

Parks vocabulary and speaking

Brainstorm vocabulary into the categories below. Some words and expressions can go in more than one category.

Actions that people do in parks

Adjectives for describing parks

Animals in parks and things connected to them

Architectural features of parks

Decorations/ Ornaments in parks

Negative words connected to parks

Park furniture

Parts of parks

Plants and parts of plants

Positive words connected to parks

Things connected to sport/ exercise and parks

Things connected to water and parks

Things for children in parks

Use a dictionary for five minutes to add more vocabulary above.

Compare your answers with those below, then compare your extra vocabulary as a class.

Suggested answers

- **Actions that people do in parks**- mow, weed, do sports, have a picnic, have a barbecue, relax, keep fit, do Taichi, jog, walk the dog, hang out, feed the ducks, feed the birds, look at the flowers, have a nap, pick up rubbish, have walk/ stroll, have lunch, water, prune, do yoga, exercise/ work out
- **Adjectives for describing parks** - big/ large/ huge, compact/ small, local, romantic, green, neglected/ shabby/ rundown, neat, fun, traditional,
- **Animals in parks and things connected to them** - pigeon, squirrel, crow, magpie, nest, duck, turtle, fish (e.g. koi), tadpole/ frog, sparrow, feed,
- **Architectural features of parks** - hill/ mound, pond/ lake, wall/ fence, fountain, path, car park, gate, greenhouse, shed,
- **Decorations/ Ornaments** - statue/ sculpture, topiary (= ornamental hedge), trellis,
- **Negative words connected to parks** - dog's mess, rubbish, overgrown, neglected, gloomy, mosquito-infested, damp, messy, mud/ muddy, dust/ dusty, vandalised/ vandalism, graffiti,
- **Park furniture** - bench, deckchair, parasol/ garden umbrella, patio table, sun lounger
- **Parts of parks** - smoking area, playground, lawn, nets, tennis courts, (outdoor) pool, border, flowerbed, lawn, nursery, arbour, running track
- **Plants and parts of plants** - aromatic plant (lavender etc), blossom, branch, bulb, bush/ hedge, cactus, climbing rose, flower, fruit tree, grass, herb (rosemary, basil, etc), leaf, moss, petal, pollen, root, seed, stem, stick, thorn, trunk, twig, weed, wild flower,
- **Positive words connected to parks** - aromatic/ scent, child friendly, ecologically friendly, green, leafy, fun, relaxing, romantic, traditional,
- **Things connected to sport/ exercise** – running track, (outdoor) swimming pool, parallel bars, chin up bar, sit up bench, tennis courts,
- **Things connected to water** - fountain, tap, hose, paddling pool, pond/ lake, sprinkler, stream, (outdoor) swimming pool, water barrel/ water tub, waterfall, watering can, drinking fountain, rowing boat, pedalo
- **Things for children**- basketball court/ hoop, climbing frame, paddling pool, sandpit, slide, swimming pool, swing, roundabout, seesaw

Can you think of ways of improving these things?

- climbing frame/ jungle gym
- outdoor swimming pool
- paddling pool
- park bench
- park bins
- park fence
- park gate
- park security
- pedalo
- rowing boat
- slide
- tennis courts

Parks roleplay debates

Argue over who should be allowed to take control of the park, for example:

- A construction company who will build a mixed-use development with a park included
- A local residents' association
- A school (mainly to be used as a school playground but open to the public at other times)
- A small local charity
- A large national charity
- A local religious organisation
- A gardening society (to convert part to allotments and keep the rest open to the public)
- A garden centre (to use half to show their plants to anyone who wants to come in and the other half to sell them)

Can you find a compromise solution?

Debate the use of a brownfield site, e.g.

- Nature reserve
- Park
- Mixed use
- School facilities

Can you find a compromise solution?

What do you think of these park ideas?

Choose one thing below that you are particularly in favour of or against and explain why.

Your partner must take the opposite point of view.

