

9B Megacities

1 READING & SPEAKING

- a What do you think a ‘megacity’ is? Read the introduction to the text to check your answer. With a partner, in two minutes list what you think are probably the biggest problems for people who live in a megacity.
- b Read the article once. In which city are the things you discussed in a a problem: Tokyo, Mexico City, both, or neither?
- c Read the article again. Then, in pairs, using your own words, say why the following are mentioned.

TOKYO

33 million eight million a letter from the train company
 driving schools 25 square metres the *Hikikomori*
 Rent a friend the *Hashiriya*

MEXICO CITY

taco stands Mariachi bands two-and-a-half hours
 social imbalance kidnapping Kevlar

- d Find words in the article which mean...

TOKYO

- _____ *adj* operated by machines not people (paragraph 1)
- _____ *adj* impossible to imagine (paragraph 1)
- _____ *noun* the number of people who don't have a job (paragraph 1)
- _____ *adj* with too many people in it (paragraph 2)
- _____ *noun* a feeling that you don't belong to a community (paragraph 3)
- _____ *noun* the feeling of not having any friends (paragraph 3)

MEXICO CITY

- _____ *noun* the process of making air (and water) dirty (paragraph 2)
- _____ *noun* the state of being very rich
- _____ *noun* the state of being poor
- _____ *adjective* not having a house

- e Talk to a partner.

- If you had to go to work or study in either Mexico City or Tokyo, which would you choose, and why?
- What do you think are the main advantages of living in a big city?
- What's the biggest city you've ever been to? Why did you go there? What did you think of it?

Andrew Marr's Megacities

BBC | Wednesday 8.00 p.m.

By 2050, 70% of the world will live in cities, and by the end of the century three-quarters of the entire planet will be urban. There are now 21 cities called ‘megacities’, i.e. they have more than 10 million inhabitants. In Andrew Marr's BBC series *Megacities* he travelled to five of these cities, including Tokyo and Mexico City.



TOKYO

Tokyo, with a population of 33 million people, is by far the largest city in world. It's also the most technologically advanced, and the city runs like digital clockwork. The automated subway*, for example, is so efficient that it is able to transport almost eight million commuters every day and on the rare occasions that it goes wrong, nobody believes it. If you are late for work in Tokyo and, as an excuse, you say that your train was late, you need to provide written proof from the train company. The idea of late trains is almost unthinkable. There is very little crime, violence, or vandalism in Tokyo and the streets are safe to walk by day or night. There is also relatively low unemployment compared to other big cities in the world.

But such a huge population creates serious problems of space, and as Marr flew over Tokyo in a helicopter he saw football pitches, playgrounds, even driving schools constructed on top of buildings. Streets, parks, and subways are extremely overcrowded. Property prices are so high and space is so short that a family of six people may live in a tiny flat of only 25 square metres.

There are other problems too, of alienation and loneliness. The *Hikikomori* are inhabitants of Tokyo who cannot cope with ‘the mechanical coldness and robotic uniformity’ of a megacity and have become recluses, rarely or never leaving their homes. There is also a new business that has grown up in Tokyo which allows friendless people to ‘rent a friend’ to accompany them to a wedding or just to sit and chat to them in a bar after work.

Another strange group of people are the *Hashiriya*, Tokyo's street racers who risk their lives driving at ridiculous speeds along the city streets. During the week these men have ordinary jobs and they're model citizens. But on Saturday nights they spend the evening driving through the city as fast as they possibly can. It's a deadly game, but it's just one way of escaping the daily pressures of life in the metropolis.



* the underground or metro system



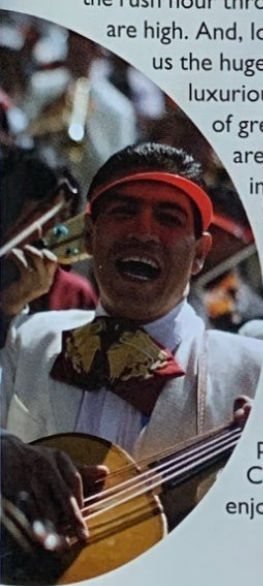
MEXICO CITY

As a complete contrast to Tokyo, Marr takes us to Mexico City, a colourful and vibrant city of about 20 million people where people live their lives in the street. Marr says that 'in Mexico City, food and friendship go hand in hand'. The city is full of taco stands and cafés where people meet and socialize and Mariachi bands stroll through the boulevards and squares playing songs for money. And on Sundays people of all ages gather to dance in the street.

