most. (...)

The drug overdose epidemic appears to have been concentrated in the city's Tenderloin district, where Mayor London Breed declared an official state of emergency in December 2021.

- 15 The data also shows another grim figure: compared to 2010's 13 overdose-related deaths per 100,000 people, just a decade later the rate stood at 49 per 100,000, a whopping 370% increase. (...)

Homelessness and beyond

The drug epidemic and homelessness in the city are deeply intertwined.

- 20 A stone's throw from San Francisco's City Hall is the intersection of Van Ness Avenue and Willow Street, which have been plagued by an encampment along with open-air drug dealing and use.

Public defecation and open drug use are commonplace, with many residents loudly decriing safety concerns and steep declines in the value of their properties. (...)

- 25 **Office vacancies break records**

As one of the most expensive cities in the US, San Francisco and its downtown features many pricey office spaces, which were increasingly abandoned due to the convenience of remote work – especially in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic – and rents widely seen as exorbitant.

- 30 Even though the rise in the number of artificial intelligence-based firms led to a recent boom in real estate in the city, which is known for being a tech hub, the downtown has long suffered from the abandonment of office spaces.

The office vacancy rate in the city hit a record-high 29.4% in the first quarter of 2023.

- 35 The city's upscale Westfield Mall fell to only 55% occupancy rate, leading it to abandon its lease.

Housing crisis still a major issue

Due to its traditionally high rents, San Francisco has been called one of the priciest cities to live in. Because of the tech downturn, homelessness, and the drug epidemic, rents have gone down somewhat, but housing remains a major issue for the city.

- 40 The housing shortage has been a persistent issue for the city since the 1990s, eventually in 2015 giving it the unwanted distinction of being the most expensive city in the US for renting, according to the website Zumper.

With the median rent in the city getting dangerously close to \$4,000, people are moving out to the suburbs and other counties in the Bay Area, especially those privileged

- 45 enough to be able to work from home.

US Census data shows that San Francisco's population shrank from 873,000 to 808,500 between April 2020 and June 2022, a trend blamed on sky-high rents, a high crime rate, the drug problem, and the city's homeless population stoking rising fears.