

Millions of Americans lack access to quality parks

Level 1 • Pre-intermediate / Intermediate

1 Warmer

Match these famous parks with their cities.

- | | |
|--------------------|---------------|
| 1. Gorky Park | a. Copenhagen |
| 2. Central Park | b. Sydney |
| 3. Regents Park | c. Moscow |
| 4. Centennial Park | d. Vancouver |
| 5. Tivoli Gardens | e. New York |
| 6. Stanley Park | f. London |

2 Key words

Fill the gaps in the sentences using these key words from the text. The paragraph numbers will help you.

grateful

pedestrian

access

pandemic

amenities

- _____ is the right or opportunity to have or use something that will bring you benefits. (para 1)
- If you are _____ for something, you feel happy and lucky that you have it. (para 2)
- A _____ is a disease that affects many people across the whole world. (para 2)
- _____ are things that make it comfortable or enjoyable to live or work somewhere. (para 4)
- A _____ is someone who is walking, especially in a town or city. (para 5)

budget

hits hard

rethink

unprecedented

activist

- If something negative _____, it has a very bad effect. (para 5)
- A _____ is the amount of money an organization has to spend on something. (para 6)
- An _____ event or situation has never happened before. (para 6)
- An _____ is someone who tries to achieve political or social change. (para 9)
- If you _____ something, you consider it again in order to change it. (para 9)

3 Find the information

Find the following information in the text as quickly as possible.

- How many American children have no access to nearby green spaces?
- What percentage of people in Washington and Minneapolis are within a ten-minute walk of a park?
- What percentage of people in Charlotte and Oklahoma City are within a ten-minute walk of a park?
- How many miles of streets might open to pedestrians and cyclists in New York City?
- How many parks took part in the survey run by the National Recreation and Park Association?
- By what percentage have some parks been asked to reduce their budgets for the current financial year?

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Millions of Americans lack access to quality parks, report reveals

Nina Lakhani

20 May, 2020

- 1 Poor investment in public parks for many years means 100 million Americans, including 27 million children, have no access to nearby green spaces during the coronavirus lockdown, according to a new report.
- 2 Many people have been really grateful for their local parks during the pandemic because schools, gyms and walking trails have closed to reduce physical contact and stop the virus. Many studies have shown that spending time in green spaces reduces stress and is good for the physical and mental health of adults and children.
- 3 But the report by the Trust for Public Land (TPL) shows big differences in access. For example, 98% of people in Washington, in Minneapolis and in Saint Paul, Minnesota are within a ten-minute walk of a park. But, less than 50% of people in cities like Charlotte, North Carolina, Mesa, Arizona and Oklahoma City are within a ten-minute walk of a park.
- 4 Even inside cities, access to green spaces is also different. Poorer families and people of colour are least likely to live close to parks with basic amenities like toilets, playgrounds and basketball courts.
- 5 For example, in New York City, where the Mayor, Bill de Blasio, promised to open 100 miles of streets to pedestrians and cyclists, the places with least park access include Morris Park in the Bronx and Corona in Queens. These are both mainly black and brown neighbourhoods where coronavirus has hit hard.
- 6 As summer comes closer, it's clear that public parks will play an important role in giving safe, cheap leisure spaces to millions of people unable to work or travel. But the report suggests local governments might reduce park budgets because of the unprecedented economic challenges as a result of the lockdowns.
- 7 A survey of 300 parks by the National Recreation and Park Association found that about half had already been told to cut budgets by 10% to 20% for the current financial year. All over the US, the parks system took years to recover from budget cuts after the Great Recession. The economic effect of the coronavirus pandemic will probably be worse.
- 8 "Park supporters are preparing for a fight," said Bill Lee, the senior vice-president at TPL. The organization is asking the federal government to give financial help to parks. "We need our parks, and we will not allow park systems to be victims of the Covid-19 pandemic."
- 9 But there is some hope for environmental activists. The crisis could make people see how important parks are. This might encourage local activists to fight for fair access. Rue Mapp, the founder and CEO of Outdoor Afro, said: "This is an opportunity for us to rethink public lands. Many people think that nature is somewhere that you have to drive to, but we can change that idea."

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4 Comprehension check

Match the beginnings and the endings to make statements about the text.

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. Many people have been grateful for local parks because ... | a. ... safe, cheap leisure spaces. |
| 2. Spending time in green spaces ... | b. ... gyms and walking trails have been closed. |
| 3. Poorer people and people of colour ... | c. ... reduce their budgets by between 10% and 20%. |
| 4. During the summer months, parks give people ... | d. ... will make people see the importance of parks. |
| 5. Parks have been told to ... | e. ... are less likely to live near parks. |
| 6. Environmental activists hope that the coronavirus crisis ... | f. ... can help to reduce stress. |

5 Chunks

Rearrange the words to make phrases from the text.

- new to a report according
- survey a of hundred parks three
- a ten- walk within minute
- the as lockdowns a result of
- drive somewhere to that you to have
- financial the year current

6 Two-word phrases

Match the words in the left-hand column with the words in the right-hand column to make expressions from the text.

- | | |
|-------------|------------------|
| 1. walking | a. neighbourhood |
| 2. green | b. contact |
| 3. black | c. cuts |
| 4. hit | d. trail |
| 5. budget | e. hard |
| 6. physical | f. spaces |

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7 Word stress

Put these words from the text into two groups according to their word stress.

access
budget

contact
report

reduce
suggest

adult
result

within
promise

A o o	B o o

8 Discussion

Why should we waste money on parks when there are more important things to spend money on?