

Vienna named world's top city for quality of life

Level 2 • Intermediate

1 Warmer

Answer the questions. Then, discuss your answers.

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

Paris

London

San Francisco

Singapore

Vienna

Berlin

2 Key words

Match the key words with the definitions below. Then, find them in the article to read them in context. The paragraph numbers will help you.

ambassador
recreational

congestion
stable

dominate
tend to

GDP
ranked

hub
unrest

overlooked
USP

1. be the most important and strongest thing in a particular situation _____ (para 2)
2. was in a certain position according to its success, importance, size etc _____ (para 6)
3. the thing that makes something special or different from others _____ (para 10)
4. a senior official who lives in a foreign country and represents his or her own country there _____ (para 10)
5. the most important and central place where something particular takes place _____ (para 10)
6. the total value of the goods and services that a country produces in a year _____ (para 11)
7. failed to be noticed _____ (para 13)
8. usually do a particular thing _____ (para 13)
9. not changing frequently and not likely to suddenly become worse _____ (para 15)
10. used for enjoyment _____ (para 15)
11. a situation in which there are so many vehicles that it is difficult to move around _____ (para 16)
12. angry or violent behaviour by people who are protesting against something _____ (para 19)

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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 enter 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 dropped down the table – it has fallen ten places to 37th, just ahead of London at 39th, mostly because of the terrorist attacks on the city.
- 4 The study examined social and economic conditions, health, education, housing and the environment. It is used by big companies to decide where they should open offices and factories and how much they should pay staff.
- 5 Helena Hartlauer, 32, from Vienna, said she was not surprised at her city's top position. The city's social democratic government has a long tradition of investing money in high-quality social housing, which makes Vienna less expensive than other major cities.
- 6 "I live in a 100sq-metre apartment in a good area about 20 minutes' walk from the city centre. But my rent is just €800 (£625) a month." A similar apartment in London would cost over £2,000 and even more in New York, ranked 44th in the table.
- 7 US cities perform relatively badly in the study, mostly 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, do much better than their US rivals in the table.
- 8 "You don't realize how safe Vienna is until you go 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 connections to the former Austro-Hungarian empire.
- 10 "Our big USP (unique selling point) 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 make Vienna a 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 (gross domestic product) per person in the world, just behind the US and ahead of Germany and Britain, although below neighbouring Switzerland.
- 12 Mercer says Zurich in Switzerland has 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.
- 13 Vienna has long been overlooked by British weekend city break tourists, who instead go 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 British cities such as Manchester and Edinburgh, Vienna is becoming a more popular destination. In 2015, there were 588,000 British visitors to Vienna, 18% more than the year before.
- 15 "Vienna has ranked top in the last seven surveys," said Mercer. "It scores highly in a number of categories; it provides a safe and stable environment to live in, a high standard of public transport and good recreational facilities."
- 16 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.
- 17 Paris has suffered the biggest fall in the most recent rankings. "Paris has remained stable for several years but has, this year, dropped ten places," said Mercer. "The drop was mostly due to the terrorist attacks in 2015 because safety is a very important factor in the survey."
- 18 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 do well in the survey, with Sydney 10th and Melbourne 15th.
- 19 War and political unrest are behind all the worst-ranked cities in the world. Surprisingly, Damascus is named as only the seventh worst, ranked

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better than Baghdad, 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 with information from the article.

1. What is the full name of the survey?
2. What factors does the survey examine?
3. Who uses the results of this survey and what for?
4. Why do most US cities do badly in the survey?
5. Which capital city fell ten places in the most recent rankings and why?
6. What do the worst-ranked cities in the world have in common?
7. What is Vienna's USP?
8. What other factors helped to place Vienna at the top of the list?

4 Collocations

- a. Match the words to make collocations from the article.
- b. Say what the collocations mean and what they describe.
- c. Use them to talk about the article.

- | | |
|-----------------|----------------|
| 1. economic | a. housing |
| 2. terrorist | b. break |
| 3. social | c. conditions |
| 4. geographical | d. attacks |
| 5. city | e. location |
| 6. budget | f. ranking |
| 7. popular | g. flights |
| 8. recreational | h. pollution |
| 9. highest | i. facilities |
| 10. air | j. destination |

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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.

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KEY

1 Warmer

Teacher's tip: Consider writing this task onto the board and have the students do it before you hand out the worksheets so that they are not influenced by the title of the article.

2 Key words

1. dominate
2. ranked
3. USP
4. ambassador
5. hub
6. GDP
7. overlooked
8. tend to
9. stable
10. recreational
11. congestion
12. unrest

3 Comprehension check

1. 18th Mercer Quality of Life study
2. social and economic conditions, health, education, housing and the environment
3. big companies to assess where they should open offices and factories and how much they should pay staff
4. due to issues around personal safety and crime
5. Paris, because of the city's vulnerability to terrorist attacks.
6. They are all suffering from wars or political unrest.
7. its geographical location at the centre of Europe and that it is becoming the gateway to Eastern European countries
8. safety, public transport, cheaper rents, good recreational facilities, high GDP, quality of life, large number of students making it a young and lively place to live

4 Collocations

1. c – the financial and business situation of a particular place
2. d – attacks on a place by people who use violence to achieve political aims
3. a – flats and houses that local councils and other organizations provide at a low cost
4. e – the position of a place in relation to other countries and cities
5. b – a short holiday in a city
6. g – cheap flights
7. j – somewhere that a lot of people want to go
8. i – places you can go in your free time
9. f – in the top position
10. h – dirt, gases, chemicals and other substances that are in the air, making it unhealthy for people to breathe

7 Extension

Teacher's tip: Chose one of these tasks and set it either as a short project in class or as a homework task. Students should present their findings to the rest of the class.