

TOPIC: CITY LIFE AND INFRASTRUCTURES

preparation time: 10 min.



1. Do you think **cycle lanes** are **controversial**? In what way? Would you like to have a **cycle hub** where you live? How could it promote and facilitate cycling?
2. Do you think that the idea of having a **tram** in our area would be **feasible**? What would be the merits and **demerits** of the project? Would **commuters** use it?
3. Do you think that **science and technology parks** are a **haven** for **start-ups**. Are they essential in order to **promote innovation**? Are they **prosperous** in your area? What about **industrial estates** ? Is the **central business district** in your area **thriving**?
4. Has the **high street** been hit hard by the recession? What could be done to make them more **affluent**?
5. Does your town offer a great variety of local **amenities**? Do they **enhance** your quality of life? What **leisure facilities** does your town **boast**?
6. What **mod cons** could you not live without? Do you think you could enjoy more **creature comforts** if there was a **drop in commodity prices**?
7. Have the eras of **boom and bust** produced any **white elephants** in your area? Is **this wastefulness part and parcel** of our **addiction to overconsumption**? Have any of these buildings experienced **abandonment**?
8. Can you think of a building that you would **regard as a blot on the landscape**? Why? What would you do about it?

Monologue

Student A

1. Is your city able to host major international events? Does it have the **infrastructure**?
2. What areas of your town are currently **undergoing urban regeneration**? What are the benefits and problems of **gentrification**?
3. How could the problem of **traffic congestion** be solved in your town? Do you think **tolls** should be introduced?

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Student B

1. Do you think our towns and cities are fast becoming **concrete jungles** and **highly congested places**? Do you think there should be more **green spaces**? What else do you think should be done? Do you think building more **ring roads** could solve the problem?
2. Is the **A&E** department in your area **overstretched**? Are there other **overstretched services** in your region as a consequence of **cutbacks in public spending**?

3. In the 1970s we did our shopping at **family-run retailers** like the **butcher's**, the **baker's**, the **greengrocer's** or the **newsagent's**. Nowadays when a **big-box store** opens, smaller retailers often go out of business. What are the benefits and drawbacks of such a **sweeping change**?

Vocabulary

Picture 1

promenade:

/ˌprɒməˈneɪd/ (informal prom) a public place for walking, usually a wide path beside the sea. E.g. the promenade at Blackpool. They walked along the promenade. a hotel on the promenade.

saddle:

a seat on a bicycle or motorcycle. E.g. There is no better way to experience a new place than from the saddle of a bicycle.

Picture 2

commute: (V)

/kəˈmju:t/ to travel regularly by bus, train, car, etc. between your place of work and your home. E.g. **commute (from A) (to B)** She commutes from Oxford to London every day. **commute between A and B** He spent that year commuting between New York and Chicago. I live **within commuting distance of** Dublin. **commute something** People are prepared to commute long distances if they are desperate for work.

commute: (N)

/kəˈmju:t/ the journey that a person makes when they commute to work. E.g. a two-hour commute into downtown Washington. I have only a short commute to work. Today most commutes are not suburb to city to suburb but from one suburb to another.

commuter:

/kə'mju:tə(r)/ a person who travels into a city to work each day, usually from quite far away. E.g. The five o'clock train is always packed with commuters. the **commuter belt** (= the area around a city where people live and from which they travel to work in the city)

Picture 3:

science and technology park: A **university research park**, **science park**, or **science and technology park** an area where there are a lot of companies or organizations involved in scientific research and development. Often, science parks are associated with or operated by institutions of higher education (colleges and universities). Businesses and organizations in the parks focus on product advancement and innovation. E.g. Many innovation research centres of enterprises related with tourism are placed in the Park Bit, which is the **science and technology park** on Mallorca.

Picture 4:

Amenity:

/ə'mi:nəti/ (plural **amenities**) a feature that makes a place pleasant, comfortable or easy to live in. Sp. Servicio. E.g. The campsite is close to all **local amenities**. Many of the houses lacked even **basic amenities** (= baths, showers, hot water, etc.). The city has all the amenities. **enhance:** /ɪn'hɑ:ns/ enhance something to increase or further improve the good quality, value or status of somebody/something. E.g. This is an opportunity to enhance the reputation of the company.

