

Talking About Your Hometown – Video

In this lesson, you can learn how to describe your hometown in English. Talking about your hometown is useful for your conversational English, and could also help you in exams such as the IELTS speaking exam (<https://www.oxfordonlineenglish.com/ielts-speaking-exam-part-one-video>) or the FCE speaking exam (<https://www.oxfordonlineenglish.com/fce-speaking-exam-part-one>).

Where do you live? Do you live in a small town, a big city, or a remote village? What's it like? Learn phrases and vocabulary to use when talking about your hometown hometown in English.

1. Introducing Your Hometown

Let's start with a simple sentence.

I live in a _____.

What could you say? You could say something like:

I live in a city.

I live in a town.

I live in a village.

That's a good start, but it's very basic. Let's add a bit more detail.

What's it called? How big is it?

I live in Paris. It's the capital city.

I live in Shanghai. It's a huge city.

I live in a small town. It's called Banbury.

I live in Manarola, which is a tiny village by the sea.

Better! You should always try to add more details when you speak.

What about you? Where do you live? Can you make one or two sentences like this? Pause the video and practice!

Okay, let's move on. It's important to make answers more detailed and interesting when talking about your hometown in English.

2. Adding Background and Details

Think about these questions:

1. What's your hometown famous for?
2. Can you think of some words you could use to describe your hometown?
3. How long have you lived there?

Add these ideas to your answer to make it longer and more detailed. For example:

I live in Paris, the capital city. It's famous for its landmarks such as the Eiffel Tower, Notre Dame Cathedral or the Louvre. It's also well-known for its food, of course!

I live in Shanghai. It's a huge, bustling, international city. People from all over the world live and work there.

I live in a small town called Banbury. I've been living there for about five years, since I finished university. It's a pretty sleepy place, to be honest.

Let's look at some useful vocabulary from these examples which you can use when you speak.

We said:

Paris is famous for its landmarks such as the Eiffel Tower.

Landmarks (<https://www.mapsofworld.com/world-landmark.htm>) are famous places or buildings, like the Eiffel Tower in Paris, the Sydney Opera House or Christ the Redeemer in Rio.

(https://www.oxfordonlineenglish.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Aerial_view_of_the_Statue_of_Christ_the_Redeemer.webp)

Does your hometown have any famous landmarks? What are they called in English?

Next, we said:

Shanghai is a bustling city.

Do you know what this means?

It means there's a lot of activity. There are lots of people, lots of traffic, lots of life and energy.

Is your city *bustling* or *sleepy*? If a town is sleepy there's not much activity and things are quiet.

What about your hometown. Look at our questions again:

1. What's your hometown famous for?
2. Can you think of some words you could use to describe your hometown?
3. How long have you lived there?

What could you say about your hometown? Pause the video and try to make 2-3 sentences.

Okay? Let's look at our next point.

3. Saying What You Like About Your Hometown

What's good about your hometown? What do you like most about it?

Different people like different things in a city or town. Let's look at some example sentences which express positive feelings:

I love living in Paris. It's got such a rich culture and there's always something interesting going on.

Shanghai's a great place to live. It's a real 24-hour city and you can meet people from all over the world.

Living in Banbury suits me. It's a quiet place and it's small enough that you can get to know your neighbours and have a sense of community.

(<https://www.oxfordonlineenglish.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/shanghai.webp>)

What's important for you? Do you want to live somewhere with a rich culture and a sense of history, or do you prefer more modern, international cities? Would you rather live somewhere larger and more energetic, or somewhere smaller and more peaceful?

Think about these ideas. You'll need them in a minute!

Let's look at some useful language from our examples:

I love living in _____.

_____ 's a great place to live.

Living in _____ suits me.

Of course, you can change these to say what you want to:

I quite like living in _____.

I really like living in _____.

I suppose I don't mind living in _____.

We also saw some useful phrases in our examples:

It's got such a rich culture.

There's always something interesting going on.

It's a real 24-hour city.

You can meet people from all over the world.

It's small enough that you can get to know your neighbours.

You have a sense of community.

What does that last phrase mean?

If you have a *sense of community* (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sense_of_community), it means people know their neighbours and feel like they belong to a wider community. Smaller towns and villages often have a better *sense of community*, perhaps because people have more time to talk to each other and do things together.

What about your hometown? Could you use any of these phrases to describe where you live?

