

大学英语教程

A COLLEGE ENGLISH COURSE

Book One B

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Speed Reading

快速阅读

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Lesson One

Our Village

Starting Time: Minutes _____ *Seconds* _____

Our village is small and has only one street. Because it is not on a main road, it is quiet and peaceful. Except at week-ends during the summer months there is not much traffic. There are only three shops, the butcher's, the baker's and the General Stores.

If you want stamps to put on your letters and postcards, you can buy these in the General Stores. The owner is also the village postmaster. The General Stores and Post Office is the centre of village life, at least for the women and children. The men meet at the public house to talk about village affairs, but it is in the shop that the women exchange news.

Look round the shop. You will learn a good deal about the life of the village. Look at the newspapers there. If you know which newspapers support the two big political parties, you can make a good guess at the politics of the man who represents the villagers in Parliament.

There are cards pinned up on a wooden board near the door. One card tells you that there will be a dance in the village hall on Saturday evening. Another announces that

there will be a sale of village produce on Wednesday afternoon to raise money for repairs to the woodwork in the church. Other cards advertise second-hand furniture and other goods for sale. Mrs. Wells has a card that says she will go out in the mornings to help people with their housework. There are still other cards asking for domestic help two or three mornings a week.

Opposite the General Stores is the village 'pub'. A large signboard shows that it is called 'The Red Lion'. Here, in the evening, many of the men come for a glass of beer and a game of darts. The pub is the working man's club. There is talk about the weather and the crops, about what has been happening in the village. There is talk about football in winter and cricket in summer. After the nine o'clock news from the B.B.C. there may be a discussion on national and international affairs.

Outside the pub is the bus stop, and on a board there is the time-table for the local bus service. The villagers go to the nearest town, seven miles away, when they want to visit a cinema or do the kind of shopping that cannot be done in the village. On Saturday afternoons there are often family parties waiting for the bus to take them to town for the week-end shopping.

The church was built in the fifteenth century. It is the most interesting and the most beautiful building in the village. From the gravestones in the churchyard and the written records inside the church a large part of the history of the

village can be learnt. On Sundays its bells ring to call the people to services.

The village school is a small and rather old-fashioned building. It is a primary school, so only young children attend it. When they are eleven years old, they go to secondary schools in the nearest town. A school bus takes them in every morning and brings them back every afternoon. They have dinner at school, between morning and afternoon classes.

Besides the butcher's, the baker's and the General Stores, we have a blacksmith's shop and a garage. The blacksmith today is an agricultural engineer. He repairs farm tractors and other complicated machinery used in modern agriculture.

The garage has two petrol pumps. The mechanic will keep your car in good order. He is also an electrician. He will repair your radio or television set or wire your house if you want to change from paraffin lamps to electric lighting. The owner of the garage has a motor-coach which the men of the village often hire to take them to football and cricket matches in neighbouring towns. The women sometimes hire the coach to take them for a day's outing to the seaside in summer, or perhaps to a theatre in town when there is a play that they think interesting or amusing.

Finishing Time: Minutes _____ Seconds _____

Check Your Comprehension

Choose the best answer to complete the sentence.

1. At week-ends during the summer months, there is
 - a. heavy traffic in the village.
 - b. as much traffic as on week-days in the village.
 - c. as little traffic as on week-days in the village.
2. The women and children of the village usually go to
 - a. the General Stores.
 - b. the Post Office.
 - c. the General Stores and Post Office.
3. You can learn a lot about the life of the village
 - a. by reading the newspapers there.
 - b. by looking round the shop.
 - c. by buying picture-postcard views of the village.
4. You can learn a large part of the history of the village from
 - a. the beautiful buildings in the village.
 - b. the historic monuments in front of the village.
 - c. the gravestones in the churchyard and the written records inside the church.
5. The village school building is
 - a. large and modern.
 - b. small but new-style.
 - c. small and old-fashioned.
6. The school children have their dinner
 - a. at home.

- b. at school.
c. at the baker's.
7. The blacksmith today is
a. a farmer.
b. a tractor driver.
c. an agricultural engineer.
8. The mechanic is also
a. an electrician.
b. an engineer.
c. a carpenter.
9. The owner of the garage has
a. a taxi.
b. a motor-coach.
c. a bicycle.
10. The men of the village often hire the motor-coach to take them
a. to the Post Office.
b. to the General Stores.
c. to football and cricket matches in neighbouring towns.

Name _____ Date _____ Class _____
 Reading Time: Minutes _____ Seconds _____
 Words per minute _____
 Total number right _____ Percent _____

Vocabulary Practice

Select the word or words closest in meaning to the underlined word or words.

1. The men meet at the public house to talk about village affairs, but it is in the shop that the women exchange news.
 - a. house at which alcoholic drinks are sold, to be drunk in the building
 - b. hotel where people stay
 - c. club in which people take part in recreational activities
2. Another card announces that there will be a sale of village produce on Wednesday afternoon to raise money for repairs to the woodwork in the church.
 - a. bring up
 - b. manage to get
 - c. cause to rise
3. Other cards advertise second-hand furniture and other goods for sale.
 - a. extra hand in some watches and clocks recording seconds
 - b. indirect
 - c. already used by others
4. Besides the butcher's, the baker's and the General Stores, we have a blacksmith's shop and a garage.
 - a. building in which motor-cars are parked

- b. building in which motor-cars are kept when not in use
 - c. building where motor-cars, etc., are repaired, where petrol, oil, tyres, etc., can be bought
5. The women sometimes hire the coach to take them for a day's outing to the seaside in summer.
- a. practice cycling
 - b. practice gallop
 - c. short pleasure trip

Name _____ *Date* _____ *Class* _____

Reading Time: Minutes _____ *Seconds* _____

Words per minute _____

Total number right _____ *Percent* _____

Lesson Two

City

Starting Time: Minutes _____ *Seconds* _____

A city is a community where thousands—or even millions—of people live and work. Cities are the world's most crowded places. New York City, for example, has an average of about 19,400 persons per square mile (7,490 persons per square kilometer). The United States as a whole averages only 64 persons per square mile (25 persons per square kilometer). Similarly, other large cities of the world have population densities hundreds or thousands of times as large as the average national population densities.

