

# BBC Learning English

## 6 Minute English

### *Quieter London*



NB: This is not an accurate word-for-word transcript

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**Dima:** Hello and welcome to 6 Minute English from [bbclearningenglish.com](http://bbclearningenglish.com). I'm Dima Kostenko and to help you and me with the language today is Kate Colin.

**Kate:** Hello.

**Dima:** Kate and I both live in London, a buzzing capital city that's no place for you if all you long for is calm, peace and quiet. Of course, there are many 'pros and cons' of living in a big city like London.

**Kate:** Oh I like that expression - 'pros and cons'! It means advantages, as well as disadvantages of something. Or to put it in even simpler words, both the good and the not so good sides.

**Dima:** OK, let's first of all think why living in a city can be a good thing.

**Kate:** *responds + list of 3-4 pros (Kate and Dima alternating)*

**Dima:** That's a nice positive list we've got here Kate - but surely there must be things about London that many people don't like all that much?

**Kate:** *responds + list of 3-4 cons (Kate and Dima alternating); Kate introduces 'noise pollution'*

**Dima:** Yes, noise pollution, which is a widely used term. Can you explain what it means Kate?

**Kate:** Yes, it's a term describing the amount and loudness of the unpleasant, sometimes even disruptive sound produced by too many people, too much traffic and so on.

**Dima:** Apparently, noise pollution is one of the main causes of stress suffered by city dwellers just about everywhere in the world, and here in London some experts have come up with the idea of reducing that in eight urban areas. In a moment we'll hear from one of the experts but first we'll need to get to grips with some key vocabulary, so it's over to you Kate.

**Kate:** *Responds.* First of all, the word combination 'screening from the noise'. This means building special shields, or screens, that will stop the unwanted sounds reaching you directly - they'll protect you from too much noise. Next, 'traffic calming'. This means taking steps to limit the number of cars in an area, as well as to prevent them from moving too fast. Then we'll hear a nice phrasal verb 'to green up', meaning to plant more trees, flowers and other types of 'vegetation'. And 'vegetation' of course simply means plants in general.

**Dima:** Thanks Kate. OK, back to the story. One of the eight areas that we mentioned earlier is near The Monument, right in the middle of the City of London. And here comes this week's question for you Kate. What measures do you think the experts propose in order to bring more quiet to the area around The Monument?  
Is it

- a) screening from the noise;
- b) traffic calming;
- c) greening the area up, or
- d) all of the above?

**Kate:** *Guesses*

**Dima:** Ok, good guess. Let's listen to check your answer:

**Clip 1**                      **0'13''**

Things that we are looking at are possibly screening from the noise first of all, trying to eliminate the noise by traffic calming, looking at the types of vehicles, the noise from vehicles. Also perhaps greening the area up a bit with trees, with vegetation, that type of thing as well.

**Kate:**                      So the idea is to eliminate the noise by introducing all three measures - *which means I was right/wrong with my earlier guess.*

**Dima:**                      *Responds.* And I'm sure you'll be pleased to hear that the idea now has official backing - from London's Mayor Boris Johnson. Speaking just two weeks ago, the Mayor talked about improving the areas of rest, or as he put it, 'places of calm and repose'. He also mentioned three more ways of keeping London quieter, including one that concerns London's busiest airport, Heathrow. What are they? Let's listen to find out, and here is some vocabulary that might come in handy:

**Kate:**                      A 'siren', which is a warning device that produces a loud wailing sound. 'To bring in', meaning to introduce, to put in service. And 'expansion', a noun that means becoming bigger in size or numbers.

**Dima:**                      Here's Boris Johnson:

**Clip 2**                      **0'15''**

We're reducing noise by making sure that the police only use their sirens when they have to, by bringing in a new lighter, quieter bus for London, stopping the expansion of Heathrow so you won't have so many planes flying over London. And of course we want to improve places of calm and repose.

**Kate:**                      So the three measures that the Mayor mentions are using sirens less, introducing new, quieter buses and stopping the expansion of Heathrow airport so there aren't so many planes flying over the city.

**Dima:** Sounds sensible to me. And as ever you can find out more about this and other related stories online by following the links from our website, [bbclearningenglish.com](http://bbclearningenglish.com). Also, if you have ever lived in a noisy city yourself and are up for a challenge, try to come up with a Noise Reduction Plan for that city, using some or all of today's key vocabulary:

**Kate:** Pros and cons  
noise pollution  
screening from the noise  
traffic calming  
greening up  
vegetation  
sirens  
expansion and  
bringing in

**Dima:** Thanks Kate. And that's all we have time for today. Until next week.

**Both:** Goodbye!