

A

Writing about the landscape

From my room I look out over the **surrounding countryside**. It's very different from the **familiar landscape** I see from the windows at home. At home it's a **gentle landscape**¹ with **open fields**². Here it's a **bleak landscape** with **rocky mountains** in the distance.

¹ a landscape with nothing extreme or threatening about it

² fields uninterrupted by woods or houses

Yesterday we **followed a path** down to the lake. As we **turned a corner**, we **caught a glimpse of**³ a kingfisher standing in the water. John tried to **take a picture**⁴ of it but it **caught sight of** us and flew off. A little further on we **rounded a bend**⁵ and St John's Abbey **came into view**. The Abbey **fell into ruin**⁶ about three hundred years ago. Although it **lies in ruins**, it is **well worth seeing** as it stands in a **dramatic setting** on a **steep slope** beside a **fast-flowing river** with **mountains towering**⁷ above it.

³ saw for a moment

⁵ turned a corner

⁷ mountains rising dramatically

⁴ take a photo

⁶ became a ruin

The cottage is in some wonderful **unspoilt countryside**⁸ on the edge of a **dense forest**⁹. Unfortunately the trees **block the view** of the **snow-covered mountains**. It has a little garden with a stream at the end of it. The **stream winds**¹⁰ through the forest. They wanted to build a timber factory here but the local people said that it would **destroy the countryside** and, fortunately, their campaign to **protect the environment** succeeded.

⁸ countryside that has not been changed by industry or modern buildings

⁹ thick forest

¹⁰ makes lots of bends, doesn't flow in a straight line

B

The language of tourism

collocation	example
uninterrupted view	From most rooms there are uninterrupted views of the castle. [nothing blocks the views of the castle]
panoramic view	From the top floor restaurant diners have a panoramic view of the countryside. [view over a very wide area]
spectacular view	From the balcony there is a spectacular view of the mountains. [very dramatic view]
enjoy/admire a view	We stopped for a few minutes to admire the view .
breathtaking scenery	The area has some breathtaking scenery – mountains, cliffs, lakes. [extremely striking and beautiful views]
dominate the landscape	The castle dominates the landscape for miles around. [can be seen from a long way away]
beach stretches	A beautiful beach stretches for miles along the coast.
sandy beach	The hotel has its own sandy beach .
secluded beach	You'll love the secluded beaches . [without many people]
golden sands	You can wander for miles along the golden sands .
peaceful/tranquil countryside	You can quickly go from the hustle and bustle of the town to the tranquil countryside . [formal]

A

Describing towns and cities for visitors

Look at these extracts from a magazine article about tourist cities.



The **city skyline** is a wonderful mix of old and new, and the city itself has a lot of busy, narrow **cobbled¹ streets**. The old town is a **conservation area** and it has a lot of **quaint² old buildings** dating back to the city's foundation in the 1500s.

¹ made of a regular pattern of stones ² attractive because of being unusual and especially old-fashioned

Doradella Street has a lot of **upmarket³ shops** and rather **pricey⁴**, sometimes **overpriced, restaurants**, but not far away is the Genasia district, where you'll find restaurants which offer **good value** and a more **relaxed atmosphere**.



³ for people with expensive tastes ⁴ expensive, in a negative sense



Royal Avenue runs from north to south, and is **lined with shops**. Behind it, the streets are full of **lively bars** and **fashionable clubs**. The **pavement cafés** and shops of Luna Square are pleasant but very expensive.

As you drive into the city, the **tree-lined avenues** of the **residential areas** are soon replaced by the **high-rise flats** of the **inner city⁵**. Then come the **imposing buildings** of the Parliament and government departments.



⁵ central part of a city where poorer people live and where there are often social problems

B

Towns and cities and their problems

Here are some descriptions of the more negative aspects of towns and cities.

Some of the **inner-city areas** are an **urban wasteland¹** and are somewhat dangerous for visitors. In fact some streets have become **no-go² areas**, with high crime. Many streets are **strewn with litter** and there are numerous **run-down³ buildings**. There are some **deprived⁴ areas** round the city centre with huge social problems. The **industrial zones** which lie on the edge of the city are grey and polluted.

¹ a city area which is empty and in a bad condition

² where the police and other authorities are afraid to enter

³ in very bad condition

⁴ not having the things that are necessary for a pleasant life, e.g. enough money, good living conditions

Triope is a **sprawling⁵ city** with **bumper-to-bumper⁶ traffic** all day long. The **exhaust fumes** can be a nightmare. The **volume of traffic** has increased in recent years and the **incessant roar⁷** of trucks and buses makes the city centre an extremely noisy place. The **comfortable suburbs⁸** away from the city centre contrast sharply with the poor **shanty towns⁹** one sees on the way to the airport.