But it's a city with problems of its own, too. It can take two-and-a-half hours for commuters to drive to and from work in the rush hour through choking traffic fumes, and pollution levels are high. And, looking down from a helicopter, Marr shows us the huge social divide. On one hillside we see massive,

luxurious houses and on the next hill, slums. It's a city of great wealth but also extreme poverty, and there are many homeless people. Because of this social imbalance it can be a dangerous city too, with high levels of crime, especially kidnapping. In fact, there are boutiques which sell a rather special line in men's clothes: the shirts, sweaters, and jackets look completely normal but are in fact bulletproof, made of reinforced Kevlar.

But despite the crime, the traffic, and the pollution Andrew Marr describes Mexico City as 'a friendly, liveable place' and the most enjoyable megacity of all that he visited.



2 VOCABULARY

word building: prefixes and suffixes

Prefixes and suffixes

A **prefix** is something that you add to the beginning of a word, usually to change its meaning, e.g. *pre* = before (*pre-war*), or a negative prefix like *un-* or *dis-* (*unhealthy*, *dishonest*). A **suffix** is something you add to the end of a word, usually to change its grammatical form, e.g. *-ment* and *-ness* are typical noun suffixes (*enjoyment*, *happiness*). However, some suffixes also add meaning to a word, e.g. *-ful* = full of (*stressful*, *beautiful*).

- Read the information about prefixes and suffixes. What prefix can you add to *city* meaning *big*? What suffix can you add to *home* meaning *without*? Can you think of any other examples of words with this suffix?
- p.163 Vocabulary Bank *Word building*.

3 PRONUNCIATION & SPEAKING

word stress with prefixes and suffixes

Word stress on words with prefixes and suffixes

We don't put main stress on prefixes and suffixes that are added to nouns and adjectives. However, there is usually secondary stress on prefixes, e.g. *un* in *unemployment*.

- Underline the stressed syllable in these multi-syllable nouns and adjectives. The secondary stress has already been underlined.

ac|com|mo|da|tion an|ti|so|cial bi|ling|ual
en|ter|tain|ment go|vern|ment home|less
lon|e|li|ness mul|ti|cul|tu|ral neigh|bour|hood
o|ver|crow|ded po|ver|ty un|der|de|vel|oped
un|em|ploy|ment van|dal|ism

- 5 16)) Listen and check. Practise saying the words.
- Answer the questions below with a partner.

Which city (or region) in your country do you think...?

- is the most multicultural
- offers the best entertainment (for tourists / for locals)
- has a bilingual or trilingual population
- is very overcrowded
- has very serious pollution problems
- has a lot of homeless people
- has some very dangerous neighbourhoods
- has the highest rate of unemployment
- has the worst levels of poverty
- suffers from the worst vandalism and antisocial behaviour

4 LISTENING & SPEAKING



- a When you travel to another country or city, do you normally try to find out about it before you go? Where from? What kind of information do you look for?
- b You are going to listen to an interview with Miles Roddis, a travel writer for the Lonely Planet guidebook series, talking about his five favourite cities. Look at the photos, and try to guess which continent or country they were taken in.
- c (5 17)) Listen once and find out where they are. What personal connection does Miles have to each place?
- d Listen again and make notes. What does Miles say is special about each place?
- e (5 18)) Now listen to some extracts from the interview. Try to write in the missing words. What do you think they mean?
- 1 ...there's wonderful surfing on Bondi beach and plenty of great little _____ for sunbathing and swimming.
 - 2 ...the choice of places to eat is _____.
 - 3 But what gives the city a special _____ during the festival is 'the Fringe'.
 - 4 And the Museum of Islamic Art has a whole lot of _____ pieces from Muslim times.
 - 5 Tuscany's two major tourist towns, Florence and Pisa, are absolutely _____ - _____ with tourists all year round...
 - 6 These walls are amazing – they're completely intact, and you can _____ into people's living rooms as you walk past.
 - 7 The Laotians are a lovely, _____, laid-back people.
 - 8 I remember looking down on it from one of the restaurants along its banks, and feeling that it was _____ all my troubles.
- f Talk in small groups.
- 1 Which of the five places Miles mentions would you most like to go to? Why?
 - 2 What other cities would you really like to go to? Why?
 - 3 What are your two favourite cities (not including your own)?
 - 4 Of the cities you've been to, which one(s) have you liked least? Why?

