

6 Cities

Words associated with human geography | Recognizing positive and negative connotation |
Recognizing superordinate terms

Vocabulary

Nouns:

- **amenity (amenities)**
NOUN Amenities are things such as shopping centres or sports facilities that are provided for people's convenience, enjoyment, or comfort. ■ *The hotel amenities include health clubs, conference facilities, and banqueting rooms.*
- **commuter (commuters)**
NOUN A **commuter** is a person who travels a long distance to work every day. ■ *The number of commuters to London has dropped by 100,000.*
- **congestion**
UNCOUNTABLE NOUN If there is **congestion** in a place, the place is extremely crowded and blocked with traffic or people. ■ *The problems of traffic congestion will not disappear in a hurry. ■ Energy consumption, congestion and pollution have increased.*
- **housing**
UNCOUNTABLE NOUN You refer to the buildings in which people live as housing when you are talking about their standard, price, or availability. ■ *a shortage of affordable housing*
- **resident (residents)**
NOUN The **residents** of a house or area are the people who live there. ■ *The Archbishop called upon the government to build more low cost homes for local residents. ■ More than 10 percent of Munich residents live below the poverty line.*
- **immigrant (immigrants)**
NOUN An **immigrant** is a person who has come to live in a country from some other

country. ■ *industries that employ large numbers of illegal immigrants* ■ *Portugal, Spain and Italy all have large immigrant populations from Africa.*

- **infrastructure (infrastructures)**
NOUN The **infrastructure** of a country, society, or organization consists of the basic facilities such as transport, communications, power supplies, and buildings, which enable it to function. ■ *investment in infrastructure projects* ■ *a focus on improving existing infrastructure*
- **inhabitant (inhabitants)**
NOUN The **inhabitants** of a place are the people who live there. ■ [+ of] *the inhabitants of Glasgow* ■ *Jamaica's original inhabitants were the Arawak Indians.*
- **neighbourhood (neighbourhoods)**
NOUN A **neighbourhood** is one of the parts of a town where people live. [US **neighborhood**] ■ [+ to-inf] *It seemed like a good neighbourhood to raise my children.* ■ [+ of] *He was born and grew up in the Flatbush neighbourhood of Brooklyn.*

Adjectives:

- **bustling**
ADJECTIVE A **bustling** place is full of people who are very busy or lively. ■ *the bustling streets of Salzburg* ■ *Oxford was bustling with students and tourists and shoppers.*
- **pioneering**
ADJECTIVE **Pioneering** work or a **pioneering** individual does something that has not been done before, for example by developing or using new methods or

techniques. ▪ *The school has won awards for its pioneering work with the community.* ▪ *a pioneering Scottish surgeon and anatomist named John Hunter*

- **historic**

ADJECTIVE Something that is **historic** is important in history or is likely to be important. ▪ *The opening of the Scottish Parliament was a historic moment.* ▪ *a fourth historic election victory*

- **rural**

ADJECTIVE **Rural** means relating to country areas as opposed to large towns. ▪ *These*

plants have a tendency to grow in the more rural areas. ▪ *the closure of rural schools*

- **sprawling**

ADJECTIVE A place that is **sprawling** has been built over a large area in an untidy or uncontrolled way ▪ *a sprawling suburb on the edge of a big city* ▪ *The house was a sprawling ranch-style building.*

- **urban**

ADJECTIVE **Urban** means belonging to, or relating to, a town or city. ▪ *Most of the population is an urban population.* ▪ *Most urban areas are close to a park.* ▪ *urban planning*

Practice exercises

Exam tip: In the IELTS Reading exam you may have to answer questions about the writer's attitude.

Writers often convey their attitude by choosing words which have positive, negative or neutral connotations, for example:

If a writer describes a solution as *simple*, they mean that it is obvious and straightforward (positive connotation). If a writer describes a solution as *simplistic*, they are criticizing it for being simpler than it should be (negative connotation).

Learn to recognize whether a word has a positive, negative or neutral connotation.

1 Sentences 1–5 contain pairs of words in italics which are similar in meaning. Underline the word in italics which has the more positive connotation.

- 1 The shopping centre is normally *crowded/bustling* on a Saturday afternoon.
- 2 The roads are *busy/congested* during rush hour.
- 3 That housing scheme has won awards for its *novel/pioneering* design.
- 4 The city centre is surrounded by *extensive/sprawling* suburbs.
- 5 There are many *old/historic* buildings in the town centre.

Exam tip: In the IELTS Reading exam you may have to show that you can identify the writer's main ideas by matching headings to sections of text.