Facility:

/fə'sɪləti/1. **facilities** [plural] buildings, services, equipment, etc. that are provided for a particular purpose. Sp. Instalaciones. E.g. **sports/ leisure facilities**. Conference facilities. **Shopping/ banking/ cooking facilities**. The hotel has special facilities for welcoming disabled people. All rooms have **private facilities** (= a private bathroom). 2. a place, usually including buildings, used for a particular purpose or activity. E.g. the world's largest nuclear waste facility. A new health care facility.

ATM: automated teller machine (also **cash machine**, **cash dispenser**, **cashpoint™**)

/,ɔ:təmeɪtɪd 'telə məʃi:n/ a machine in or outside a bank, etc., from which you can get money from your bank account using a special plastic card.

teller: a person whose job is to receive and pay out money in a bank.

shopping centre:

a group of shops/stores built together, sometimes under one roof.

mall:

/mɔ:l/ /mæl/ (also **shopping mall**) (both especially North American English) a large building or covered area that has many shops/stores, restaurants, etc. inside it. E.g. Let's go to the mall. Some teenagers were hanging out at the mall.

department store:

/dɪ'pɑ:tmənt stɔ:(r)/ a large shop/store that is divided into several parts, each part selling a different type of goods.

outlet:

a shop/store or an organization that sells goods made by a particular company or of a particular type. E.g. The business has 34 retail outlets in this state alone.

High street:

(North American English **main street**) the main street of a town, where most shops/stores, banks, etc. are. E.g. Peckham High Street. **High-street banks/ shops.** The approaching festive season boosted the high street.

retailer:

a person or business that sells goods to the public. E.g. one of the country's largest food retailers.

Picture 5 White elephant

a thing that is useless and no longer needed, although it may have cost a lot of money. E.g. The new office block has become an expensive white elephant. Origin: From the story that in Siam (now Thailand) the king would give a white elephant as a present to somebody that he did not like. That person would have to spend all their money on looking after the rare animal.

Question 1

Bicycle or cycle lane /leɪn/: a part of road marked by painted lines and intended for use of bicycles.

controversial: /ˌkɒntrəˈvɜːʃl/ causing a lot of angry public discussion and disagreement. E.g. a **highly controversial** topic.

Hub: the central and most important part of a particular place or activity. E.g. the commercial hub of the city. The kitchen was the hub of family life. To be at the hub of things (= where things happen and important decisions are made). A hub airport (= a large important one where people often change from one plane to another). A **cycle hub** (a social enterprise that promotes and facilitates cycling).

Question 2

tram: (also **tramcar**) (US English **streetcar**, **trolley**) a vehicle driven by electricity, that runs on rails along the streets of a town and carries passengers. E.g. a tram route in Calvia would be ideal for tourists who want to get down to Palma.

demerit: a fault in something or a disadvantage of something. E.g. the merits and demerits of the scheme. The merits and demerits of these proposals. And they pointed to the fact that Martin had been suspended from school three times, among other **demerits**, as evidence that he needed watching.

Commuter: /kə'mju:tə(r)/ a person who travels into a city to work each day, usually from quite far away. E.g. The five o'clock train is always packed with commuters.

Commute: /kə'mju:t/ to travel regularly by bus, train, car, etc. between your place of work and your home. E.g. She commutes from Oxford to London every day.

Question 3

science and technology park: A **university research park**, **science park**, or **science and technology park** an area where there are a lot of companies or organizations involved in scientific research and development. Often, science parks are associated with or operated by institutions of higher education (colleges and universities). Businesses and organizations in the parks focus on product advancement and innovation. E.g. Many innovation research centres of enterprises related with tourism are placed in the Park Bit, which is the **science and technology park** on Mallorca.

haven: a place that is safe and peaceful where people or animals are protected. E.g. The hotel is a haven of peace and tranquility. The river banks are a haven for wildlife. The camp offers a haven to refugees.

start-up: (N) a company that is just beginning to operate, especially an Internet company. E.g. problems facing start-ups and small firms in rural areas.

