

# Measuring the Livability of Shakespeare's London

## Abstract

Using a modified version of the currently used Economist Intelligence Unit Global Livability Report, I will measure the livability of London during the lifetime of William Shakespeare (1564-1616), using both qualitative and quantitative historical data, and reaching a final quantitative measure of livability. I will measure five broad criteria categories: stability, healthcare, culture/environment, education, and infrastructure. I will eliminate criteria based on their anachronisms with the period; thus, criteria such as public healthcare, level of corruption, public education indicators, telecommunications, international links, and energy provisions must be eliminated or reconfigured, as they did not exist in early modern London as they do now. In keeping with the view that this report should be measured by the standards of the time, not by modern ones, views on the value of child labor and other such contemporarily illegal acts will be judged based on the historical context. Reflecting the number of sub-criteria, stability will constitute 25% of London's livability, healthcare 15%, culture/environment 35%, education 10%, and infrastructure 15% of the overall livability score. Scores will be broken down into 20 point increments, with scores of 80-100 points reflecting ideal livability, and scores of 50 or less will reflect severely restricted living.

## Method

**Stability (25%) - 15**  
 Petty Crime- 2 Undesirable  
 Violent Crime- 3 Uncomfortable  
 Military Conflict- 5 Acceptable  
 Civil Unrest- 3 Uncomfortable  
 Threat of Terrorism- 2 Undesirable  
**Healthcare (23%) - 14**  
 Availability of Private Healthcare- 5 Acceptable  
 Quality of Private Healthcare- 4 Tolerable  
 Availability of Over the Counter Drugs- 5 Acceptable  
**Culture/Environment (22%) - 23**  
 Temperature/Humidity- 3 Uncomfortable  
 Job Quality and Availability- 3 Uncomfortable  
 Religious Restrictions- 2 Undesirable  
 Censorship- 4 Tolerable  
 Sanitation- 2 Undesirable  
 Culture- 5 Acceptable  
 Food- 4 Tolerable  
**Education (10%) - 3**  
 Availability of Education- 1 Intolerable  
 Quality of Education- 2 Undesirable  
**Infrastructure (20%) - 10**  
 Quality of Road Network- 2 Undesirable  
 Housing Quality- 3 Uncomfortable  
 Water Provision- 5 Acceptable

### Category 1: Stability (weight: 25% of total)

Indicator	Source
Prevalence of petty crime	EIU rating
Prevalence of violent crime	EIU rating
Threat of terror	EIU rating
Threat of military conflict	EIU rating
Threat of civil unrest / conflict	EIU rating

### Category 2: Healthcare (weight: 20% of total)

Indicator	Source
Availability of private healthcare	EIU rating
Quality of private healthcare	EIU rating
Availability of public healthcare	EIU rating
Quality of public healthcare	EIU rating
Availability of over-the-counter drugs	EIU rating
General healthcare indicators	Adapted from World Bank

### Category 3: Culture & Environment (weight: 25% of total)

Indicator	Source
Humidity / Temperature rating	Adapted from average weather conditions
Discomfort of climate totravellers	EIU rating
Level of corruption	Adapted from Transparency International
Social or religious restrictions	EIU rating
Level of censorship	EIU rating
Sporting availability	EIU field rating of 3 sport indicators
Cultural availability	EIU field rating of 4 cultural indicators
Food and drink	EIU field rating of 4 cultural indicators
Consumer goods and services	EIU rating of product availability

### Category 4: Education (weight: 10% of total)

Indicator	Source
Availability of private education	EIU rating
Quality of public education	EIU rating
Public education indicators	Adapted from World Bank

### Category 5: Infrastructure (weight: 20% of total)

Indicator	Source
Quality of road network	EIU rating
Quality of public transport	EIU rating
Quality of international links	EIU rating
Availability of good quality housing	EIU rating
Quality of energy provision	EIU rating
Quality of water provision	EIU rating
Quality of telecommunications	EIU rating

Figure 1. The original livability criteria. Economist Intelligence Unit. "The Global Liveability Report 2017." *The Economist*.

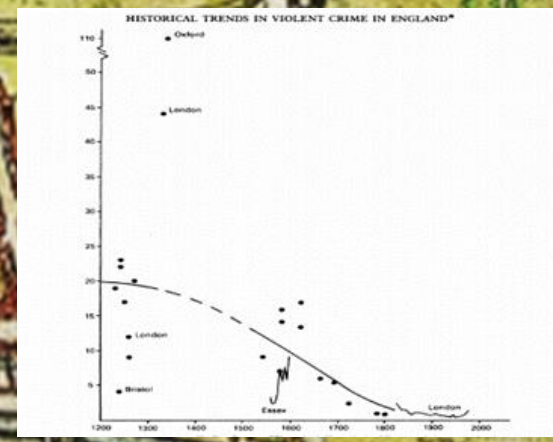


Figure 2. A graph of the violent crimes though years 1200 to 2000 in England. Stone, Lawrence. "Interpersonal Violence in English Society 1300-1980." *Past & Present*. 1983.

