

## Heavy Street

Do you have nice neighbours? Perhaps you never speak to them or worse still you argue with them regularly. You might think that your relationship with your neighbours was a question of personalities but new research suggests otherwise. Much of what happens between people living on the same street is directly influenced by the traffic that passes in front of their doors.

The study, based on interviews with the residents of three different streets in a city in the UK, found that individuals who live with a high level of traffic are far more likely to be socially disconnected than people who live in quiet streets. The researcher, Joshua Hart, called the three streets Heavy Street, Medium Street and Light Street according to their respective traffic flows and asked their residents about their social contacts and their habits.

People living on Light Street considered themselves to have, on average, five times as many friends when compared to people living on Heavy Street, whose residents had very few friends on the other side of the road and hardly ever crossed over. Hart also found that people adapted to the noisier, dirtier environment on Heavy Street by living more in the back rooms of their houses and not opening their front windows. They were less likely to care for their street as well. "The whole street needs knocking down and rebuilding" was one comment.

On Light Street it was different. Very few people felt the need for a wall or fence in their front garden, most people opened their windows and there were three times more meeting places when compared to Heavy Street. More than 50% of Light Street said they felt "at home" in other resident's houses.

"The primary influence on social deterioration is the external effect of traffic, not any possible personality differences among the residents of the three streets," Hart concluded.

## QUESTIONS:

### 1. Answer the questions in your own words:

- a) What did Joshua Hart study?
- b) What did he find?

### 2. Read the text and choose a), b) or c) in each question below. Give evidence for your answers.

#### 1) Joshua Hart asked the residents...

- a) about their cars.
- b) about their personalities.
- c) about their routines.

#### 2) How do residents on Heavy Street adapt to the dirt?

- a) They keep their windows closed.
- b) They visit their friends on Light Street.
- c) They don't cross the road.

#### 3) Why are there nearly no walls and fences on Light Street?

- a) Because the cars have knocked them down.
- b) Because the people are friendlier.
- c) Because it is different.

### 3. Are these statements true or false? Justify your answers with words or phrases from the text.

- a) Everybody likes living on Heavy Street.
- b) People who live on quiet streets have fewer friends.

### 4. Find a synonym in the text for the following words or phrases:

- a) tranquil
- b) too
- c) necessity
- d) main

**QUESTIONS (II):****5. Rewrite the following sentences according to the instructions:****a) Turn the following sentence into the active voice:**

"Much of what happens between people living on the same street is directly influenced by traffic."

**b) Turn the following sentence into reported speech:**

One man said: "The whole street needs knocking down and rebuilding."

**c) Join the following sentences with a relative pronoun:**

The residents of Heavy Street have few friends. They live in the back rooms of their houses.

**6. Find two words in the text containing vowels or groups of vowels which are pronounced in the same way as:**

a) **ee** in street

b) **ew** in few

c) **eir** in their

**7. Write a composition of about 120 words. Choose one of the following topics:**

- a) What problems occur between neighbours? What can be done to solve them?
- b) Write a letter to your local newspaper complaining about the amount of traffic that passes along your street and how it affects your life.

**ANSWERS:****1.**

- a) **eg.** Joshua Hart studied how traffic affects people's relationships with their neighbours.
- b) **eg.** He found that community life was worse on roads with lots of traffic.

**2.**

- 1) c)
- 2) a)
- 3) b)

**3.**

- a) **FALSE** - People on Heavy Street "...were less likely to care for their street" and ""The whole street needs knocking down and rebuilding" was one comment."
- b) **FALSE** - "People living on Light Street considered themselves to have, on average, five times as many friends when compared to people living on Heavy Street".

**4.**

- a) quiet
- b) as well (or too)
- c) need
- d) primary

**5.**

- a) Traffic directly influences much of what happens between people living on the same street.
- b) One man said (that) the whole street needed knocking down and rebuilding.
- c) The residents of Heavy Street, who have few friends, live in the back rooms of their houses or The residents of Heavy Street, who live in the back rooms of their houses, have few friends.

**6.**

- a) speak, between, three, need, meeting
- b) you, to, argue, new, interview, UK, rooms
- c) care, there, compared