READING COMPREHENSION

CITY LIFE

If you are about to take a decision whether to live in a large city or a small town, you definitely look at all the advantages and disadvantages of these places.

There are lots of good points to be made about living in a city. One of them is the fact you have all the most important offices, banks, **headquarters** (= the main office) of companies and what not **near/close at hand** (= very close and easy to reach). A large number of these means a wide choice of services, which is what most people appreciate. Another, if not the crucial advantage, is a relatively **easy access to** education and much higher chances of **landing** (= finding) **a good job** (or any job at all) than in small towns. Since everything is close, you needn't waste time and money to get from home to work or shops. But does it still hold true?

In fact, nowadays you spend hours in a city to cover the distance that normally should take you no longer than half an hour. And here comes the first **drawback** (= disadvantage) of modern city life: omnipresent traffic jams which can **bring the whole city to a standstill** (= paralyse the city) in the rush hours. Let alone the stress and frustration they cause, reducing people's life expectancy in the long run. Another thing to be considered is **the frantic** (= quick) **pace of life**, which may not suit everybody, although there are people who couldn't live without being in a hurry all the time. Last but not least at all, comes the polluted environment with the **exhaust fumes** (= smoke produced by car engines), **sewage** (= waste substances, especially from people's bodies, removed from houses), **undrinkable water** or fewer and fewer green areas which are taken away for the new high rise buildings to be erected.

So, is city life a blessing or a curse? If you had to move away from the city, which of the above would you miss and which would you be glad to leave behind?

More contexts for the new words:

• When I came into the room, she was explaining something and waving her hands about **frantically**. (= with a lot of quick movement and involvement)

• The dinner we were presented with was just **inedible** . We couldn't swallow a single bite. (= not safe or pleasant to eat, uneatable)

EXERCISE 1

Match the expression halves.

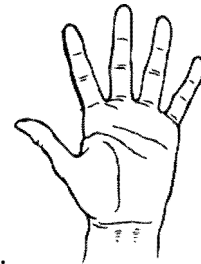|		
1) close at		a. to a standstill
2) easy access		b. hand
3) to land		c. food
4) to bring the city		d. pace of life
5) a frantic		e. a good job
6) exhaust		f. fumes
7) undrinkable		g. water
8) inedible		h. to education

EXERCISE 2

Use the pictures to complete the questions, and then answer them.

1. What are the chances of ………………………………….. a good job in your home town?

2. What useful facilities do you have close at ………………………………….. ?

3. What can we do to reduce the amount of exhaust …………………………………..

?

ENGLISH IN USE

You most probably know the word **SINCE** in connection with the Present Perfect tense. You use it then when talking about an activity that started in the past and is still true, when you refer to a point in time, e.g.

*We have been living here **since** David was born.*
*She has had her car **since** 2004.*
*I haven't seen Mary **since** last year.*

This is all very true, but **SINCE** can be used with a completely different meaning, too. Look at the sentence from today's text:

***Since** everything is close, you needn't waste time and money to get from home to work or shops.*

Here **SINCE** has a meaning similar to 'because' and is not followed by an expression referring to a point in time (like in Present Perfect), but by a clause. A few more examples will help you understand this use of **SINCE**.

*He didn't want to take part in the project **since** he decided to leave the company.*
***Since** she was only 13, she couldn't be let in.*

IDIOM CLOSE-UP

A/ I've heard you've been fishing?
*B/ I have, but as a **CITY SLICKER** I didn't know the first thing about it.*

A **city slicker** is someone who lives and works in a city. This word is usually used disapprovingly by people from the countryside who dislike people from the city.

PHRASAL VERBS CLOSE-UP

1. When you WALL something OFF, you separate a small space from a larger one by constructing a wall or by permanently closing a door.

*The part of the city where riots began was **walled off** from the other districts.*
*Several rooms were **walled off** to save money on heating bills.*

2. When you WALL something UP, you permanently close the doors and windows of a room or house, for example with wooden boards or bricks.

*In the inner city, many buildings are entirely **walled up**.*
*Most of the old building's windows have been **walled up**.*

EXERCISE 3
Transform the sentences so that they mean the same. Use the words in brackets.

1. The doors have been permanently closed. [WALLED]

……………………………………………………………….
2. The ghetto was separated from the rest of the city. [WALLED]

……………………………………………………………….
3. He lives and works in the city. [SLICKER]

……………………………………………………………….

NEWS

PLANNED CITIES

Most cities in the world tend to evolve like living organisms – they first start as tiny settlements, usually on a river bank, and then grow as more and more immigrants settle there. A city's growth is thus a direct **derivative** of the city's desirability and attractiveness. However, some cities in the world have been pre-planned, as their architects had certain **preconceptions** concerning the functions of the place. For instance, in South Africa many cities were planned during the apartheid era, and thus feature separate districts and facilities for the two races. In **mainland** China, in turn, since ancient times cities have **striven** to reflect the principles of feng shui, featuring square or rectangular city walls, a straight road **grid**, and symmetrical layout. And we even have a few planned communities in Poland: Tychy, Zamość, Gdynia, and Nowa Huta.

GLOSSARY
- **derivative** – sth developed from sth else
- **preconceptions** – opinions you form before you have all the information
- **mainland** – continental
- **strive (strove striven)** – try very hard
- **grid** – pattern of crossing lines

Ex.1
  1. b
  2. h
  3. e
  4. a
  5. d
  6. f
  7. g
  8. c

Ex.2
1. landing
2. hand
3. fumes

Ex.3
1. The doors have been walled up.
2. The ghetto was walled off from the rest of the city.
3. He's a city slicker.