Industrial estate: (North American English **industrial park**) an area especially for factories, on the edge of a town. They focus on manufacturing.

Trading estate: an area of land, often on the edge of a city or town, where there are a number of businesses and small factories.

Business park: an area of land that is specially designed for offices and small factories. They focus on administration.

A **central business district (CBD)**, also called a **central activities district** is the commercial and often geographic heart of a city. Downtown (AmE) City centre (BrE). Usually typified by a concentration of retail and office buildings.

Downtown (especially North American English) in the centre of a city, especially its main business area. E.g. to go/ work downtown. Live downtown/ in the downtown area.

Thrive: to become, and continue to be, successful, strong, healthy, etc. E.g. New businesses thrive in this area.

Question 4

High street: (North American English **main street**) the main street of a town, where most shops/stores, banks, etc. are. E.g. Peckham High Street. **High-street banks/ shops.** The approaching festive season boosted the high street.

Affluent: rich and with a good standard of living. E.g. affluent Western countries.

Question 5

Amenity: /ə'mi:nəti/ (plural **amenities**) a feature that makes a place pleasant, comfortable or easy to live in. Sp. Servicio. E.g. The campsite is close to all **local amenities**. Many of the houses lacked even **basic amenities** (= baths, showers, hot water, etc.). The city has all the amenities.
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boast: **boast something** to have something that is impressive and that you can be proud of. E.g. The hotel also boasts two swimming pools and a golf course. Rhodes boasts 300 days of sunshine a year.

a conference centre

a conference hall (hall: a building or large room)

a conference room

conference: a large official meeting, usually lasting for a few days, at which people with the same work or interests come together to discuss their views.

lecture:

a talk that is given to a group of people to teach them about a particular subject, often as part of a university or college course. E.g. to deliver/give a lecture to first-year students. to attend a series of lectures on Jane. **a lecture room/hall**

Question 6

Mod cons: /,mɒd 'kɒnz/ the things in a house or flat/ apartment that make living there easier and more comfortable. The amenities and appliances characteristic of a well-equipped modern house that contribute to an easier and more comfortable way of life. Sp. comodidades. E.g. The property has many interesting features and all mod cons.

Creature comforts: all the things that make life, or a particular place, comfortable, such as good food, comfortable furniture or modern equipment. Material comforts that contribute to physical ease and well-being, such as good food and accommodation. Sp. comodidades. E.g. you're a long way from home and the only creature comforts you have are a television.

Commodity: /kə'mɒdəti/ 1 (economics) a product or a raw material that can be bought and sold. Sp. Materia prima, mercancía, producto. E.g. rice, flour and other basic commodities. A drop in commodity prices. Crude oil is the world's most important commodity. Commodities such as copper and coffee. 2 (formal) a thing that is useful or has a useful quality. E.g. Water is a precious commodity that is often taken for granted in the West.

Question 7

Boom-and-bust periods of rapid growth with an increase in investment and consumption and that are followed by sudden collapses in economic activity. Sp. auge y decadencia. E.g. the eras of **boom and bust**. **Boom-and-bust cycle.** Arnold's life had followed a boom-and-bust cycle, rich one moment, broke the next.

White elephant a thing that is useless and no longer needed, although it may have cost a lot of money. E.g. The new office block has become an expensive white elephant. Origin: From the story that in Siam (now Thailand) the king would give a white elephant as a present to somebody that he did not like. That person would have to spend all their money on looking after the rare animal.

