

Town or city centre

The centre of a town or city is most often where it was founded. The centre has often been built and rebuilt many times.

Q1. What is the name for the place where the oldest buildings are found clustered together in a town or city?

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Q2. List six different kinds of public building you would expect to find in the centre of a large city or town.

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Q3. Look at the diagram on the right. You will see a mix of low rise and high rise buildings. Until recently, many towns and cities banned tall office buildings. Explain why they are now allowed in most places.

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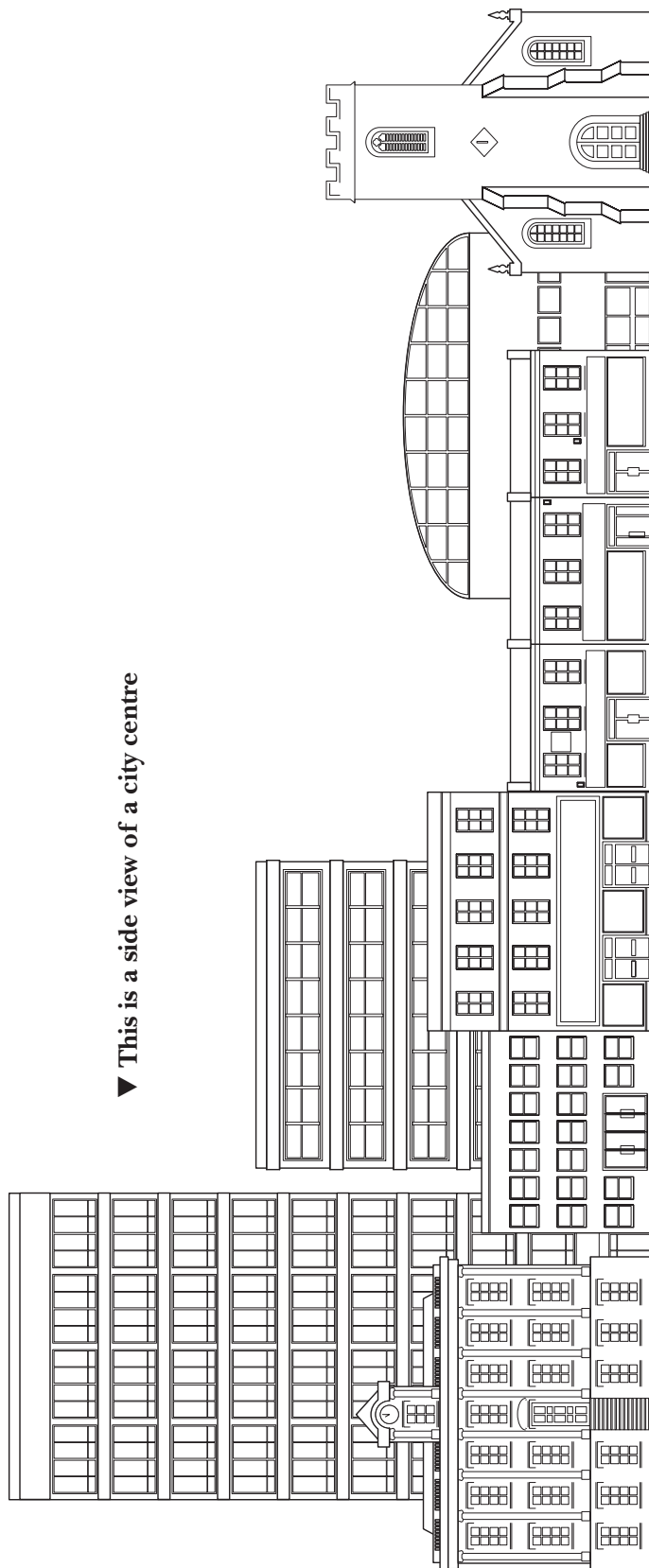
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▼ This is a side view of a city centre



Background

There are several different aspects to the city centre that can be tackled. The first concerns the role of the centre as a 'bull's-eye' region within the city. It is easy to take pictures of the main public buildings, prominent office blocks, railway station and the like, and to use these in combination with the drawings on the corresponding page in the student book. The student book contains the model; use it to build up your local example.

Having looked at the 'bull's-eye' functions as they exist today, you may find that even more interest is raised by looking at the historic district and getting students to imagine what it was like to live in your locality in the past. The web site has some old city maps for many larger cities, but you can often find local maps in your museum, library or good bookshop. There is also usually a local history of the place you live in and this can be a mine of information, allowing you to transcribe the information on to a modern map.

If you are doing history topics, don't forget to ask: what was it like in my place when the Romans, Vikings etc. were around? (They might not have been in your place, but at the same time, people were probably living in your place and their daily lives can be imagined in the context of your location.) You can even do the same thing with Egyptians and Aztecs — while the Egyptians were building their pyramids, what were people doing where you live? Tudor and Victorian remnants should be much easier to find. Don't forget, the road pattern is much older than anything else, so if necessary use this as a starting point.

Answers

Q1. Historic district or old town.

Q2. Town or city hall, theatre, concert hall, museum and library and most important a religious building (cathedral or church in dominantly Christian places, mosque or temple in Islamic, Hindu or Buddhist places).

Q3. Many people can work in a building that uses little ground space. As more pressure grows on city space, few cities have been able to resist allowing skyscrapers in their centres.

