



Paris' Riverside

Booksellers Seek UNESCO Status

Discussion > Advanced 8



Exercise 1 – Vocabulary

recognition	The act of accepting something as important and worthy of respect.
[noun]	<i>Ex: The band is starting to get some recognition.</i>

trade	A particular type of work or business.
[noun]	<i>Ex: He is a carpenter by trade.</i>

intangible	Not existing as a physical thing.
[adjective]	<i>Ex: You can't scientifically measure love. It's intangible.</i>



status	The social position of someone compared to other things.
[noun]	<i>Ex: His status is very important to him.</i>

profile	The amount of public attention that a person or thing receives.
[noun]	<i>Ex: The lawyer's high public profile was the reason we chose him.</i>

diversify	To start to include different types, things, etc.
[verb]	<i>Ex: They diversified their portfolio by investing in several financial products.</i>



Exercise 2 – Reading

Read the text aloud with your tutor and discuss the key points.

Paris' Riverside Booksellers Seek UNESCO Status

The banks of the Seine River are one of Paris' top attractions – and a UNESCO World Heritage site. Now, the city's famous riverside booksellers, or bouquinistes, are also campaigning for recognition by the United Nation's cultural agency.

The bouquinistes of Paris have been around for hundreds of years. "They're part of what makes the city so special," says Meghan Patton, a tourist from the U.S.

The rise of e-books and online dealers have made it difficult to make money selling second-hand books. As a result, many booksellers have started selling souvenirs, as they bring in more cash. That's why a group of bouquinistes are now on a mission to save the trade by getting it added to UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage list.



However, the booksellers first need to make France's Intangible Heritage list before trying for UNESCO status. Even this step is difficult and can take several years. So far, UNESCO has only accepted 15 out of 400 candidates that made the French list.

Politician Florence Berthout, a supporter of the UNESCO campaign, believes that protecting the booksellers is urgent. Berthout argues that UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage status would raise the profile of bouquinistes.

"I have a small, but loyal [group of customers]; a lot of travelers, which aren't the same as tourists," said Sophie Leleu, one of the bouquinistes. "If we're on the UNESCO list, we become like the Egyptian pyramids – nobody can remove us."

Still, not all booksellers support the campaign. Some fear that UNESCO status may mean they won't be able to sell souvenirs, which help them survive.

"I've always strongly supported books. Bouquinistes must continue to exist. But we have to adapt and diversify," bookseller Francis Robert says.

Few believe the bouquinistes will disappear from the city altogether. So, the question may not be whether they will survive, but how they will adapt to changing times.



Exercise 3 – Discussion

Discuss the following questions with your tutor.

1. What are your thoughts on Paris' bouquinistes?
2. In your opinion, should the bouquinistes be given UNESCO status? Why do you think so?
3. Have you ever bought a second-hand book? Why? Why not?
4. Do you prefer to read e-books or paper books? Why?
5. In your opinion, what makes your town or city special? Please explain your answer.
6. What do you make of the idea that there is a difference between travelers and tourists?
7. Do you usually buy souvenirs when you travel? If so, what kind of souvenirs do you typically get?
8. Have you been to Paris? If so, what tourist attractions did you visit? If not, would you like to?