Let's continue talking about your hometown in English. Next, what if you don't like something about your hometown?

4. Saying What You Dislike about Your Hometown in English

Let's look at some examples which express negative feelings:

Paris is great, but the cost of living is really high. That can be quite stressful because you're always thinking about money and how to make ends meet.

Shanghai's an exciting place, but it's really crowded and it can be exhausting to live there. Air quality can be an issue, particularly in the summer.

Banbury's nice, but sometimes I find it a bit boring. There's not much nightlife and sometimes it feels a bit cut off from the wider world.

When talking about things you don't like about your hometown, you can use adjectives like:

stressful

crowded

boring

You can make your answer more interesting by using phrases. We saw some useful ones in our examples:

The cost of living is really high.

You're always thinking about how to make ends meet.

It can be exhausting to live there.

Air quality can be an issue.

There's not much nightlife.

It feels a bit cut off from the wider world.

Could you use any of these phrases to describe your hometown in English?

Remember that you can also change the phrases to fit your ideas. For example:

Traffic can be an issue.

There's not much for young people to do.

It can be very stressful to live here.

(<https://www.oxfordonlineenglish.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/traffic.webp>)

Okay, what about you? Try to make 3-4 sentences. Say what you like and dislike about your hometown. Use the key words and phrases from parts 3 and 4.

Go on, pause the video and practice!

Okay? We have one more thing to do:

5. Describing How Your Hometown has Changed over Time

What was your hometown like ten, twenty or fifty years ago? How has it changed? How has it changed over time? By the way, we're using the present perfect tense

(<https://www.oxfordonlineenglish.com/present-perfect-verb-tense>) here! Be sure to watch the lesson if you need some practice.

Some places change very fast; other places never seem to change at all!

Talking about changes can add interesting and useful information to your description. Let's look:

Paris has changed a lot in the last twenty years. It's much more international and much more expensive than it used to be. However, the soul of the city is still there. Paris will always be Paris!

Shanghai is almost unrecognisable compared to twenty or thirty years ago. The city has expanded so much, both physically and economically. It's amazing when you see old photos of the city; things are so different now!

Banbury hasn't changed much as a place in the last twenty years, but the mix of people is a bit different nowadays. The population used to be older and mostly English, whereas now there are more young people living here, including many people from other parts of Europe.

Again, these examples contain a lot of useful language you can use when talking about your hometown in English.

For example:

- _____ *has changed a lot in the last twenty years.*
- _____ *is almost unrecognisable compared to twenty years ago.*
- _____ *hasn't changed much as a place in the last twenty years.*

Which of these sentences is true for your hometown? Can you add details to explain why? For example:

- It's much more _____ than it used to be.*
- The city has _____ so much.*
- The _____ is a bit different nowadays.*

Now, you've seen a lot of useful language you can use for talking about your hometown in English. Let's put everything together and practice making a longer answer.

6. Review

Do you remember all the points we talked about? We covered:

1. Introducing your hometown in English.
2. Adding background and details.
3. Talking about what you like or dislike about it.
4. Talking about how it's changed over time.

Follow these points and you can make a long, detailed answer to describe your hometown. For example:

I live in St Petersburg (<http://www.saint-petersburg.com/>). It's the second largest city in Russia, and it's a beautiful place to live. I've lived here all my life and I can't imagine living anywhere else! It has such a rich culture, I think partly because the city's history is a mix of European and Russian influences. I think that's why I like it here—it's a unique place. Traffic can be an issue in the city centre, but public transport is very good. The city hasn't changed much in the last twenty years, although there are certainly more and more tourists these days!

Could you make an answer like this? Let's do one more example first. I'll tell you about my hometown:

I'm from Denver (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Denver>), the capital of Colorado. It's near the Rocky Mountains, so the surrounding area is quite beautiful. I've been living here for about three years. I really like Denver because it's a young city with lots of energy, but if you need a break it's easy to drive to the mountains and find a quiet place to relax. The only real disadvantage is that winter can be seriously cold! Denver's changed quite a lot in the last twenty years—many people are moving here to work. Unfortunately, the cost of living has also gone up quite a lot.

Okay, now it's definitely your turn! Practice talking about your hometown in English. Make a longer answer like these ones.

Thanks for watching this Oxford Online English speaking lesson, and see you next time!