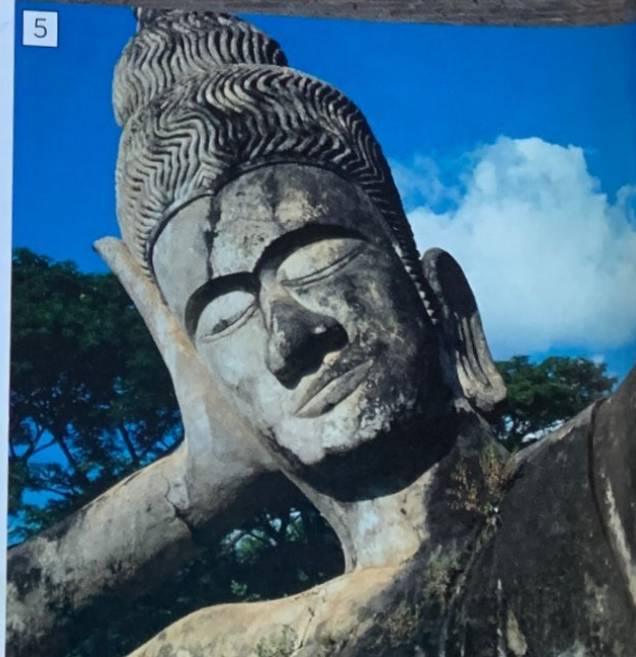


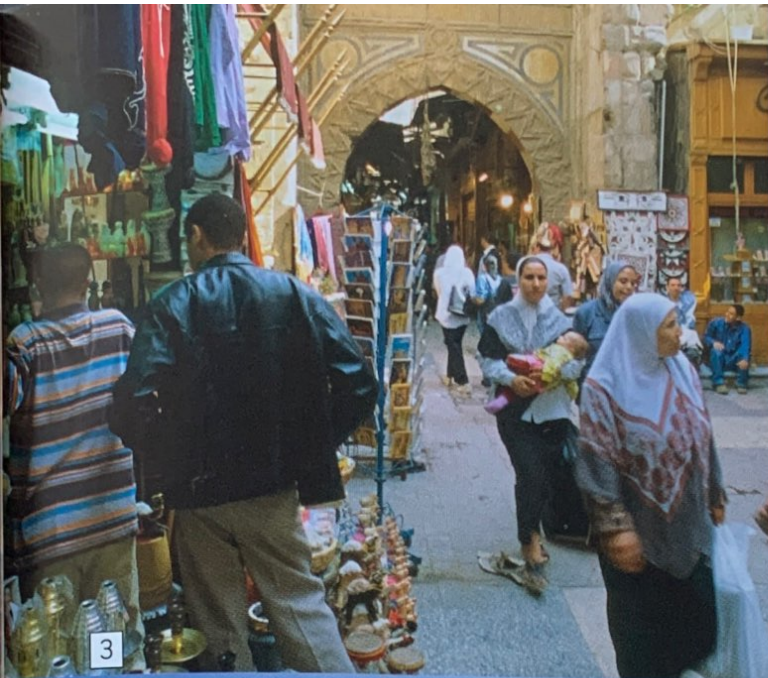
1

2



5





3

4



5 GRAMMAR uncountable and plural nouns

a Circle the correct form. Tick (✓) if you think both are possible.

- 1 A good guidebook will give you *advice* / *advices* about what to see.
- 2 You may have *some bad weather* / *a bad weather* if you go to London in March.
- 3 When I was in Rome and Paris, *the accommodation was* / *the accommodations were* extremely expensive.
- 4 It's best not to take *too much luggage* / *too many luggages* if you go on a city break.
- 5 The old town centre is amazing, but *the outskirts is* / *the outskirts are* a bit depressing.
- 6 I really liked the hotel. The rooms were beautiful, and *the staff was* / *the staff were* incredibly friendly

b ➤ p.149 Grammar Bank 9B. Learn more about uncountable nouns and plural and collective nouns, and practise them.

c Play **Just a minute** in small groups.

Just a minute

RULES

One person starts. He / she has to try to talk for a minute about the first subject below.

If he or she hesitates for more than five seconds, he / she loses his / her turn and the next student continues.

The person who is talking when one minute is up gets a point.

modern furniture

good advice you've been given

what's in the news at the moment

tourist accommodation in your country

the weather you like most

the most beautiful scenery you've seen

the traffic in your town / city

chocolate

the police in your country

clothes you love wearing

6 WRITING

➤ p.119 Writing Bank A report. Write a report for a website about good places for eating out or entertainment in your city.