- a park designed to attract wildlife
- a park which is mainly cactuses
- a sculpture park
- a security guard on the gate
- a wall for graffiti
- an area for nudists
- banning persistent offenders
- barbed wire on top of the fences
- forcing all large developments to have a public park
- forcing publicly-funded organisations like universities, the royal family and museums to open their gardens to the public
- leaving the whole or part of the park to go wild
- locking the park at five o'clock
- more use of wild plants
- ornamental hedges (= topiary)
- paying a refundable deposit
- piped music
- questioning and/ or searching of suspicious looking people
- replacing some of the grass
- security cameras
- sprinklers that come on once an hour to periodically clear the lawns

Solutions to park funding problems

What do you think of these ideas to raise enough money to support a park or cut down on costs? Which is the best idea below? Can you think of any better ideas?

- A small zoo, e.g. a petting zoo
- A son et lumière show
- A tax on local residents, e.g. people who live within one mile of the park
- A tent/ pavilion to be hired out for events
- Advertise, e.g. advertising jingles in the piped music
- Allow a private tennis club to use the courts as long as they provide some classes for poor local kids
- Allow film crews etc to take over the park for fixed amounts of time
- An exclusive area, e.g. an island in the middle of the park, for private functions
- Arrange classes that you charge for, e.g. aerobics or nature photography
- Better quality facilities, e.g. an exclusive sunbathing area and cleaner toilets, for those who pay or have a season ticket
- Build a car park and charging for its use
- Build something, e.g. a car park, underground under the park
- Change part of the lawn into an area for ball sports and charging for its use
- Change part of the park into a private facility, e.g. club, and use that as a way of financing the rest
- Change part of the park to allotments
- Change the park to a charity and do sponsored runs etc to raise money
- Charge a small amount of money for using the park
- Charge buskers and other street performers for permission to perform in the park
- Charge companies to set up large tents for corporate entertaining
- Charge for toilet paper and soap
- Charge for use of deckchairs
- Charge for use of the toilets
- Charge more for the sports facilities
- Charge people for selling in the park, e.g. a hotdog stall or ice cream stand
- Children maintaining the park as school work or as a punishment for misbehaviour at school
- Commission a private company to run the park for less money and let them raise money however they like short of charging for admission
- Convert (part of) it into a botanical gardens
- Cut spending on other things and so continue full government funding at the present or higher levels
- Festivals, e.g. music festivals, with a charge for admittance
- Filling in the pond
- Fines for misbehaviour
- Give the park to local residents to do what they like with, cutting most or all funding
- Grow plants to sell
- Have Xmas illuminations and charge for admission during that period
- Large deposits for using park facilities which are lost if there is any misuse or damage at all

- Leave the tennis courts open and make organisations/ people bring their own equipment, including nets
- Let the pond go wild
- Make the pool more exclusive and expensive, making it more like a hotel pool
- Not picking up fallen leaves
- Outdoor market with charges for admission and/ or for setting up a stall there
- Reduce how often the grass is cut
- Reduce how often the park is weeded
- Remove lighting and close at dusk
- Replace the gardeners with people doing community service
- Sell food and drink and banning people bringing those things in from elsewhere
- Sell food for the ducks and koi
- Sell off the sculpture (to raise money and reduce the costs of security and insurance)
- Sell souvenirs
- Sell the courts to a private tennis club
- Sell the land and build another park on the roof of the new building
- Sell the land and build another park somewhere else, on a cheap brownfield site
- Set up a café or restaurant inside the park
- Set up a facility for weddings
- Shorten the hours of the park, e.g. closing one day a week
- Sponsorship, e.g. changing the name of the park to the name of the sponsor (e.g. “IBM Hyde Park”) or allowing sponsors to advertise their association with the park (e.g. “Microsoft, proud sponsors of Central Park”)
- Stop heating the pool water
- Use exclusively for local residents, who must help with the gardening etc
- Vending machines

Speak in favour of one of the things above. Your partner will take the opposite side of the argument. Talk about how desirable or undesirable it would be, how much financial impact it would have, what people’s reactions might be, if it would actually work, etc.

