

Vienna named world's top city for quality of life

Level 3 • Advanced

1 Warmer

Answer the questions. Then, discuss your answers.

- What factors do you think make a city a good place to live?
- Which of these cities corresponds best with your idea of a great place to live?

Paris

London

San Francisco

Singapore

Vienna

Berlin

2 Key words

Find the key words in the article and write them next to the definitions below. The paragraph numbers are given to help you.

1. the highest point _____ (subtitle)
2. fallen _____ (para 3)
3. the fact that something is relatively easy to hurt or damage _____ (para 3)
4. badly _____ (para 7)
5. the thing that makes something special or different from others _____ (para 10)
6. the most important place where a particular activity takes place _____ (para 10)
7. the total value of the goods and services that a country produces in a year, not including income received from money invested in other countries _____ (para 11)
8. admitted _____ (para 12)
9. go somewhere in large numbers, usually because there is something interesting or exciting
 _____ (para 13)
10. public services such as gas, water or electricity that are used by everyone _____
 (para 15)
11. used for enjoyment _____ (para 15)
12. a situation in which a place is crowded with people or vehicles so that it is difficult to move around
 _____ (para 17)

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Study examining socioeconomic conditions places Austrian capital at apex of index while London, Paris and New York fail to make top 35

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- 1 Vienna is the world's best city to live in, Baghdad is the worst and London, Paris and New York do not even make it into the top 35, according to international research into quality of life.
- 2 German-speaking cities dominate the rankings in the 18th Mercer Quality of Life study, with Vienna joined by Zurich, Munich, Dusseldorf and Frankfurt in the top seven.
- 3 Paris has tumbled down the league, falling ten places to 37th, just ahead of London at 39th, almost entirely because of the city's vulnerability to terrorist attacks.
- 4 The study examined social and economic conditions, health, education, housing and the environment, and is used by big companies to assess where they should locate and how much they should pay staff.
- 5 Viennese-born Helena Hartlauer, 32, said she was not surprised at her city's top position. The municipality's social democratic government has a long tradition of investing in high-quality social housing, making Vienna almost uniquely affordable among major cities.
- 6 "I live in a 100sq-metre turn-of-the-century apartment in a good area about 20 minutes' walk from the city centre. But my rent is just €800 (£625) a month." An equivalent apartment in London would cost upwards of £2,000 and even more in New York, ranked 44th in the table.
- 7 US cities perform relatively poorly in the study, largely because of issues around personal safety and crime. The highest ranking city in the US is San Francisco, at 28th; Boston is 34th. Canadian cities, led by Vancouver, far outrank their US rivals in the table.
- 8 "You don't realize how safe Vienna is until you head abroad," said Hartlauer. "We also have terrific public transport, with the underground working 24 hours at weekends, and it only costs €1 per trip."
- 9 Vienna benefited enormously from the fall of the Berlin Wall, becoming the gateway to Eastern European countries that often have historic ties to the former Austro-Hungarian empire.
- 10 "Our big USP is our geographical location," said Martin Eichtinger, Austrian ambassador to London, who lived in Vienna for 20 years. "The fall of the Berlin Wall helped define Vienna as the hub for companies wanting to do business in Central Europe."
- 11 According to the World Bank, Austria has one of the highest figures for GDP per head in the world, just behind the US and ahead of Germany and Britain, although quite some way below neighbouring Switzerland.
- 12 Zurich in Switzerland is named by Mercer as having the world's second highest quality of life but the Viennese say their city is far more fun. "There are more students in Vienna than any other German-speaking city," said Hartlauer. "It's a very fast growing, young and lively city," she added – though she conceded she works for the city's tourist board.
- 13 Vienna has long been overlooked by British weekend city break tourists, who instead flock to Barcelona or Berlin and tend to think of Austria as somewhere for skiing, lakes and mountains.
- 14 But, after an increase in budget flights from regional British cities such as Manchester and Edinburgh, Vienna is fast catching up as a popular destination. In 2015, there were 588,000 British visitors to Vienna, up 18% on the year before. The flow is both ways; Eichtinger said London has become the number one city destination for Austrian visitors.
- 15 "Vienna has ranked top in the last seven published rankings," said Mercer. "It scores highly in a number of categories; it provides a safe and stable environment to live in, a high level of public utilities and transport facilities and good recreational facilities."
- 16 The European migrant crisis, which has seen large numbers of refugees and asylum seekers pass through Vienna en route to Germany, has had little impact on the city of nearly 1.8 million people, said Eichtinger. "We have managed to accommodate 90,000 refugees in Austria but the numbers have slowed in recent months."
- 17 London has never been in the quality-of-life top ten, says Mercer, damaged by its poor scores for air pollution, traffic congestion and climate. After London, Edinburgh is the next-ranking British city, in 46th place.

