

The following text will give you an opinion on life in a large city. Read it, then a) contradict to the narrator, speak in favour of living in a large city. Use the words given below; b) argue with your friend who keeps to an opposite point of you.

“Only a madman would choose to live in a large city”

'Avoid the rush-hour' must be the slogan of large cities the world over. If it is, it's a slogan no one takes the least notice of. Twice a day, with predictable regularity, the pot boils over. Wherever you look it's people, people, people. The trains which leave or arrive every few minutes are packed: an endless procession of human sardine tins. The streets are so crowded there is hardly room to move on the pavements. The queues for buses reach staggering proportions. It takes ages for a bus to get to you because the traffic on the roads has virtually come to a standstill! Even when a bus does at last arrive, it's so full, it can't take any more passengers. This whole crazy system of commuting* stretches man's resources to the utmost. The smallest unforeseen event can bring about conditions of utter chaos. A power-cut, for instance, an exceptionally heavy snowfall or a minor derailment must always make city-dwellers realise how precarious the balance is. The extraordinary thing is not that people put up with these conditions, but that they actually choose them in preference to anything else!

Large modern cities are too big to control. They impose their own living conditions ON the people who inhabit them. City-dwellers are obliged by their environment to adopt wholly unnatural way of life. They lose touch with the land and rhythm of nature. It is possible to live such an air-conditioned existence in a large city that you are barely conscious of the seasons. A few flowers in a public park (if you have the time to visit it) may remind you that it is spring or summer. A few leaves clinging to the pavement may remind you that it is autumn. Beyond that, what is going on in nature seems totally irrelevant. All the simple, good things of life like sunshine and fresh air are a premium. Tall buildings blot out the sun. Traffic fumes pollute the atmosphere. Even the distinction between day and night is lost. The flow of traffic goes on unceasingly and the noise never stops.

The funny thing about it all is that you pay dearly for the 'privilege' of living in a city. The demand for accommodation is so great that it is often impossible for ordinary people, to buy a house of their own. Exorbitant rents must be paid for tiny flats which even country hens would disdain to live in. Accommodation apart, the cost of living is very high. Just about everything you buy is likely to be more expensive than it would be in the country.

In addition to all this, city-dwellers live under constant threat. The crime rate in most cities is very high. Houses are burgled with alarming frequency. Cities breed crime and violence and are full of places you would be afraid to visit at night. If you think about it, they are not really fit to live in at all. Can anyone really doubt that the country is what man was born for and where he truly belongs?

*commuting - маятниковая миграция. Ежедневные поездки по железной дороге или на автобусе из пригорода на работу

Argument: key words

1. Avoid rush-hour': slogan of every large city; no one does.
2. Happens twice a day.
3. Trains packed; streets crowded; bus queues; traffic jams; buses full.
4. Commuting screeches man's resources.
5. Unforeseen events (e.g. power-cut, heavy snowfall): chaos.
6. People actually choose such conditions.
7. Large modern cities too big to control.
8. Impose their own living conditions on people.
9. City-dwellers: unnatural way of life.
10. Lose touch with land, rhythm of nature
11. Air-conditioned existence: barely-conscious of seasons: flowers: spring; leaves: autumn; nature irrelevant.
12. Simple good things (e.g. sunlight, fresh air) at a premium.
13. Distinction day, night is lost; always noise, traffic.
14. Expensive 'privilege'.
15. Accommodation: house of your own impossible; rents high.
16. Cost of living in general high,
17. Lack of security: cities breed crime and violence; houses often burgled.
18. Cities not fit to live in; man born for country.

The counter-argument: key words

1. If proposition is true, then there are millions of madmen.
2. Most people love cities: proof: man is fleeing from countryside.
3. Modern man too sophisticated for simple country pleasures.
4. It's enough to visit countryside at week-ends.
5. Objections to city living are unconvincing'
6. Commuting does not really affect those who live in cities; a small inconvenience only.
7. Noise, traffic, etc., hardly noticeable; people easily adapt.
8. Very small minority of city-dwellers ever involved in crime, violence.
9. Many reasons why city life is preferable:
10. Good to be near one's friends; never cut off by weather conditions.
11. Life is never dull; always something to do.
12. Cities offer high concentration of good things in life: big stores, restaurants, theatres, cinemas, galleries, etc.
13. Services are always better; better schools, more amenities (e.g. swimming-pools, etc.).
14. More chances of employment; greater range of jobs; more opportunity to succeed