

11A Our town

Activity type: Reading/Speaking – Planning an ideal living environment – Pairs / Whole class / Groups

Aim: To plan an ideal town to live in

Language: *would* for unreal situations / Vocabulary relating to buildings and towns – Use any time after 11.2.

Preparation: Make one copy of the worksheet for every two learners.

Time: 25–35 minutes

- 1 Divide learners into pairs and give each pair a copy of the worksheet. Learners read the article, checking any vocabulary questions with you or other learners.
- 2 Learners then list what they see as the advantages and disadvantages of Poundbury. Tell them to consider things like:
 - travel and transport
 - shopping
 - employment
 - entertainment
 - architecture
 - the environment
 - zoning.Give them a time limit for this part of the activity. (Suggested time is five minutes.)
- 3 Draw two columns on the board, one headed ‘Advantages’ and the other ‘Disadvantages’. Gather as many advantages and disadvantages as possible on the board, again within a time limit of five minutes.
- 4 Now divide learners into groups of four or five. Tell them they are going to be town planners. Their task is to devise a plan for their ideal town to live in. They should arrive at as much of a consensus as possible, and this will probably involve some negotiation. For example, if one learner wants a shopping mall in the town and another doesn’t, a compromise might be to locate their town near another town which does have a shopping mall. They can locate their ideal place to live anywhere in the world. Encourage them to use *would* as they make suggestions, for example *The town would have a cinema*. Give learners a time limit of 10–15 minutes for this part of the activity.
- 5 When the time is up, learners elect a spokesperson to present their ideal town on behalf of the group. Again, encourage those speaking to use *would* in describing their group’s ideas and plans.

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Poundbury – urban perfection?

In the 1990s, a new small town – or village – was built in the county of Dorset in southwest England, near the ancient town of Dorchester, which has a population of about 16,000. However, Poundbury is unusual because it was planned in a different way from many new towns. It was designed to be an integrated community of houses, shops, businesses and social facilities, like traditional towns which have grown up over centuries. There is no ‘zoning’ in Poundbury, which means that residential buildings and commercial buildings (e.g. shops) can be built next to each other in the same area. The common areas of the town are managed by a management company to which all residents belong.

The design of the buildings is also traditional. Many buildings look like very old buildings (a mixture of British and continental European styles) and the streets are quite narrow and vary in width, look and texture, just like streets in old towns and cities. In fact, Poundbury was designed to encourage people to walk, cycle and use public transport rather than their cars. Some streets are open to pedestrians only. Most parking areas are in backstreets, which means that you don’t see many parked cars in the main streets.

Poundbury has many small businesses, but it is also home to a cereal factory which produces a wide range of cereals for domestic use and export. The factory is a major employer in the town. Poundbury encourages small businesses and you don’t find shopping facilities like the big shopping malls in towns and cities around the country.

But even though Poundbury is growing in size and population, some people ask if a town that is built over a relatively short period of time can really function and feel like a traditional town which has grown up over centuries. And, of course, people mention that many residents have to travel away from Poundbury and to other towns for work, major shopping and entertainment (the cinema, the theatre, etc.).

Advantages of Poundbury	Disadvantages of Poundbury