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- 18 Paris has suffered the biggest fall in the most recent rankings. "Paris remained stable for several years but has, this year, dropped ten places in the overall ranking," said Mercer.
- 19 "The drop was essentially due to the terrorist attacks in 2015. However, it is important to highlight that safety issues are a very highly weighted factor within the 'basket' so any small adjustments can have a big impact on the ranking."
- 20 Auckland in New Zealand was the highest ranking English-speaking city in the survey, in third place, followed by Vancouver in fifth. Australian cities also perform very highly in the survey, with Sydney 10th and Melbourne 15th. *The Economist* has consistently ranked Melbourne as the world's most liveable city, although its survey has been criticized as too Anglocentric.
- 21 War and political unrest are behind all the worst-ranked cities in the world. Surprisingly, Damascus is named as only the seventh worst, ranked better than not just Baghdad but also Bangui in Central African Republic, Sana'a in Yemen, Port-au-Prince in Haiti, Khartoum in Sudan and N'Djamena in Chad.
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3 Comprehension check

Answer the questions, if possible without referring back to the article.

- What is the full name of the survey?
- What factors does the survey examine?
- Who uses the results of this survey and for what purpose?
- Why do US cities rank poorly in the survey?
- Which capital city fell dramatically in the 2015 rankings and why?
- What common factor links the worst-ranked cities in the world?
- What is Vienna's USP?
- What other factors helped to place Vienna at the top of the list?

4 Collocations

Match the words to make collocations from the article. Discuss what they describe. Then, use them to talk about the article.

- | | |
|------------------|---------------|
| 1. socioeconomic | a. congestion |
| 2. terrorist | b. board |
| 3. social | c. pollution |
| 4. historic | d. attacks |
| 5. geographical | e. housing |
| 6. tourist | f. seekers |
| 7. city | g. conditions |
| 8. recreational | h. location |
| 9. asylum | i. unrest |
| 10. air | j. facilities |
| 11. traffic | k. ties |
| 12. political | l. break |

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5 Discussion

Look at the list of the top 30 cities.

| rank | city | country |
|------|---------------|-------------|
| 1. | Vienna | Austria |
| 2. | Zurich | Switzerland |
| 3. | Auckland | New Zealand |
| 4. | Munich | Germany |
| 5. | Vancouver | Canada |
| 6. | Dusseldorf | Germany |
| 7. | Frankfurt | Germany |
| 8. | Geneva | Switzerland |
| 9. | Copenhagen | Denmark |
| 10. | Sydney | Australia |
| 11. | Amsterdam | Netherlands |
| 12. | Wellington | New Zealand |
| 13. | Berlin | Germany |
| 14. | Bern | Switzerland |
| 15. | Toronto | Canada |
| 15. | Melbourne | Australia |
| 17. | Ottawa | Canada |
| 18. | Hamburg | Germany |
| 19. | Luxembourg | Luxembourg |
| 19. | Stockholm | Sweden |
| 21. | Brussels | Belgium |
| 21. | Perth | Australia |
| 23. | Montreal | Canada |
| 24. | Stuttgart | Germany |
| 24. | Nurnberg | Germany |
| 26. | Singapore | Singapore |
| 27. | Adelaide | Australia |
| 28. | San Francisco | US |
| 28. | Canberra | Australia |
| 30. | Helsinki | Finland |
| 30. | Oslo | Norway |

- Talk about one of these cities – one that you have visited, lived in or worked in. Would you recommend it as a place to live or work? Why? Why not?
- If you have no experience of any of the cities, which one would you most like to visit and why?

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6 Webquest

Complete the table with information about Austria.

| | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| size of country | |
| location and border countries | |
| geographical features | |
| highest point | |
| population | |
| language | |
| currency | |
| GDP | |
| current head of government | |
| flag | |
| famous citizens | |
| other interesting facts | |

Do some research on Vienna.

- What can you see and do there?
- How can you get there?

7 Extension

A. General English task

Research one of the other cities in the top 30 list and present your findings. Try to convince the other students that it is the best city to live in.

B. Business English task

Your company plans to open a new office abroad. Your boss has asked you to compare three of the cities from the top 30 list and produce a report recommending where the new office should be and why.