

Life in a shale village
Worksheet 2 - Sheila's story

Read Sheila's story and then answer the questions on the next sheet.

Hello, my name is Sheila. I live in West Calder with my husband and six of my children. I have 10 children but four have now left to work in other parts of West Lothian. We live in Burngrange Cottages. It is quite a small house for such a large family. We have one bedroom and a kitchen so it is quite cramped but we get by. We don't have any running water so we have to use the well outside. Luckily everyone helps to get the water. We have to be careful in winter that we have enough in case the well freezes. As you may guess since we don't have water we also don't have a toilet. The toilet is in a hut at the end of the street. The four cottages all have to share it. Not easy with so many children. It is a dry toilet so can get quite smelly and not somewhere you want to spend a lot of time!

My husband works in the oil works down the road. He isn't badly paid so we get by. I was born in the countryside so do a lot of baking and sewing myself. During the summer I am busy knitting jumpers for my children to wear in the winter time. I do try to provide a happy life for my family by keeping the place clean and tidy, good cooked food and clothes too. Sadly I can't keep them safe from everything. Just last year my nephew died of appendicitis. He was taken to the Edinburgh Royal Infirmary but the ambulance is a horse drawn carriage so took 2 and a half hours. By the time he got there his appendix had burst and it was too late to save him. I've lost a lot of my family from illness and injuries so I pray a lot for those I have left.

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Read Sheila's story. Use her story to help you answer these questions.

1. Who does Sheila live with?

2. Why does she live in West Calder?

3. Where does she get her water from?

4. What are the problems with the toilet?

5. What does Sheila do to help their money go further?

6. Why did her nephew die?

7. Why would he have been more likely to survive now?

8. Would you have liked to live in Sheila's house? Explain your answer.