Solve the park problems

Choose one of the problems below and suggest at least one solution. Your partner will ask you questions about your idea.

- A new patch of land for a park is very long and thin
- A new tall building nearby will mean that everything people do in the park will be visible for the first time
- Balls flying out of the park
- Balls ruining flowers etc
- Can't afford someone to supervise the tennis courts and take money
- Children falling off park equipment and hurting themselves
- Children rarely go to parks anymore
- Children running across the street
- Children walking on the flowerbeds
- Complaints from neighbours about noise
- Complaints from neighbours about parking nearby
- Conflicts between people playing sports on the lawn and people doing less active things, e.g. picnics and sunbathing
- Crime, e.g. pickpocketing
- Crows attacking people
- Cruising
- Deer attacking people
- Difficult to get to/ Limited public transport
- Dogs digging up the flowerbeds
- Dogs' mess
- Drug dealing
- Drunkenness
- Dust
- Graffiti
- Heavy petting by young couples
- Homeless people setting up shelters in the park
- It gets too busy
- Little greenery in the park and little money to add any
- Little rain/ Dry soil
- Loud parties after dark
- Men hassling women
- Mosquitoes
- Mud
- Old ladies taking cuttings of plants or even entire plants
- People climbing over the fence after the park closes
- People feeding cats and pigeons and so attracting them to the park
- People feeding fish/ ducks too much or with unsuitable things
- People jumping into the lake
- People picking flowers
- People sleeping in the park
- People sleeping on benches

- People staking out large areas for picnics long before they use them
- People taking up benches for long periods of time
- People throwing rubbish in the water
- Pigeons' mess
- Problems keeping lawns in good condition
- Roller-skaters/ Skateboarders (nearly) colliding with pedestrians
- Rotting fruit from trees
- Rubbish
- Rusty playground equipment
- Soap and toilet paper being stolen from toilets
- Street trading
- Teenagers using the playground
- The land that the park is on has become very valuable for the first time and so the local council would like to sell it
- The local weather is very bad
- The park isn't wheelchair accessible
- There is little sunlight, e.g. because the park is surrounded by tall buildings
- Tree roots cracking the paths
- Trees in the park are starting to block sunlight from houses opposite
- Unused playground equipment
- Using too much water
- Vandalism
- Walking on the lawn

Design a park for particular purposes

After choosing which are the most important and/ or needed, discuss how to design a park for at least two uses from this list:

- Appreciating the changing seasons
- *Approaching people in the park, e.g. surveying them or to tell them about your religion*
- Being around other people/ Relieving loneliness
- *Bringing in your own food and drink, e.g. picnics, lunch break or barbecues*
- *Buying and eating food and drink, e.g. at café tables*
- *Buying and selling*
- *Camping*
- Clearing your head
- *Climbing trees*
- *Collecting natural things, e.g. autumn leaves, wild fruit/ nuts, bugs/ tadpoles*
- *Cycling*
- *Displaying art*
- *Drinking (= alcohol)*
- Enjoying animals, e.g. bird watching or *feeding animals*
- Escaping the city/ Escaping the noise/ Escaping the traffic
- Escaping the heat
- *Fishing*
- *Flying kites*
- Fresh air
- Fun/ Excitement
- Gardening ideas
- *Giving classes*
- Having a coffee
- Helping with gardening
- Learning about local history
- *Listening to music*
- Looking at plants, e.g. autumn leaves, blossom or flowers
- Looking down at the surrounding area
- *Making money, e.g. selling or doing balloon art*
- Painting/ Sketching
- Peace and quiet
- People-watching
- *Performing, e.g. busking, doing magic*
- Playing children's games, e.g. hide and seek or tag
- Playing with snow, e.g. *snowball fights* or ice sculpture
- *Political speeches, e.g. like Speakers' Corner*
- *Practising music*
- *Religious meetings/ Preaching*
- Romance
- *Setting off fireworks*
- Shelter when there is a disaster, e.g. an earthquake
- *Sleeping, e.g. having a siesta*
- *Smoking*
- Socialising, e.g. meeting friends and family or meeting strangers