⁵ spread over a large area (slightly negative)

⁶ so many cars and so close that they are almost touching each other

⁷ very loud noise which never stops

⁸ a place from which many people travel in order to work in a bigger town or city

⁹ very poor houses made of discarded materials (e.g. tin, cardboard, plastic, etc.)

A Describing a city

The words **city** and **town** are sometimes used interchangeably but a city is generally large with a wider range of facilities. This is a description of Cork, one of Ireland's main cities. Which words or phrases might be useful for describing your own or another town?

Cork city is the major metropolis of the south; indeed, with a **population** of about 119,500, it is the second largest city in the Republic. The main business and shopping centre of the town lies on the island created by two channels of the River Lee, with many of the **suburbs** within walking distance of the centre. The buses tend to be overcrowded and the one-way **traffic system** is extremely complicated. In the hilly area of the city is the famous Shandon Steeple, the bell-tower of St Anne's Church, built on the site of a church destroyed when the city was besieged by the English in 1690. Back across the River Lee lies the city's cathedral, an imposing 19th-century building in the French Gothic style. Cork has two markets. Neither caters specifically for tourists but those who enjoy the **lively** atmosphere of a real working market will appreciate their charm. The town has good sports and arts facilities. The Crawford Art Gallery is well worth a visit. It regularly puts on **adventurous** exhibitions by **contemporary** artists. The fashionable **residential** districts of Cork city overlook the **picturesque** harbour. There are other residential areas on the **outskirts**.

**B Facilities**

Sports: **swimming pool** **sports centre** **golf course** **tennis courts** **football pitch** **skating rink**

Culture: **theatre** **opera house** **concert hall** **radio station** **art gallery**

Education: **school** **college** **university** **library** **adult education centre** **museum**

Catering, accommodation and night-life: **restaurant** **take-away** **hotel** **B&B** (bed and breakfast) **youth hostel** **club**

Transport: **bus service** **taxi rank** **car hire** **car park** **parking meters**

Other: **health centre** **law courts** **registry office** **citizens' advice bureau** **job centre**

department store **chemist's** **garden centre** **police station** **Town/City Hall**

estate agent **housing estate** **industrial estate**

C Problems in cities

problem	effect	cause
traffic jams	traffic very slow; commuters get very stressed	too much traffic, especially in the rush hour
slums	housing in a bad condition	poverty - people don't have money to spend on housing
vandalism	pointless destruction of property	poverty; lack of hope
overcrowding	difficult living conditions	too many people living in one place
pollution	deterioration in health	traffic and industrial

D Adjectives to describe a city

picturesque [very pretty and attractive], **historic**, **spacious** [with plenty of space], **elegant**, **magnificent**, **lively**, **deserted** [no one on the streets, e.g. at night], **bustling** [with lots of movement], **packed** [very crowded], **filthy** [very dirty], **run-down** [in a very bad condition]

Common mistakes

There are a lot of open **spaces** in the centre of London. (NOT There are a lot of open ~~places~~ in ...)

A Driving and traffic regulations

In the UK, you must **give way**¹ at a **give-way sign** and at a roundabout, where traffic coming from the right **has the right of way**². You must give way to pedestrians at a **pedestrian crossing**³.

In some countries, **sounding/beeping**⁴ your horn is prohibited, except in emergencies.

In most countries, **jumping**⁵ a red light is a serious offence, as is **reckless**⁶ driving.

In many parts of the world, **drink-driving**⁷ or **drug-driving**⁸ can result in a heavy fine or imprisonment. Drivers may be asked by a police officer to take a **breathalyser**⁹ test. **Hit-and-run**¹⁰ accidents are almost always considered to be grave offences and may result in a **ban**¹¹ for several years and/or imprisonment. In the UK, less serious breaches of traffic regulations may lead to **penalty points**¹² on the driver's licence. In many countries, **on-the-spot**¹³ fines may be issued for careless driving and other offences.

In the European Union, **exhaust emissions**¹⁴ must meet certain standards, and the car must be **roadworthy**¹⁵, which includes a minimum depth of **tyre tread**¹⁶: driving with a **bald**¹⁷ tyre is against the law.

- ¹ stop at a junction before entering a bigger road ² is allowed to go before other traffic ³ often called a *zebra crossing* when it has black and white stripes ⁴ *beeping* is less formal than *sounding* ⁵ not stopping at
⁶ very dangerous, without any care for others ⁷ driving after consuming alcohol above the official limit
⁸ driving after taking illegal drugs ⁹ instrument you breathe into to measure alcohol level ¹⁰ running into someone and not stopping ¹¹ removal of your driving licence ¹² negative points which are added up over time and which can result in the loss of your licence ¹³ given at the scene of the offence ¹⁴ waste gases produced by the vehicle ¹⁵ in a condition that it can be driven safely ¹⁶ the depth of the grooves in the tyre rubber ¹⁷ one which has lost its tread

B Traffic problems

It was the rush hour, and there was a long **tailback**. [line of slow or stopped traffic]

There's always **congestion** in the city centre. [situation in which there is a lot of traffic that can't move.]