The headings capture the main ideas, and the sections contain detailed information and examples. Superordinates (words that describe a group or category) can help you match headings.

For example, in the word set: *summer, season, winter, and spring*, the word *season* is the superordinate term because *summer, winter and spring* are examples of seasons.

Learn to recognize superordinate terms.

2 For each set of words or expressions 1–4, circle the superordinate term.

- | | | | | |
|---|-------------------|------------------|----------------|----------------|
| 1 | underground train | public transport | tram | commuter rail |
| 2 | housing | flat | bungalow | council house |
| 3 | library | leisure centre | park | amenity |
| 4 | power supply | roads | infrastructure | communications |

3 Choose the correct superordinate term 1–3 for words a–h below. Write the correct number 1–3 next to words a–h.

- | | | | |
|---|--------|---|---------------|
| 1 | people | a | commuter |
| 2 | places | b | immigrant |
| 3 | events | c | suburb |
| | | d | region |
| | | e | street party |
| | | f | resident |
| | | g | inhabitant |
| | | h | neighbourhood |

4 Read the paragraph below. Which of the superordinate terms 1–4 matches the words in bold?

- | | | | |
|---|--|---|--|
| 1 | <i>Quantity</i> of food consumed in New York | 3 | <i>Origin</i> of food consumed in New York |
| 2 | <i>Quality</i> of food consumed in New York | 4 | <i>Types</i> of food consumed in New York |

As in many urban areas, seventy per cent of the food consumed in New York is imported from **overseas**. Most of the remainder is produced in rural areas elsewhere in the **country**. Only a tiny percentage of food is produced in the **city** itself – mainly soft fruit and vegetables grown in patches of **ground** between buildings or on rooftop **gardens**. If New Yorkers used their green spaces more efficiently, they could produce up to twenty per cent of the fruit and vegetables they eat.

Exam practice: Reading – matching headings

The reading passage opposite has 5 paragraphs, A–E.

Choose the correct heading for paragraphs B–E from the list of headings below. Write the correct numbers i–viii in spaces 1–4 at the top of the page.

NB There are more headings than paragraphs, so you will not use them all.

List of headings

- | | | | |
|-----|------------------------------------|------|-------------------------------------|
| i | The quality of urban housing | v | The urban-rural divide |
| ii | Amenities in urban areas | vi | The quality of rural infrastructure |
| iii | The affordability of urban housing | vii | Rural neighbourhoods in the city |
| iv | The amenities that people want | viii | Rural transport |

Example: Paragraph A Answer: v

1 Paragraph B _____

2 Paragraph C _____

3 Paragraph D _____

4 Paragraph E _____

The lure of the urban village

A

Many people dream of leaving the city and moving to the countryside, but in fact we are an overwhelmingly urban population. Over 80 per cent of UK residents now live in urban areas. Globally, it's much the same; according to the United Nations, by 2012, well over half of the world's population will be living in towns and cities.

B

Increasingly, people are living in towns, but what many really want is a piece of the countryside within the town. Three years ago a survey of 1,000 homeowners in the UK found that many of those who were planning to relocate wanted to live near gyms, shops and restaurants. Today, according to a more recent report, the majority want a crime-free neighbourhood, a back garden, and theatre or gallery within reach. The report concludes that Britons are becoming more concerned about their quality of life and are willing to prioritize tranquillity over status and salary.

C

However, what the report does not say is that, for people without a high salary the chances of buying the ideal house, or indeed any house at all in the city, are becoming increasingly slim. According to recent figures, even if we take inflation into account, average urban house values are four times higher than they were 70 years ago. A comparison of average house prices and average incomes is even less favourable. Since 1940, home price rises have far exceeded rises in average salaries.

D

For those who can, moving to the countryside is an option. In most developed countries, the roads, power supply and communication facilities are adequate for their needs. Indeed, improvements in telecommunications make telecommuting an increasingly attractive proposition.

E

Those forced to stay behind in urban life are increasingly yearning for neighbourhoods that are 'village' like in feel. Indeed those who market new homes are increasingly using such terms to attract buyers. Interestingly, the idea of urban villages is not a new one. The term was coined 50 years ago, by the American sociologist Herbert Gans in his study of the Italian-American communities of Boston. According to Gans, the communities he studied refashioned urban space in an attempt to recreate the intimate feel of the Southern Italian villages they came from. He argued that American cities as a whole could be seen as a patchwork of different villages in which non-urban immigrants attempted to shape the city to resemble the places in the old country that they had left behind. His findings may well resonate with today's native urbanites yearning for village life.