

IELTS vocabulary for cities and travel

Words for urban growth, transport and tourism from passages on Dar es Salaam's traffic, public transport and wilderness tourism, with phrases like 'on the outskirts of' and 'the pace of city life'.

Words

settlement /'setlmənt/ (noun, B2) a place where people have come to live

Today, four out of five of its people live in single-storey informal settlements on the spreading edges of the city, where the journey to and from the centre regularly takes over two hours.

urban /'ɜ:bən/ (adjective, B2) relating to towns and cities

In Paris, urban farmers are trying a soil-free approach to agriculture that uses less space and fewer resources.

congestion /kən'dʒestʃən/ (noun, C1) too much traffic, so that movement is slow

Despite the extension of the underground railway, by the 1880s, congestion on London's streets had become worse.

suburb /'sʌbɜ:b/ (noun, B2) an area where people live on the edge of a city

Melbourne's large tram network has made car use in the inner city much lower, but the outer suburbs have the same car-based structure as most other Australian cities.

sprawl /sprɔ:l/ (noun, C1) the spread of a city into the land around it

Urban sprawl means that life without a car is next to impossible.

residential /,rezɪ'denʃl/ (adjective, B2) (of an area or building) where people live, not work

In California, where population growth has averaged more than 600,000 a year for at least a decade, more residential housing is being built.

high-rise /'haɪ raɪz/ (noun, B2) a very tall building with many floors

Mass-produced, low-cost high-rises seemed to offer a solution to the problem of housing a growing inner-city population.

inner-city /,ɪnə 'sɪti/ (adjective, C1) in the old central area of a large town, often poor

His idea was to relocate the poor workers who lived in the inner-city slums to newly constructed suburbs, and to provide cheap rail travel for them to get to work.

tourism /'tʊərɪzəm/ (noun, B1) the business of providing services for people on holiday

Tourism currently makes up 9% of the country's gross domestic product, and is the country's largest export sector.

destination /,destɪ'neɪʃn/ (noun, B1) the place someone or something is going to

Large merchant ships would approach the destination port and, just like today, be intercepted by a number of towboats that would drag them to the quay.

accommodation /ə,kɒmə'deɪʃn/ (noun, B1) a place to live or stay

The explosion in demand for accommodation in the inner suburbs of Melbourne suggests a recent change in many people's preferences as to where they live.

overcrowded /,əʊvə'kraʊdɪd/ (adjective, B2) with too many people in one place

The area within consisted of poorly built, overcrowded slums and the streets were full of horse-drawn traffic.

municipal /mju:'nɪsɪpl/ (adjective, C1) belonging to or run by a town or city

These correspond roughly to small municipal, medium-sized metropolitan and major metropolitan airports respectively, and encompass an increasingly rigorous set of regulations.

density /'densəti/ (noun, C1) how many people or things are in an area

With such small population densities, it seems unlikely that prehistoric hunter-gatherer groups had to compete against each other for resources or had any need to develop ruthlessness and competitiveness, or to go to war.

voyage /'vɔɪdʒ/ (noun, B2) a long journey, especially by sea

It also seemed likely that these islands were crucial "stepping stones" on humans' island-hopping voyages through this region millennia ago.

landmark /'lændmɑ:k/ (noun, B2) a building or feature that is easy to recognise

They sailed by noting their position relative to a succession of recognisable landmarks.

architecture /'ɑ:kɪtektʃə/ (noun, B1) the design and style of buildings

Although the Renaissance is renowned as an era of incredible progress in art and architecture, it is rarely noted that the 15th century also marked the birth of urbanism as a true academic discipline.

sanitation /,sæn'teɪʃn/ (noun, C1) systems for clean water and removing human waste

This rapid urbanisation brought significant challenges, as overcrowded cities suffered from pollution and inadequate sanitation.

mobility /məʊˈbɪləti/ (noun, C1) the ability to move or travel easily

During Phase II, from January to February 1991, a number of approaches were implemented in an effort to improve mobility and access to transport.

housing /ˈhaʊzɪŋ/ (noun, B2) houses and flats, especially for many people

During this period, there was an emphasis on providing clean water, improved sanitation and housing.

expedition /ˌɛkspəˈdɪʃn/ (noun, B2) an organised journey to explore a place

Between 1906 and 1908 he had taken part in a highly publicized and extremely dangerous expedition to the coast of northeast Greenland.

navigate /ˈnævɪgeɪt/ (verb, C1) to find your way through or around a place

Outside the centre many rely on boda boda (motorbike taxis) to navigate the narrow side streets and potholed mud roads that make up much of the metropolis.

Phrases for Speaking and Writing

on the outskirts of at the edge of a town or city

I'm living in a rented flat on the outskirts of the city, about forty minutes from where I work.

residential suburb an area of homes at the edge of a city

Right now I'm back at my parents' house, in a quiet residential suburb on the eastern side of the city.

blocks of flats large buildings divided into many apartments

Half the old bungalows have been knocked down and replaced with blocks of flats, so it feels busier than I remember.

sprawling suburb a large area of homes spreading out from a city

The reason it appeals to me is that I grew up in a sprawling suburb where you couldn't do anything without a car.

urban planner a person who plans how land in a city is used

My dream job would be working as an urban planner, ideally for a city government rather than a private consultancy.

planning applications formal requests for permission to build

There are endless consultations, planning applications and compromises between people who want completely different things.

panoramic view a wide view of a large area

At the top there's a flat, open area with a low stone wall, and from there you get a panoramic view of the whole city: the river, the old town with its crowded rooftops and, on a clear day, mountains in the distance.

the pace of city life how fast and busy life in a city is

The main reason I like going there is that it gives me a break from the pace of city life.

tucked away hidden in a quiet place that is hard to find

The place I'd like to describe is a second-hand bookshop tucked away in one of the older neighbourhoods of my city.

tourist spot a place many visitors go to

It's not a famous tourist spot, so even at weekends it's fairly peaceful, and there's a small guesthouse where the owner now recognises us.

road trip a long journey by car for pleasure

My friends and I discovered it by chance a few years ago when we took a wrong turn on a road trip, and we've been going back ever since.

out of season at a time of year when few tourists visit

Out of season it's almost deserted, which suits me perfectly, because I go there to recharge rather than to sightsee.

congested cities cities so full of traffic that movement is slow

A daily commute of ninety minutes, which is by no means unusual in congested cities, adds up to well over three hundred hours a year.

daily commute the journey to and from work every day

A daily commute of ninety minutes, which is by no means unusual in congested cities, adds up to well over three hundred hours a year.

affordable public transport buses and trains that most people can pay for

At the same time, they could invest in renewable energy such as solar and wind power, and expand affordable public transport so that people have a realistic alternative to driving.

a lively neighbourhood a local area that is busy and full of activity

Living in a lively neighbourhood also means there's always something going on, which suits my personality.