- *Spending all day sitting on a bench*
- Sports/ Exercise/ Keep fit, e.g. *jogging, inline skating, skateboarding, Frisbee, speed walking, aerobics, tennis, football, rugby, volleyball, golf/ pitch and putt/ crazy golf, ice skating, horse riding, baseball, softball, badminton, working out, rock climbing, swimming, martial arts, weight training, ice skating, bowls – including formal and informal competitive sports*
- Stress relief
- Study
- Sunbathing/ Enjoying the sun, e.g. *bringing in a deckchair*
- Tai chi/ Yoga/ Meditation
- *Taking a pet for a walk*
- *Taking cuttings from plants*
- *Taking photos*
- Using the toilets
- *Walking on grass*
- *Walking through to get somewhere else*
- *Water play, e.g. splashing in fountains, water fights or paddling*
- *Wild children's play, e.g. playing in mud or fighting with sticks*

Draw that park and then present it to the class. They will give you feedback on its suitability for those uses and more generally how good a park it would be.

Are there any purposes above which you wouldn't want the park to be suitable for or care about catering to? Are there any you would want to ban or discourage from in the park?

Rank the ones in italics by how likely you would be to ban them.

What would be suitable punishments?

Write out rules for your park.

Design an information board with the rules on.

Designing a park for groups of people

Perhaps after choosing which are the most important and/ or needed, discuss how to design a park for groups of people from the list below.

- Art lovers
- Blind people
- Children, including young children who can't yet properly do what the park is designed for, e.g. use a swing on their own, climb a climbing frame or walk
- Clubs
- Families
- Homeless people
- Large groups
- People who need persuading to go to parks/ spend time outside, e.g. teenagers who like technology
- People with hay fever
- People with pets
- Physically disabled people
- Smokers
- Sunbathers
- The elderly
- Tourists/ People from outside the area
- University students

Draw that park and then present it to the class. They will give you feedback on its suitability for those groups of people and more generally how good a park it would be.

Are there any groups of people above who you wouldn't want the park to be suitable for or care about catering to? Are there any you would want to ban or discourage from using the park?

Design a park taking particular things into account

Perhaps after choosing which are the most important and/ or needed, discuss how to design a park taking the number of things below which your teacher tells you into account.

- Appearance, e.g. screening areas which are unattractive
- Cleanliness and tidiness, e.g. bins
- Elements that fit well together and with the local area
- Focal point(s)
- Food and drink
- Funding
- Getting local people involved
- Getting positive media coverage
- Giving people pride in their local area/ Making people interested in their local area
- Improving the image of the area with people elsewhere, including perhaps attracting people to visit or move there
- Information, e.g. signs/ maps/ information boards and/ or pamphlets/ leaflets
- Maintenance, e.g. access for maintenance vehicles
- Making people come back more often, e.g. with the seasons or with special events
- Making people spend longer in park
- Neighbouring houses, including local property values
- Noise
- Outdoor stages/ amphitheatres
- Pamphlets/ Leaflets?
- Parking, including bike racks, motorcycle parking and disabled parking, in the park and/ or in the local area
- Pets, e.g. dog's mess
- Safety, e.g. making sure there are no areas which are too isolated/ hidden from view, emergency vehicle access
- Seating
- Smells
- Something to make the park stand out
- Staffing
- Teaching people about history
- Teaching people about nature/ green issues
- The local economy
- Use at night, e.g. lighting
- Use on cold days
- Use on hot days, e.g. shade and drinking fountains
- Use on/ after rainy weather
- Views
- Water play for children
- Wheelchair access
- Wild animals

Draw that park and then present it to the class. They will give you feedback on how well it matches your criteria, if those were the right criteria, and more generally how good a park it would be.

Are there any criteria above which are completely unimportant? Rank all the others.