Wastefulness the trait of wasting resources. Useless or profitless activity; using or expending

or consuming thoughtlessly or carelessly. Sp. derroche, despilfarro. E.g. the wastefulness of missed opportunities. Efficiency is the ability to use energy without **wastefulness**. The prince also attacked what he characterised as the **wastefulness** of modern society.

part and parcel: an essential part of something. E.g. Keeping the accounts is part and parcel of my job.

overconsumption: The action or fact of consuming something to excess. E.g. the overconsumption of alcohol. The environmental cost of overconsumption.

abandonment: the act of leaving a person, thing or place with no intention of returning. E.g. their childhood abandonment by their mother. She had a feeling of utter abandonment and loneliness.

Question 8

Regard: to think about somebody/something in a particular way. Sp. considerar. E.g. Capital punishment was regarded as inhuman and immoral. He regarded him as a hero.

A blot on the landscape: an object, especially an ugly building, that spoils the beauty of a place. E.g. wind power turbines are **a blot on the landscape**.

Monologue

Student A

Question 1

infrastructure: the basic systems and services that are necessary for a country or an organization to run smoothly, for example buildings, transport and water and power supplies. E.g. the social and economic infrastructure of a country.

Question 2

undergo something: to experience something, especially a change or something unpleasant. E.g. to **undergo tests/ trials/ repairs**. My mother **underwent** major **surgery** last year. Some children **undergo a complete transformation** when they become teenagers.

regeneration: the action or process of regenerating or being regenerated. E.g. the regeneration of inner cities. Economic regeneration. The regeneration of cells in the body.

Gentrify: /'dʒentrɪfaɪ/ to change an area, a person, etc. so that they are suitable for, or can mix with, people of a higher social class than before. Renovate and improve (a house or district) so that it conforms to middle-class taste. Sp. aburguesar. E.g. Old working-class areas of the city are being gentrified.

Gentrification (N) the process by which wealthier (mostly middle-income) people move into, renovate, and restore housing and sometimes businesses in inner cities or other deteriorated areas formerly home to poorer people. E.g. urban gentrification often involves population migration as poor residents of a neighbourhood are displaced. In a community undergoing gentrification, the average income increases. The real estate market also changes when gentrification occurs because increases in rents and home prices increase evictions.

Question 3

congestion: the state of being crowded and full of traffic. E.g. traffic congestion and pollution

toll: money that you pay to use a particular road or bridge. E.g. motorway tolls. A toll road/bridge.

Student B

Question 1

Concrete jungle: a way of describing a city or an area that is unpleasant because it has many large modern buildings and no trees or parks. E.g. a three-room flat in the concrete jungle of suburban Moscow.

Congested (with something) /kən'dʒestɪd/ crowded; full of traffic. E.g. congested city streets. Many of Europe's airports are heavily congested.

Green space: (or **urban open space**) an area of grass, trees, or other vegetation set apart for recreational or aesthetic purposes in an otherwise urban environment.

Ring road: (US **outer belt, beltway, loop**) a road that is built around a city or town to reduce traffic in the centre. It encircles a town or city. Sp. circunvalación.

Question 2

A&E (also **accident and emergency**, AmE. **emergency room**) the part of a hospital where people who need urgent treatment are taken. E.g. the hospital accident and emergency department.

overstretched: being made to do more than they are capable of. E.g. overstretched muscles. Overstretched services.

cutback (in something) a reduction in something. E.g. cutbacks in public spending. Staff cutbacks.

Question 3

retailer /'ri:teɪlə(r)/ a person or business that sells goods to the public. E.g. One of the country's largest food retailers.

greengrocer's (plural **greengrocers**) a shop/store that sells fruit and vegetables. It is run by the greengrocer.

newsagent's (plural **newsagents**) (British English also **paper shop**) a shop/store that sells newspapers, magazines, sweets/candy, etc. E.g. I'll go to the newsagent's on my way home.

big-box: (also **big-box store**) (also **supercenter, superstore, or megastore**) a very large shop/store, built on one level and located outside a town, which sells goods at low prices. E.g. When a big-box store opens, smaller retailers often go out of business. Efforts were made to limit big-box expansion.

sweeping: having an important effect on a large part of something. E.g. **sweeping reforms/changes**. Security forces were given sweeping powers to search homes. A sweeping programme of reorganization.