

Transcript for Listening 1

Host: Right, so it's one point for each correct answer. What do you think? Has Rotterdam got a port or not?

Student 1: Yeah, I think it has.

Student 2: Yeah, it has. Definitely. In fact, I think it's one of the busiest ports in the world.

Host: Correct, both of you! Ok, next question. Is Cardiff in Scotland?

Student 1: Yes, I think it is.

Student 2: Me too.

Host: No, Cardiff is the capital of Wales. Ok, is Milan in the south of Italy?

Student 1: No, I think it's in the north.

Student 2: Me too.

Host: Correct! Now, this is a bit more difficult. Which has a bigger population? Portsmouth or Birmingham?

Student 1: Not sure. Portsmouth?

Student 2: I think Birmingham is a bigger city and has a bigger population.

Host: Yes, Birmingham has the biggest population. What about this one? Cambridge is famous for its university.

Both students: Yes.

Host: Correct! That was easy. Now, Is Riga in Russia?

Student 1: I don't think it is.

Student 2: Neither do I. I think it's in Estonia.

Host: Well, it's in Latvia. Ok, is London more expensive than Zaragoza?

Student 1: Yes.

Student 2: I haven't been to Zaragoza, but I've been to London. And believe me, it's a very expensive city. So yes, I agree.

Host: Correct! And is Las Palmas a tourist resort?

Both students: Yes.

Host: Easy. But this is more difficult. Do they make Volkswagen cars in Gothenburg?

Student 1: I don't know, but I'll say no.

Student 2: I don't know either, but I'll say yes.

Host: The answer is yes. And finally, is Budapest in Eastern Europe?

Student 1: I think so. It's the capital of Romania, isn't it?

Student 2: It is in Eastern Europe, but it isn't in Romania.

Host: Correct! It's in Hungary, which is an Eastern European country. Okay, let's count up the points and see who has won.

Transcript for Listening 2

A: So, you've been living here for some time now.

B: Yeah, about three and a half years.

A: What do you do for a living?

B: I work in a big company in a technological park on the outskirts of the city.

A: Why did you come here?

B: Well, mainly for my job. But also, because this city offers much more for young people than where I'm from. In my hometown there isn't even a cinema.

A: So, you like living here?

B: Yes. I mean ... there are some really good things here. The city is modern – they modernised the whole centre a few years ago. Now we've got pedestrianised areas with cafés and shops. And the new metro and tram systems are very efficient. You can live in the centre and work in the outskirts without a car. It's great!

A: And what about the quality of life in the city centre?

B: Recently they've really cleaned things up. A few decades ago.... I mean. if you look at photos of this city twenty years ago you can see now they've really made an effort to convert old industrial areas, real eyesores, into pleasant, green areas. What was once an industrial wasteland has been changed into parks and woodland. The river, which was once a toxic mess, smelly and unpleasant.... has returned to its original state. Now people fish there.

A: And what about the job situation? Is it easy to find work here?

B: Well, relatively speaking ... yes I suppose. All these new projects – the city centre, the transport systems, the technological park. All this attracts investment. I've heard they're going to build a new theme park in an old, run-down part of the city. Yes, finding a job here isn't too difficult. But you need qualifications for the best jobs...just like anywhere.

A: And are there any negative things about the city? Things you don't like.

B: Well, it's a great city, and as I said before, they're doing a great job transforming the old industrial areas, but it's a very slow process. There are some parts of the city that are really ugly. Abandoned factories, deprived neighbourhoods, ugly post-industrial wasteland. I suppose it takes time to clean everything up.

A: So not everyone feels the benefit of the modernisation of the city?

B: No, the modernisation doesn't reach every area of the city. The projects are not always successful. Sometimes, whole communities and neighbourhoods disappear under shopping centres and transport systems. Not all aspects of the city's transformation are well thought out. Sometimes, in their enthusiasm to modernise the city, they lose part of the city's character.

A: But on the whole, you'd recommend this city as a place to work and live?

B: Yes. On the whole it's a good place to live. The wages are decent – about the same as the national average. The quality of life is good and in general things are improving for everyone – in some areas faster than others.