

Categorising Europe's Cities

Read the text and answer the questions below.

There are lots of different ways of classifying cities and lots of studies have been done. Some studies concentrate on how big cities are, on economic factors like how expensive a city is, others on how many artists or musicians work in the city. There are hundreds of factors that can be studied.

Recently, the European Union commissioned a study to find out about the present state of Europe's cities. The study concentrated on the size of the cities' populations as well as economic and financial factors. The researchers decided to categorise Europe's cities into three main types: International hubs, specialised poles and regional poles.

International hubs are big cities with an international reputation, like London or Barcelona.

Specialised poles are big cities with an important role in the national economy, and sometimes in the global economy, like Cardiff in the UK or Zaragoza in Spain.

Regional poles are small to medium-sized cities that have an important place in their region or province.

Task 1: Comprehension questions

1. Which three ways of classifying a city are mentioned in paragraph one?
2. What factors did the European Union's study of the state of Europe's cities concentrate on?
3. How many types of city did the study identify?
4. What is an international hub?
5. What is a specialised pole?
6. What is a regional pole?

Task 2: Can you match the city types with the definitions?

1) established capitals 2) re-invented capitals 3) knowledge hubs

A	B	C
Cities with an important role in the global economy – important centres for international trade, industry, business and finance. E.g. Lyon, Stockholm.	Usually, the national capital, lots of organisations have their headquarters in these cities. They are also the centres of national services. E.g. Madrid, Rome.	These cities are important in their national economies – as well as in the global economy. Usually these cities have moved on from an industrial past to activities. They are often in Eastern European countries; the most recent members of the European Union. E.g. Prague, Warsaw.

Task 3: The researchers also divided specialised poles into different city types. These are:

- 1 transformation poles
- 2 gateways
- 3 modern industrial centres
- 4 research centres
- 5 visitor centres.

What do you think these terms mean?

Task 4: Look at the list of cities. Which subtype do you think they belong to? Be prepared to justify your answer.

- Helsinki
- Cardiff
- Edinburgh
- Lisbon
- Bucharest
- Belfast
- Budapest