

A cool country to live in?

Hi there! (or 'Hol', as we say in Dutch!)



1 My name's Lucas and I'm a student in Amsterdam. My mum's English but my dad's from Holland. I'm an only child but I have two cousins in England, Alex and Amy. Recently, our teacher told us about a report on happiness. In the report, it says Dutch teens are a lot happier than young people in other parts of the world. So is Holland really a great place to grow up?

2 Everyone knows that Dutch people love their bikes. There are cycle paths everywhere, so going by bike is fast, easy and safe. It also means I can be more independent. Amy and Alex have to wait for a lift from their mum or dad. But here I can get on my bike and meet up with my friends all over town. There are some great places to hang out. And we don't mind bad weather. If it's wet on the day of a school sports match, we play anyway. We love cold winters too. When the canals freeze, the whole city goes skating!



3 I think I'm lucky because Holland is quite a relaxed place. For Alex and Amy, school life seems quite competitive. They have homework every night and there's a lot of pressure from exams – more than we have here, I think. Dutch kids actually seem to enjoy school! In the happiness report, it says that eighty percent feel that they are part of their school community.

4 Here most families are quite open. Parents ask even younger kids for their opinion. In my case, my parents listen but they don't make me chat if I don't want to. And they don't message me on my mobile twenty times a day! They are just there when I need help. And I don't have to be the best at anything. Both Alex and I play the piano. I enjoy it but Alex would like to give it up. That's because his parents make him practise for competitions all the time.

Now you know a little about Holland. Of course, things aren't perfect but I can't complain. So what's life like where you live?

1)

Match the headlines with the paragraphs

- A Free to be me
- B Less stress
- C All about me
- D The outdoor life

2) Which sentences are true?

- 1 Lucas doesn't have any brothers or sisters.
- 2 Alex, Amy and Lucas live near each other.
- 3 Lucas feels he is free to go where he likes.
- 4 Lucas says that the weather doesn't stop people having fun.
- 5 Young people in Holland worry about school as much as teenagers in England.
- 6 More than three quarters of Dutch teenagers feel a connection to their school.
- 7 Lucas says that in his country it's easy for children of all ages to talk to their parents.
- 8 Alex wants to give up the piano because Lucas is a better player.

3) Find words/phrases in the blog that have these meanings.

- 1 when somebody takes you in a car (para 2):
- 2 spend time with friends (para 2):
- 3 turn to ice (para 2):
- 4 a feeling of worry (para 3):
- 5 a group of people in the same place (para 3):
- 6 honest and easy to talk to (para 4):