

# SEA CITIES



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## Warm-up

How do you think a 'sea city' would be different from a city on land?

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## Key words

Match the words to their definitions.

1. autonomous	a. able to continue existing without help and resources
2. self-sustaining	b. a disappointed feeling you get when you discover something is not as good as you thought
3. an initiative	c. a plan to solve a particular problem
4. a constraint	d. having the freedom to govern itself
5. flourish	e. not made known to the public
6. undisclosed	f. possible to do
7. disillusionment	g. something that limits or restricts actions
8. feasible	h. to grow successfully

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### Predict the answers

You are going to read an article about the plan to build a floating sea city. Before you read, guess the answers to the questions, then scan the text on page two for the correct answers.

1. How much will the project to build the floating city cost?  
a. \$43 million      b. \$167 million      c. \$281 million
2. How many people will be able to live on the floating island?  
a. 300      b. 3,000      c. 30,000
3. When is the project supposed to be completed by?  
a. 2020      b. 2025      c. 2030
4. Which ocean will it be built in?  
a. The Atlantic Ocean      b. The Indian Ocean      c. The Pacific Ocean



## World's first floating city to be built

On-going project makes the concept of building a semi-autonomous community at sea a reality

- <sup>1.</sup> Ambitious plans to create a city in the sea, complete with homes, offices and restaurants, are beginning to materialise.
- <sup>2.</sup> 'Seasteading' - the idea of building autonomous, self-sustaining cities in international waters - has moved one step closer to reality.
- <sup>3.</sup> A pilot project underway in the coastal waters of French Polynesia (in the Pacific Ocean) is set to become the first functioning 'floating community' by 2020, offering homes for up to 300 people.
- <sup>4.</sup> In a recent interview, Joe Quirk, president of the Seasteading Institute, outlined his plans for cities in the ocean that are free from the constraints imposed by world governments.
- <sup>5.</sup> "If you could have a floating city, it would essentially be a start-up country," Mr Quirk told the New York Times, explaining his disillusionment with current governments that "just don't get better", and are stuck in the past. He said he saw seasteading as a way to escape this system.
- <sup>6.</sup> For the time being, however, the seasteaders seem prepared to cooperate with existing governments in order to get their initiative off the ground. Mr Quirk's company Blue Frontiers and his collaborators are working with the local government of French Polynesia to create a 'Semi-Autonomous Floating Venice in Paradise'.
- <sup>7.</sup> Engineers and architects have visited an undisclosed location where the project is set to begin. Their ambitions extend to the creation of a research institute in the floating city, and even a power plant to sell energy and clean water back to their host nation. The project is projected to cost \$167 million.
- <sup>8.</sup> The team has made a deal with French Polynesia to create a "unique governing framework" in a patch of ocean where their project can begin.
- <sup>9.</sup> Mr Quirk first became interested in the idea of seasteading at Nevada's Burning Man festival in 2011. The festival showed him the type of unconstrained society he would like to see flourishing in offshore cities.
- <sup>10.</sup> The Silicon Valley billionaire Peter Thiel has invested \$1.7 million in The Seasteading Institute, but has since fallen out of love with the idea.
- <sup>11.</sup> "They're not quite feasible from an engineering perspective," Mr Thiel told the New York Times in a separate interview. "That's still very far in the future."
- <sup>12.</sup> Indeed, past efforts to get seasteading off the ground have not been successful, with a prototype planned for the San Francisco Bay in 2010 failing to appear.
- <sup>13.</sup> But the team behind the Floating Island Project are sure of their new idea, and are currently in the process of demonstrating the project's viability to the French Polynesian local government. They need to demonstrate what positive economic and environmental impact it would have for their host nation.
- <sup>14.</sup> If that all goes to plan, they anticipate work beginning on development of the pilot project as early as 2018 and beyond that, many more. "I want to see floating cities by 2050, thousands of them hopefully," said Mr Quirk.
- <sup>15.</sup> Adapted from the *Independent* by Josh Gabbatiss, 14th of November 2017

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## Checking understanding

Put 'T' (True) or 'F' (False) next to each of the statements below. Give reasons for your answers.

1. Sea cities will be subject to the same laws as the nearest country to them.
2. The planned sea city will return a percentage of the power it generates back to nearby islands.
3. A floating city was previously planned but never built.
4. Sea cities societies will be tightly controlled.
5. From an engineering point of view, it's not currently practical to build a city at sea.

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## Find the words

Find a word or phrase in the text which means ...

1. become a reality (**verb**, P.1): \_\_\_\_\_
2. got nearer to existing (**phrase**, P.2): \_\_\_\_\_
3. forced on people (**verb - ed**, P.4): \_\_\_\_\_
4. start (sth) (**idiom**, P.6): \_\_\_\_\_
5. for the moment (**idiom**, P.6): \_\_\_\_\_
6. become uninterested in (**phrase**, P.10): \_\_\_\_\_
7. happens as intended (**phrase**, P.14): \_\_\_\_\_
8. expect that something will happen (**verb**, P.14): \_\_\_\_\_

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## Grammar

Complete each sentence so it has a similar meaning to the first. Use between three to six words, and don't change the word given. All the words in bold can be found in the article.

1. The weather conditions made it more difficult for the emergency services to rescue people.

**EFFORTS**

The emergency services' ..... more difficult by the weather conditions.

2. We have space for no more than five new students next semester.

**UP**

We can ..... five more students next semester.

3. He was woken up by noise outside which kept him awake the rest of the night.

**BACK**

He ..... because of the noise outside.

4. To complete the project on time, more resources are needed.

**ORDER**

They ..... finish the project on time.

5. Partners were not included in the guest's invitations.

**EXTEND**

The invitations ..... guest's partners.

## Talking point

Discuss any of the questions below.

1. Do you think that you would like to live in a floating city? Why/why not?
2. Do you think that this 'seasteading' project will be completed? Why/why not?
3. Do you think that it will be possible for sea cities to govern themselves? Why/why not?