In some cities, cars have to pay a **congestion charge** to go into the city centre. [a charge you have to pay to use the road]

You have to pay a **toll** on the new motorway. [a charge you have to pay to use the road]

There was a **pile-up** involving ten cars, because of the fog, so the road was closed and we were **diverted** onto a narrow country lane. [crash between several or many cars] [directed away from our road]

Overnight snow caused **disruption** this morning on many roads, but it has cleared now. [when a system, process or event is prevented from continuing as usual or as expected]

I had stupidly parked in a **tow-away zone** and came back to find my car had gone! [area where your car may be taken away if you park illegally]

I only parked for a few minutes outside the station, but when I came out my car had been **clamped**. [fitted with a metal device on the wheel to prevent it from moving]

I saw two men fighting next to their cars. I think it was a case of **road rage**. [anger or violence between drivers because of difficult driving conditions]

The road was wet and I **skidded** on a bend and almost crashed. [lost control of the steering so that the car slid across the road]

There was a **head-on collision** on the main road between here and the next village last night. [two vehicles hitting each other directly in the front]



(Radio announcement)

There was an accident at the junction between the A476 and the A53 this morning involving a lorry carrying a load of glue. Traffic has been stuck there for the last three hours.

A

The daily commute



GREG: I live in a small town in the US. Outside the big cities there are very few **local transport links**, so I have to drive to work. It's a busy **commuter route** so I end up **getting stuck in traffic**¹ most days. Luckily, there's also a **toll road**² I can take for part of the trip. It's expensive but isn't as crowded – even in **rush hour**.



PAOLA: I travel about an hour each way on a crowded **commuter train** and it's often difficult to get a seat. My **season ticket**³ is very expensive because I always have to travel at **peak time**⁴. Sometimes, when there are **engineering works**⁵ or cancellations, we have to take a **replacement bus service** which is even slower!



LARS: I live in Denmark and lots of people commute by bike here. We have a good **cycle network** and most roads have separate **cycle lanes** which are very safe. I enjoy cycling and it's often quicker, especially when there's **traffic gridlock**⁶ on the main roads into Copenhagen.



AKIKO: I live in a **commuter town** outside Tokyo and there's a very good **bus and rail network** here. The trouble is, it's really busy – **overcrowded trains** are normal. There's even a special person employed by the underground to push people onto the trains!

¹ be slowed down by heavy traffic

² a road you have to pay to use

³ a ticket which is valid for a certain period of time (often a month or a year)

⁴ the time when most people want to go somewhere, often leading to higher prices (opp. **off-peak**)

⁵ repair or maintenance work

⁶ when roads are so blocked with traffic that nothing is moving

B

Problems and solutions

The minister for transport is being interviewed about current transport problems and future policies.

Interviewer: So, Minister, we've been hearing a lot on the news recently about all the problems faced by commuters: **packed trains**¹, **fare rises**, **train strikes**. What is the government planning to do?

Minister: Well, this government's policy has always been to **invest in infrastructure** and to **provide more local transport services** for the hard-working commuters of this country.

Interviewer: But for commuters **facing a** ten percent **hike**² in fares for services which are constantly **running late** or not at all, that policy doesn't seem to be working.

Minister: **Train operators** are re-investing the majority of their profits in new trains and better services and the government is supporting that. In addition, we are trying to **ease traffic congestion**³ in big cities by restricting private car use and encouraging **car-sharing programmes** and **park-and-ride schemes**⁴. The **congestion charge**⁵ in London has helped to reduce traffic and improve **air quality** and our road-building programmes have aimed to **alleviate bottlenecks**⁶ in key areas.

Interviewer: I'm glad you mentioned traffic. Commuters who drive also seem to be facing increasing difficulties, such as **road closures** and detours which in turn cause **lengthy tailbacks**⁷ and **bring traffic to a standstill**⁸. It's not surprising more people are choosing to **work from home** more regularly!



¹ trains which are very crowded

² expecting a quick increase ³ reduce traffic jams

⁴ schemes where people can park their cars out of town and take a bus into a town/city centre

⁵ a charge for vehicles which enter a specific zone within a city

⁶ reduce places where too many cars try to get through at the same time

⁷ long queues of traffic ⁸ stop (traffic) completely

A

City life

Read this advertisement for new houses in the city and note the collocations.



Secure your new home now in the exciting city of Lorchester

In the **bustling**¹ centre you can enjoy high-quality **urban living**, with **reliable public transport** and shops and restaurants whose **long opening hours** will suit your busy lifestyle.

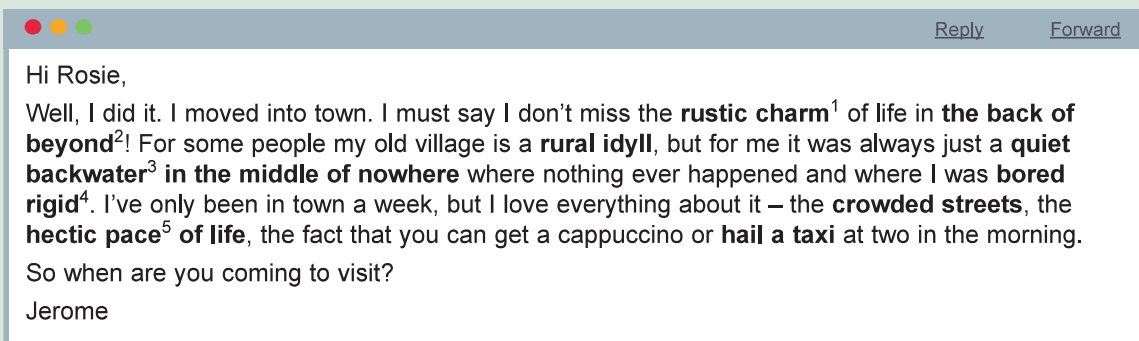
Phone us now on 00345 877223 to visit our extensive range of show houses and apartments, or take a virtual tour at www.incitilife.com.

¹ full of busy activity

B

Country life versus city life

Jerome has just moved from his home village into a big town. He emails Rosie about it.



Hi Rosie,

Well, I did it. I moved into town. I must say I don't miss the **rustic charm**¹ of life in **the back of beyond**²! For some people my old village is a **rural idyll**, but for me it was always just a **quiet backwater**³ in **the middle of nowhere** where nothing ever happened and where I was **bored rigid**⁴. I've only been in town a week, but I love everything about it – the **crowded streets**, the **hectic pace**⁵ of life, the fact that you can get a cappuccino or **hail a taxi** at two in the morning.

So when are you coming to visit?

Jerome

¹ appeal that is simple and picturesque

⁴ (informal) extremely bored

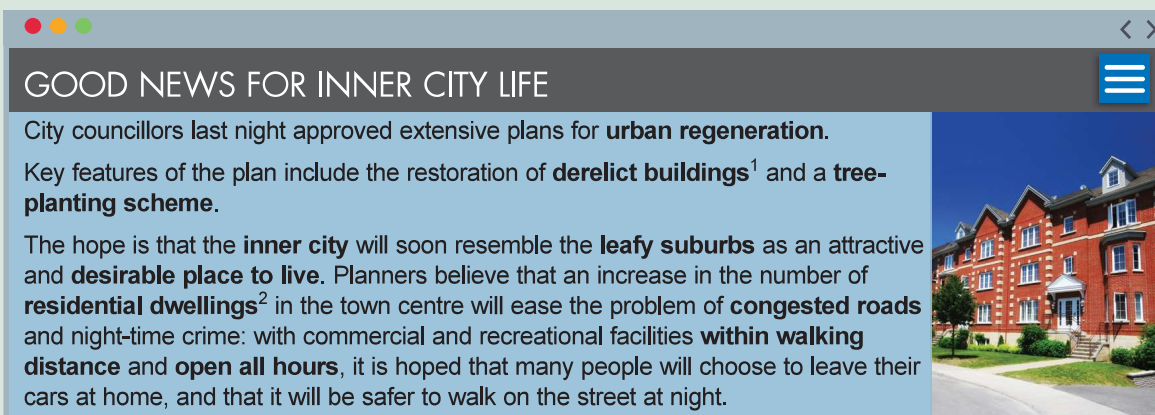
² an extremely isolated place

⁵ very busy and fast pace

³ a quiet, isolated village

C

City Council plans



GOOD NEWS FOR INNER CITY LIFE

City councillors last night approved extensive plans for **urban regeneration**.

Key features of the plan include the restoration of **derelict buildings**¹ and a **tree-planting scheme**.

The hope is that the **inner city** will soon resemble the **leafy suburbs** as an attractive and **desirable place to live**. Planners believe that an increase in the number of **residential dwellings**² in the town centre will ease the problem of **congested roads** and night-time crime: with commercial and recreational facilities **within walking distance** and **open all hours**, it is hoped that many people will choose to leave their cars at home, and that it will be safer to walk on the street at night.

¹ buildings that are not cared for and are in a very bad condition ² (formal, official) homes