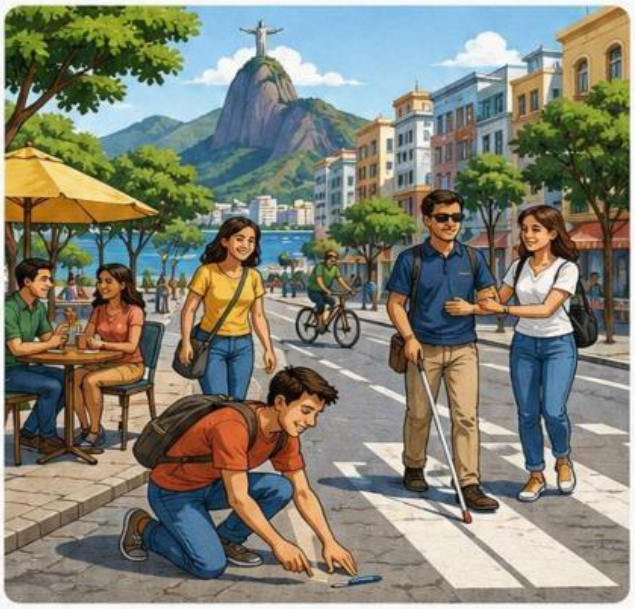
READING 1. IELTS Academic Reading Part 1 (Band 5.0–6.0)

The World's Friendliest Cities

A A team of social psychologists from California spent six years investigating how people behave towards strangers in cities across different parts of the world. Their research involved observing everyday interactions in a variety of urban environments. Surprisingly, the results suggested that cities with lower average incomes often showed higher levels of friendliness than wealthier ones.

B Among all the cities included in the study, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, was ranked as the friendliest. Although the city is frequently associated with crime and social inequality, local residents were consistently willing to offer assistance to people they had never met. Lilongwe, the capital city of Malawi, finished in third place, demonstrating that friendliness is not necessarily linked to economic prosperity.

C The researchers argued that the social environment plays a far greater role than nationality or cultural background in determining how helpful people are. According to the team, cities where people experience a slower pace of life tend to encourage more interaction between residents and visitors. In contrast, people living in large financial or business centres often have demanding schedules.



D To measure people's willingness to help, the psychologists carried out a series of practical experiments in 23 cities. In one test, a researcher deliberately dropped a pen in front of pedestrians to see whether anyone would stop to return it.

E In another experiment, a researcher pretended to be visually impaired and asked for help crossing a busy street. Because the same experiments were conducted in every city, the researchers were able to compare the results fairly.

F The findings revealed considerable differences between cities. In Rio de Janeiro, researchers received assistance in 93% of all situations. Amsterdam and New York produced much lower results. The researchers concluded that people living under greater time pressure often walked past strangers without noticing that help was needed. Rather than indicating a lack of kindness, this behaviour may simply reflect the demands of modern urban life.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Questions 1–5
Choose the correct letter, A, B, C or D.

1. What surprised the researchers most about the results of their study?
A. Wealthier cities were always more welcoming.
B. Poorer cities often appeared friendlier than richer ones.
C. People in every city behaved similarly.
D. Tourists were friendlier than local people.

2. According to paragraph B, what does Rio de Janeiro demonstrate?
A. Crime prevents people from helping strangers.
B. Rich cities are usually the friendliest.
C. A city can be friendly despite social problems.
D. Tourism encourages people to become kinder.

3. According to the researchers, what most strongly influences how helpful people are?
A. Nationality
B. Cultural background
C. Social environment
D. Education level

4. Why did the researchers repeat the same experiments in every city?
A. To reduce research costs
B. To compare the cities fairly
C. To train local volunteers
D. To increase the number of participants

5. Why might people in busy cities fail to help strangers?
A. They are naturally less kind.
B. They are afraid of crime.
C. They are often under time pressure.
D. They dislike tourists.

Questions 6–13
Complete the table below.
Choose NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS from the passage for each answer.

Research on Friendliness in Cities

Length of the study **6.** _____

Number of cities where practical experiments were carried out. **7.** _____

In one experiment, a researcher dropped a **8.** _____ to test whether people would return it.

In another experiment, a researcher pretended to be **9.** _____ and asked for help crossing a street.

Rio de Janeiro received assistance in **10.** _____ of situations.

Lilongwe finished in **11.** _____ place in the study.

Cities with a slower **12.** _____ tend to encourage more interaction.

People in business centres often have demanding **13.** _____.

LIVEWORKSHEETS