

Reading Ex. – The New Megalopolis

Identifying details > Read the sentences below. Decide if each statement is true (T) or false (F) based on the information provided in the article below.

- 1. Across the globe, nations create economic growth more than regions.
- 2. Major international institutions such as the United Nations have been systematically collecting information about megacities.
- 3. There are about 20 megacities scattered around the globe.
- 4. The biggest mega-region is Chicago to Pittsburgh, in the United States.
- 5. Mega-regions sometimes ignore borders and include more than one country.
- 6. The three major Megas in China account for almost all of China's economic power.
- 7. When older cities get too large, new cities emerge in the middle of nowhere.
- 8. According to urbanologist Jane Jacobs, people become more productive and creative when they gather together in cities.

The New Megalopolis

Our focus on cities is wrong. Growth and innovation come from new urban corridors.

China isn't the world's most ferocious new economic competitor—the exploding east-coast corridor, from Beijing to Shanghai, is. India as a whole is not developing high-tech industries and attracting jobs, but the booming mega-region stretching from Bangalore to Hyderabad is. Across the world, in fact, nations don't spur growth so much as dynamic regions—modern versions of the original “megalopolis,” a term coined by the geographer Jean Gottman to identify the sprawling Boston–New York–Washington economic power corridor.

The New Megas are the real economic organizing units of the world and the major sources of global wealth, attracting a large share of its talent and generating the most innovation. They take shape as powerful complexes of multiple cities and suburbs, often stretching across national borders—forming a vast expanse of trade, transport, communications, and talent. Yet, despite the

fact that the rise of regions has been apparent for more than a decade, no one has collected systematic information on them—not the World Bank, not the IMF¹, not the United Nations, not the global consulting firms.

That's why a team of geographers set about building a world map of the New Megas shaped by satellite images of the world at night, using light emissions to define the outlines of each region, and additional data in categories such as population and economic growth to chart their relative peak strengths and dynamism². The result is the topographical map you see here.

The map makes it clear that the global economy takes shape around perhaps 20 great Megas—half in the United States and the rest scattered throughout the world. These regions are home to just 10 percent of total world population, 660 million people, but produce half of all economic activity, two thirds of world-class scientific activity, and three quarters of global innovations. The great urbanologist Jane Jacobs was the first to describe why megalopolises grow. When people migrate to one place, they all become

¹ IMF: International Monetary Fund, a financial monitoring and regulating organization

² dynamism: the pattern or process of change, growth, and activity

Taken from Rubin, B. (2009) Inside Reading 3 The Academic Word List In Context. Oxford University Press. NY, USA. pp. 18-21

Adapted by Andrés Barón-Ávila
MA Education and Technology – UCL – IOE





more productive. And the place itself becomes
 50 much more productive, because collective
 creativity grows exponentially³. Ideas flow
 more freely, are honed⁴ more sharply, and can
 be put into practice more quickly.

There is, however, a tipping point⁵. The
 55 forces of price and congestion begin pushing
 people away from the center. But make no
 mistake, this has nothing to do with the
 “decentralization of work,” as many have
 argued. The huge economic advantages of
 60 clustering still guide the process, which is why
 second cities emerge near big cities or in the
 corridors between them, not in the middle of
 nowhere.

The first region to achieve Mega status and
 65 still the biggest Mega in economic terms is
 the Boston-to-Washington corridor. In 1961
 it was home to about 32 million people; today
 its population has risen to 55 million, more
 than 17 percent of all Americans. The region
 70 generates \$242.5 trillion in economic activity,
 making it the world’s fourth largest economy,
 bigger than France or the United Kingdom.
 Next in line is Chi-Pitts, the great Midwestern
 Mega running from Chicago to Detroit,
 75 Cleveland, and Pittsburgh, with \$242.3 trillion

³ exponentially: extremely rapidly

⁴ hone: sharpen

⁵ tipping point: the moment at which a trend reaches its peak and starts to decline

in economic activity. Three of the power
 centers of the U.S. economy even stretch
 beyond American borders: So-Cal runs from
 Los Angeles to San Diego across the Mexican
 80 border to Tijuana; Tor-Buff-Chester sprawls
 from Toronto to Rochester, and Cascadia from
 Portland, Oregon, to Vancouver.

Aside from the island-bound financial
 center of Greater London, Europe’s major
 85 economic engines do not rely on old borders
 to define themselves. The Euro-Lowlands
 cuts across four nations: the Netherlands,
 Belgium, Germany, and France. The Euro-
 Sunbelt stretches from Barcelona to Marseille,
 90 attracting people and firms with competitive
 costs and the Mediterranean lifestyle. Japan
 is less a country than a network of linked
 Mega-regions, anchored by Greater Tokyo:
 indeed, a close look at the light-emissions map
 95 shows that its three major Megas may well be
 blurring into one super-Mega of more than
 100 million people.

While Mega-regions power advanced
 economies, they literally define the emerging
 100 nations. If you removed its Megas, China
 would be virtually meaningless as an economic
 category. What matters are Shang-King
 (Shanghai to Nanjing), with more than 50
 million people; Hong-Zen (Hong Kong to
 105 Shenzhen), 40 million; Greater Beijing, 36
 million. These three Megas account for most
 of Chinese economic output, attract most of
 its talent, and generate the great majority of
 its innovations.

110 Instead of technology helping to spread
 economic opportunity and lift many more
 boats, economic power is concentrating in
 a small number of key regions. It’s time for
 political and economic leadership to wake
 115 up to this new reality. It makes little sense to
 dwell on countries anymore, when the real
 engines of survival, innovation, and growth
 are the New Megas.



Identifying Main Ideas vs. Supporting Details > Read the excerpts below from the previous text. Write (MI) if the statement is a main idea or (SD) if it is a supporting detail.

Writers offer specific details and examples to clarify and support their general ideas. When reading a text, it is helpful to identify both the main ideas and the supporting details and note these in a simple outline form.

- Nations don't spur growth as much as dynamic regions.
- Today, its population has risen to 55 million.
- Europe's major economic engines have even less respect for old borders.
- The New Megas are the real economic organizing units of the world.
- The global economy takes shape around perhaps 20 great Megas.
- What matters are Shang-King (Shanghai to Nanjing); Hong-Zen (Hong Kong to Shenzhen); and Greater Beijing.
- The region generates \$242.5 trillion in economic activity.

Identifying the writer's purpose > The article above has nine paragraphs. What is the main purpose in each? Write some notes or sentences about the focus of each paragraph. One example has been given for you.

- Paragraph 1: *explain idea of "mega." give some examples of megas*
- Paragraph 2:
- Paragraph 3:
- Paragraph 4:
- Paragraph 5:
- Paragraph 6:
- Paragraph 7:
- Paragraph 8:
- Paragraph 9: