

English for Everyday: Hometown English

Your '**hometown**' is the town—or city—where you live, or where you were born. It's different from the more 'exact' term '**place of birth**,' which you will see on paperwork. The difference is that your 'hometown' is the town that *you* identify with. You can choose your own hometown. I even think of two different towns—Dresden, in Germany, and Towanda, in the U.S—as my 'hometowns.'

Your place of birth, on the other hand, is the town or city where you were born. The funny thing about a place of birth is that you don't have to spend much time in that city—I wasn't born in my hometown—but it'll always be a part of who you are.

This week, we're going to learn some English for describing your hometown. Imagine that you're traveling in a foreign country, speaking English, and somebody asks you: “Where are you from? What's it like there?” How well will you be able to describe your town to them in English?

Tomorrow, we're going to be learning some vocabulary that will be helpful in describing your hometown: what kind of area is it in? What things does it have to offer tourists? Why do people come to your hometown?

On Wednesday, we're going to cover some pretty simple grammar: the modal verbs. These verbs will help you in a lot of different contexts, not just in describing your hometown! You can use them to describe possibilities, as well as what's a good idea and what isn't. You probably use some—or all—of them already, so it might just be a grammar review for you.

Then, on Thursday, we're going to hear about the first of two cities. Thursday will be the day that I talk to you about Dresden, my hometown. (Well, *one* of my hometowns.) On Friday, we have the good luck to have someone else to listen to, because you don't want to hear only me speaking English, do you? A reader (should I say listener?) named Hanne was willing to describe her own hometown of Amsterdam, Holland, for us.

Before the week starts, though, why don't you try to describe your hometown, now? Think about the following points when you make your description:

- What do the people who know your hometown think of, when they think of your hometown?
- What do people come to your town to do?
- Is anything famous in your hometown? What?

Remember, I will correct any answers that you post at Bite-Sized-English. . . and you have the

possibility of posting audio answers here, too, now.

Vocabulary

Hometown: This is a pretty simple vocabulary word. What town—or city—do you think of as your home? That's your *hometown*. Pretty simple, really. If you live in a city you don't like—maybe you moved there for work—you can still call your place of birth your hometown. But, some people move from cities they *don't* like to cities they do like. If that's the case with you, you can call your new town your 'hometown.' It's not uncommon for people to have many hometowns in their life!

Place of Birth: If you might have many hometowns, you'll only ever have one '*place of birth*.' Even if you were only there for one day, the city—or town, or village—where you were born is your 'place of birth.' Because it's so inflexible, this is different from your hometown, and you'll see this on government and other 'legal' paperwork.