

# Teaching Ideas On The Topic Of Cities

Cities is a great topic for architects because it can be used at every level of study. It is also a common topic in exams, e.g. questions like the “How do you picture your city in 50 years” . It also comes up in everyday life, e.g. “What is your hometown/the capital of your country/the place you went on your business trip like?”

The ideas below include discussions and debates, topics for talking about the cities.

- The world’s most/ least liveable cities (e.g. using the annual survey from the Economist)
- Arguments for and against cities being the most sustainable way of living in the modern world
- Ways of improving a city or cities generally
- Predictions for the future of cities or a particular city
- The largest city in the world at various times in history
- Looking at predictions about the future of cities, e.g. in science fiction books, that turned out to be right or wrong
- Talking about changes in particular cities, which are good and bad, and whether overall change has been positive or negative
- Discussion of laws that allow governments to move people out of their homes, e.g. to widen motorways
- Public housing
- Making cities greener
- Dealing with slums
- What one city can learn from other cities, e.g. discussing which ideas could successfully transfer to other places and which couldn’t
- Making a city more attractive to tourists or a particular group of people who live there, e.g. young families
- Planning a new city or area from scratch
- Bringing business to a historic city like Rome without ruining its charms
- Combining modern and historic architecture, e.g. the Louvre pyramid
- The world’s smallest capital cities
- Arguments for and against economic free zones

## Language Students Might Need To Talk About Cities

- Adjectives to describe cities, including understanding which ones are positive and negative (“congested”, “lively”, “frantic”, etc)
- Language for comparing and contrasting (e.g. “It’s a bit like London, but more...” and “It’s near London but totally different”)
- Describing positions of cities (“near the sea”, “in the Northwest”, etc)
- Parts of cities (“downtown”, “suburbs”, “outskirts”, etc)
- Things in cities (“town hall”, “underground”, etc)
- Describing changes in the city and parts of it (“becoming more cosmopolitan”, “expanding”, “gentrifying”)
- Language of generalisation (“most people are commuters”, “generally locals don’t like...”, etc)

## Urban and architecture Dimensions

Useful phrases

Dimensions

It weighs...

It is ... high/ wide/ tall/ long/ thick.

It's dimension are... by ... (by...)

Its surface area/ volume/ radius/ circumference/ height/ width/ length is...

Its biggest/ smallest/ most important part is...

The biggest/ heaviest/ smallest/ lightest example of this is...

It weighs/ costs twice/ three times/ four times as much as...

Other properties

It costs...

It lasts for...

You need... to use it/ make it./ It's made of (more or less)... parts.

You can draw one with... circles/ squares/ rectangles/ ovals/ triangles.

Other numbers

There are... in this office/ building/ street/ area/ town.

It was invented in.../ The first one in this city/ country.../ It has been around for...

I see/ use/ pass this ... a day/ week/ month/ year.

It's usually... above the ground/ from the door.

The one I designed/ use/ usually see/ have is...

Approximating

Approximately/ About/ Around/ More or less

Between ... and...

(Just) under/ Less than/ Up to – (Just) over/ More than

(Almost) exactly...

Almost...

On average...

I imagine/ estimate/ think...

### **vocabulary list dictation**

*A: Without looking at the list below, listen to your teacher read out a list of words and put up your hand whenever you think you know how all those words are connected. Each person can only guess once for each category, so wait until you are fairly sure before you raise your hand.*

*B: Label the categories of vocabulary below*

- hut, serviced apartment, tent, caravan, B&B (= bed and breakfast), villa, log cabin, bungalow, self-catering flat, second home/ holiday home, mobile home, condo, maisonette, camper van, igloo, (youth) hostel, shared house, penthouse, host family, (student) halls/ dorm(itory)
- bidet, toilet, shower cubicle, bathtub,
- sand, stone (marble, limestone, etc), mortar, (reinforced) concrete, cement, wood, paint, brick, paper, mud, reeds, metal
- central heating, double glazing, (real/ coal/ electric/ gas) fire, paraffin stove, insulation, (fan) heater,
- rent, mortgage, deposit, housing benefit, subsidized housing
- carpet, rug, tatami, wood, stone, linoleum, mat
- armchair, (kitchen/ swivel) chair, chest of drawers, dresser, (queen-sized) bed, futon/ sofa-bed
- wooden flooring, wallpaper, (wall to wall/ fitted) carpet, fireplace, mantelpiece, chandelier, (wooden) beam, pillar
- fluorescent strip, LED bulb, (desk) lamp, spotlight, candle, chandelier
- beam, banister, stairs, floorboards, kitchen table, wardrobe/ closet
- drive, path, ivy, front garden, flower box, shutter, chimney, garage, carport, doorstep, fence, hedge, garden wall, gate, greenhouse, lawn, flowerbed, drainpipe
- balcony, terrace, garage, lobby, utility room, hall/ corridor, living room/ sitting room/ lounge, landing, loft/ attic, cellar/ basement
- loft/ attic, cellar/ basement, built in cupboard, walk in wardrobe
- intercom, security camera, air conditioning, smoke detector, burglar alarm
- terraced, semi-detached, detached, bungalow, mansion, cottage,
- thatched, tiled, flat, steep, terrace

*Compare your answers with the next page.*

## **Suggested answers**

- accommodation – hut, serviced apartment, tent, caravan, B&B (= bed and breakfast), villa, log cabin, bungalow, self-catering flat, second home/ holiday home, mobile home, condo, maisonette, camper van, igloo, (youth) hostel, shared house, penthouse, host family, (student) halls/ dorm(itory)
- bathroom – bidet, toilet, shower cubicle, bathtub,
- building material – sand, stone (marble, limestone, etc), mortar, (reinforced) concrete, cement, wood, paint, brick, paper, mud, reeds, metal
- connected to winter – central heating, double glazing, (real/ coal/ electric/ gas) fire, paraffin stove, insulation, (fan) heater,
- finance – rent, mortgage, deposit, housing benefit, subsidized housing
- floor - carpet, rug, tatami, wood, stone, linoleum, mat
- furniture – armchair, (kitchen/ swivel) chair, chest of drawers, dresser, (queen-sized) bed, futon/ sofa-bed
- interior – wooden flooring, wallpaper, (wall to wall/ fitted) carpet, fireplace, mantelpiece, chandelier, (wooden) beam, pillar
- lighting –fluorescent strip, LED bulb, (desk) lamp, spotlight, candle, chandelier
- made from wood – beam, banister, stairs, floorboards, kitchen table, wardrobe/ closet
- outside the house - drive, path, ivy, front garden, flower box, shutter, chimney, garage, carport, doorstep, fence, hedge, garden wall, gate, greenhouse, lawn, flowerbed, drainpipe
- part of a house – balcony, terrace, garage, lobby, utility room, hall/ corridor, living room/ sitting room/ lounge, landing, loft/ attic, cellar/ basement
- storage – loft/ attic, cellar/ basement, built in cupboard, walk in wardrobe
- technology – intercom, security camera, air conditioning, smoke detector, burglar alarm
- type of house – terraced, semi-detached, detached, bungalow, mansion, cottage,
- type of roof – thatched, tiled, flat, steep, terrace