

Listen to this excerpt from a radio programme about living in a big city.

Optional activity: While you listen, decide whether the following sentences are true or false.

Sentence	True or false?
1. Sue Shaw is an expert on how to protect the environment.	
2. Masako Ito lives in Tokyo.	
3. Today the Tokyo Bay Area has a population of 18 million.	
4. New roads have solved Tokyo's transport problems.	
5. There are high charges for cars to use the city's expressways.	
6. Travel by car is faster than travel by rail.	
7. Tokyo's transport infrastructure is a useful model for developing countries.	
8. Cities in developing countries should not rely on cars to solve their transport problems.	

Presenter: Hello and welcome to 'Visions of the Future'. This week we're discussing the growth of cities in the twenty first century. In the studio we have the environmentalist Sue Shaw and Masako Ito an urban planner based in Tokyo. For the first time in human history more people now live in cities than in than in the countryside. Today Tokyo is the world's largest conurbation. The combined cities of the Tokyo Bay Area now have a population of 28 million. Masako, how has Tokyo solved the problem of transport?

Masako: Well, many Tokyo residents would say that the city's transport problems have not been solved ..., Tokyo is different from most cities in developing countries because it has many, many suburban railway lines. These lines bring commuters to the Yamamote line, the circular line around the city centre, and to the city's 12 subway lines.

Presenter: Rail travel seems to be the answer ...

Masako: Yes, it is really. In addition there are expensive tolls on the city's urban expressways, train travel is one and a half times faster than travel by car and city centre parking is very expensive.

Presenter: So Tokyoites don't use cars that much ...

Masako: Well you know, before you can buy a car in Tokyo you must prove that you have a place to park it, parking spaces can cost as much as apartments to rent ... New roads are built in Tokyo but priority is given to new train lines ..

Presenter: So the train is king in Tokyo, Sue, anything to add?

Sue: Tokyo is a good model for our future mega cities to aspire to, but, and this is a big but, Japan is a wealthy country and most of the rail system was present before Tokyo developed or was built as the city grew. Most of our new mega cities will be in Asia and Africa where the resources to develop a transport infrastructure similar to Tokyo's just aren't present.

Presenter: What can these cities do?

Sue: They must do all they can to stop the car from becoming the main means of transport. Cars bring pollution and the construction of new roads can destroy the fabric of a city as they divide communities and lead to the building of new types of housing – usually high apartment blocks..

Presenter: So?...

Sue: Integrated transport systems that take into consideration local factors are the answer. Take Calcutta for example. There hand pulled rickshaws are being included in the plans for the transport system, alongside buses and trams. Bangkok and Manila have built overhead rail systems. These are cheaper and quicker to build than expensive underground subway lines.

Presenter: So for the future mega cities the message is forget about cars ..

Sue: Most definitely ..

Masako: I'd agree with that too

Answer key:

1. T; 2. T; 3. F; 4. F; 5. T; 6. F; 7. F; 8. T.

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