

## Development of urban area in European region| sample answer

**Q: 'Discuss the factor which influenced the development of one urban area in a European region (not in Ireland) that you have studied' (2011 Q4 C.)**

Paris is the largest city in Europe with a population of over 10 million people, Paris has grown into an important city for several reasons.

Paris dominates all aspects of French economic and social life. It is a primate city. It contains 20% of the national workforce.

The Ile-de-France was an island which Paris first developed on in medieval times. The location was chosen because of the defensive advantages of the location. This region became a vital bridging point and defensive settlement.

People moved here for safety and also for the communications it offered, this is what first caused the settlement to grow. Physical factors affected Paris's growth as well, for example Paris lies on a layer of rich, fertile limon soil.

Glacial deposition was the cause of the layer of limon soil that covers the lowlands. It is an extremely fertile soil due to the abundance of minerals. The soil is easily worked and it encourages industries to develop to process grain and other products such as vines and dairy products.

This made the city the centre of employment. Paris employs thousands of people in the civil service because it is also the centre of government.

Paris is the focal point of the country's transport network. Charles de Gaulle international airport, Le Havre and high speed trains such as the TGV bring thousands of people into Paris everyday.

It is expected for Paris to have a population of 14 million people by 2050. Its population is growing rapidly and to add to this it has a migrant population as big as 1.4 million people.

The city suburbs is the location in which the migrants have settled. Urban sprawl has been the result of the construction of these suburbs. They were constructed far into the previous country side.

The rapidness of the growth of Paris has caused it to have social and economic problems. These problems are inner city decline, social deprivation in the poor suburbs, traffic congestion and unplanned urban sprawl.

In order to control the growth in Paris, planners developed the Schema Directeur. The aim of the Scheme was to improve housing in the suburbs, employment in towns outside Paris to promote growth outside Paris.

The Schema Directeur planners chose a policy that encouraged the growth of towns around Paris. A new-town policy was implemented north and south of the Seine.

Five new towns were built. One of these is St. Quentin-en-Yvelines and is located 30 km south west of Paris. It houses 150,000 people and provides over 40,000 jobs.

The new town is an important alternative location for industry and services. The Schema Directeur has been successful in slowing the growth of Paris and improving the standard of living in Paris.

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However the Parisian riots of 2005 highlighted the problems of high unemployment rates among the young migrant population and the lack opportunity in poor suburbs.

Another satellite town that was made under the scheme is called Marne-la- Vallée near the Disneyland resort. The town helped decentralise Paris by drawing people out.

The scheme is constantly being altered and modified, with the most recent policy to control urban growth, population density and use of space in the region.

It recommends socio, economic, zoning and transport improvements along with strict preservation laws on rural and natural environments.

Urban renewal, double housing numbers in 2000, recreational facilities and upgrading of its transport system has been addressed in the last 15 years. There is a 90km growth in motorway coverage to name but one example.