Most cities are overcrowded, dirty, and noisy—and sometimes unpeaceful. Traffic jams delay people who are trying to get to and from work, stores, or other places. Airplanes, automobiles, buses, trucks, electric power plants, factories, and other sources pollute the air with fumes that endanger people's health. Motor vehicles, factories, sirens, and building and wrecking machinery create noise that often becomes nerve-racking. Many cities have a high crime rate, and violence sometimes breaks out between racial, religious, and other groups. City people have also rioted to protest poor housing

and other undesirable living conditions.

But despite all the drawbacks, the percentage of the world's people who live in *urban places* (cities and their surrounding areas) keeps growing. In 1800, only about $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent of the world population lived in urban places of 20,000 or more persons. This figure had jumped to about 30 per cent by 1980 and is expected to reach about 40 per cent by the year 2000. In 1800, the United States classified only about 5 per cent of its population as urban. This figure has reached about 78 per cent and is expected to reach about 85 per cent by 2000.

People choose to live in or near cities for several reasons. The main reason is the number and variety of jobs that are available. The economies of such nations as Canada, France, Germany, Great Britain, Japan, and the United States are based chiefly on manufacturing. Most manufacturing takes place in and near cities, and so most of the jobs are there. Far fewer jobs are available in the cities of developing nations, including most of the countries of Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Even so, large numbers of people flock to these cities. Many are farmers who no longer can earn a living from the land. They go to cities in search of jobs, but many cannot find any work.

Cities also offer many more cultural and recreational activities than do rural areas. City residents can go to art galleries, museums, and concerts. They can borrow books from huge public libraries and shop in stores that sell thou-

sands of products. City residents can also attend motion pictures, plays, and sports events.

Large numbers of people choose to live in or near a city simply because they like the rapid pace of city life. Perhaps these same people complain bitterly about the crowds, dirt, and noise they experience in a city. But they like the bustling activity that makes city life so different from rural life.

There is no standard that tells how many people a community must have to be classified as a city. In fact, some communities are called cities for reasons that have nothing to do with their population. In the United States, for example, one definition of *city* is any community—regardless of population—that has some form of city government. But most people use the word for large urban communities. This article uses the word *city* in that sense.

There are population standards for distinguishing urban places and rural places. In general, all communities in the United States with 2,500 or more persons, and smaller communities near big ones, are considered urban. Farms, and communities in uncrowded areas with fewer than 2,500 persons, are considered rural. The standard for distinguishing urban and rural places varies among the nations of the world, ranging from about 2,500 to 10,000 population. The United Nations considers as urban only those communities that have a population of 20,000 or more.

Finishing Time: Minutes _____ Seconds _____

Check Your Comprehension

Choose the best answer to complete the sentence.

1. People choose to live in or near cities mainly because
 - a. most of the jobs are there.
 - b. living conditions are better.
 - c. housing is more desirable.
2. In 2000, about 40 percent of the world population will live in
 - a. urban places.
 - b. rural areas.
 - c. new towns.
3. The drawbacks of city life include
 - a. cost for cultural activities.
 - b. cost for sports events.
 - c. noise, violence and polluted air.
4. The United Nations considers as urban only those communities that have a population of
 - a. 20,000 persons.
 - b. 20,000 persons or more.
 - c. 2,500 persons.
5. There are population standards for distinguishing
 - a. urban places and rural places.
 - b. big cities and big towns.
 - c. villages and towns.
6. Any community in _____ that has some form of city

- government is called a city.
- a. Japan
 - b. France
 - c. the United States
7. Most manufacturing takes place
- a. in cities.
 - b. in and near cities.
 - c. both in urban places and rural places.
8. The standard for distinguishing urban and rural places varies among the nations
- a. of Asia.
 - b. of Europe.
 - c. of the world.
9. New York City has an average of about
- a. 19,400 persons per square meter.
 - b. 7,490 persons per square mile.
 - c. 19,400 persons per square mile.
10. Large numbers of people like
- a. the peace of city life.
 - b. the rapid pace of city life.
 - c. noisy but interesting city life.

Name _____ Date _____ Class _____

Reading Time: Minutes _____ Seconds _____

Words per minute _____

Total number right _____ Percent _____

Vocabulary Practice

Select the word or words closest in meaning to the underlined word or words.

1. A city is a community where thousands, or even millions, of people live and work.
 - a. public
 - b. district
 - c. society
2. Motor vehicles, factories, sirens, and building and wrecking machinery create noise that often becomes nerve-racking.
 - a. destroying
 - b. working
 - c. wrapping
3. But despite all the drawbacks, the percentage of the world's people who live in urban places keeps growing.
 - a. difficulties or disadvantages
 - b. advantages
 - c. withdrawals
4. But large numbers of people like the bustling activity that makes city life so different from rural life.
 - a. lively
 - b. noisy
 - c. free
5. In the United States, for example, one definition of a city

is any community—regardless of population—that ~~has~~ some form of city government.

- a. negligent of
- b. whatever may happen
- c. in spite of

Name _____ Date _____ Class _____

Reading Time: Minutes _____ Seconds _____

Words per minute _____

Total number right _____ Percent _____