

DATE :	CRENEAU HORAIRE :
ETUDIANT·E : Name + N°	

Vous pouvez écrire sur le sujet ou le surligner mais devrez le rendre à la fin de votre oral.

Preparation – 1 hour:

- 1) Summary: Present the text and prepare an organised summary.
- 2) Commentary: prepare a structured analysis of the text around two or three issues / ideas raised by the author, whether explicitly or implicitly. Propose relevant arguments and examples.
Note that preparing a **detailed outline** will help you make an effective presentation.

Oral exam – 15 minutes:

- 1) Present your summary and commentary without reading your notes (10 mn).
- 2) Questions and discussion with the examiner about your presentation (5 mn).

Castlefield Viaduct: Manchester's new park in the sky could transform the city – but who will benefit?

Ian Mell*, 9 août 2022, The Conversation (adapted)

In July 2022, Manchester welcomed the newest addition to its roster¹ of urban parks. Owned by the National Trust, the Castlefield Viaduct is a Grade II-listed**, 19th-century railway bridge that has been redeveloped into a new 330m-long sky park.

5 The project is part of a wider repurposing² of former industrial space in Manchester with several other projects promoting the city as a go-to place for innovative urban development in housing and green and open space. For now, the National Trust is operating Castlefield Viaduct as a 12-month trial. Entry is free but ticketed and limited to 100 visitors per day on allocated one-hour slots each afternoon.

10 The idea behind the trail is to generate political and financial support to create a longer park extending westwards and make it permanent. Initial reactions to the Castlefield Viaduct have been positive. Local charity Castlefield Forum, which is set to have its own community plot³ on the bridge, has launched a podcast to tell the area's stories.

15 Access to green and open space is urgently needed in central Manchester. However, as my research on access to nature and regeneration shows, there is no guarantee that simply having green space makes people use it. Location, access routes and amenities⁴ all influence usage. Exactly who stands to benefit from a project like Castlefield Viaduct is a crucial question.

20 Built in 1892, the bridge was left derelict⁵ after 1969, when Manchester Central Station, now the Manchester Central Convention Complex, was taken out of service. Repurposing an abandoned site with little access, socio-economic worth or ecological value into a public park is a sign that Manchester city council, the landowner of the viaduct, is willing to test new approaches to urban greening.

The site is divided into three distinct zones linking the viaduct's past, present and future journeys. The opening section draws on the railway motifs of trellis architecture to guide people into the site. The second introduces the 3,000 planted species highlighting the biodiversity of the local environment.

25 The third, meanwhile, which you can currently see, but not access, offers views on to where the site may go physically and conceptually. These various spaces blend with the sound of the passing trams. You are keenly aware of being in both a park and in a layer of the city's history.

30 Castlefield is thus doted with a unique conceptual motif and a novel industrial aesthetic, as compared to other parks in Manchester. It remains to be seen, though, whether the design and the fact that it is located in an area of largely privately rented and owned flats will attract locals or serve primarily as a tourist attraction for visitors.

35 When the 606 linear park opened in Chicago in 2015, local residents reportedly expressed fears they would be priced out of their neighbourhoods. Reports in 2020 revealed that the park had indeed triggered luxury developments and long-term local residents being displaced. Research shows how similar developments, including New York's High Line, can lead to what economists have dubbed ecogentrification.

40 Research has also shown how much need there is for green space in Manchester. The city centre currently has very few public green spaces, and even fewer that provide play facilities or access to nature. According to Friends of the Earth, over 73% people across Manchester have poor or limited access to a personal garden or a communal green space. Covid lockdowns highlighted how significant this lack of access to green space is, especially for those with families.

The redevelopment of the Castlefield Viaduct [thus] presents an interesting conundrum⁶ for Manchester and other UK cities.

45 [And green space provision also] requires sufficient public funding to be allocated to local government to support capital and revenue spent on public parks — something not seen in the UK over the last 12 years.

50 By drawing on the industrial heritage of the city, Castlefield Viaduct makes strong links to its fabled Cottonopolis^{***} heritage. The park also sets out a bold statement that redundant⁷ spaces in Manchester can be meaningful, accessible and interactive. Of course, integrating industrial chic with urban regeneration is nothing new. But it is new in Manchester. This could be the start of something beautiful.

** Ian Mell is a reader in Environmental & Landscape Planning, University of Manchester. ** Refers to a building or infrastructure that has particular historic and/or architectural significance and is subject to regulations which protect its unique character. *** Cottonopolis was a 19th-century nickname for Manchester, as it was a metropolis and the centre of the cotton industry.*

1. list - 2. conversion for another use - 3. a small area of shared land used for community gardening, etc. - 4. facilities and services
5. abandoned, dilapidated - 6. dilemma - 7. no longer used or needed



Example