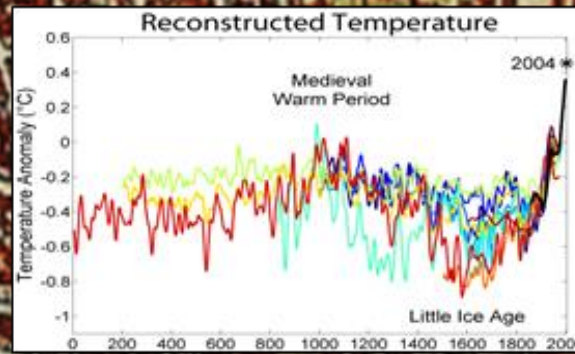


Figure 3. The "Little Ice Age" climate of London. Orange marks London's temperature. Rhode, Robert A. "Reconstructed Temperature." *Global Warming Art*.

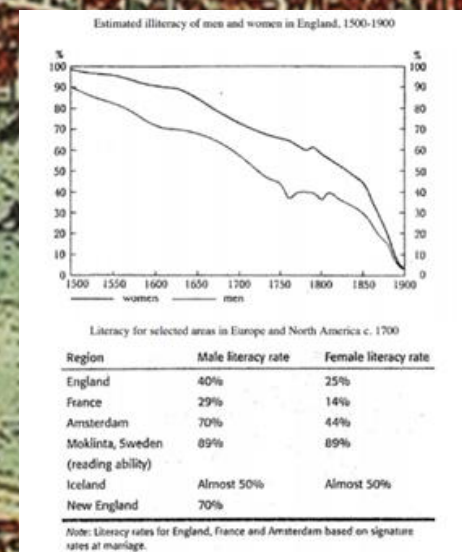


Figure 8. The literacy rates in England, France, Amsterdam, Sweden, Iceland, and New England between 1500 and 1900. Mitch, David. "Education and Skill of the British Labour Force." Roderick Floud and Paul Johnson, eds., *The Cambridge Economic History of Modern Britain, Vol. 1: Industrialisation, 1700-1860*, Cambridge:

## Results

Total- 65 of 100 possible points

A. Unskilled labourers	1500-49	1550-99	1600-49	1650-99	1700-49	1750-99	1800-49	B. Skilled craftsmen	1500-49	1550-99	1600-49	1650-99	1700-49	1750-99	1800-49
North-western Europe	North-western Europe														
London	3.2	4.6	7.1	9.7	10.5	11.5	17.7	London	5.0	6.9	11.3	14.5	14.7	17.8	28.9
Southern England	2.5	3.4	4.1	5.8	7.0	8.3	14.6	Southern England	4.2	5.1	6.1	8.4	10.4	12.6	22.0
Amsterdam	3.1	4.7	7.2	8.5	8.9	9.2	9.2	Amsterdam	4.5	7.0	10.4	11.9	11.7	11.9	12.1
Antwerp	3.0	5.9	7.6	7.1	6.9	6.9	7.7	Antwerp	5.2	10.3	12.6	11.8	11.5	11.5	12.8
Paris	2.8	5.5	6.6	6.9	5.1	5.2	8.9	Paris	4.4	9.0	10.6	11.0	8.2	8.3	16.4
Southern Europe	Southern Europe														
Valencia	4.2	6.6	8.8	6.9	5.7	5.1	—	Valencia	6.5	8.5	10.5	10.3	8.8	7.6	—
Madrid	—	6.3	8.0	—	5.1	5.3	8.0	Madrid	6.2	12.5	20.1	15.1	11.6	10.7	16.5
Milan	—	—	5.9	4.1	3.2	2.9	3.1	Milan	—	—	10.5	8.0	6.1	5.4	6.2
Ravenna	2.9	3.8	4.7	—	—	—	—	Florence	3.3	7.5	10.6	—	—	—	—
Naples	3.3	3.5	5.3	4.8	4.8	3.8	3.8	Naples	6.8	5.5	7.8	—	5.9	5.7	6.6
Central & eastern Europe	Central & eastern Europe														
Gdansk	2.1	2.1	3.8	4.3	3.8	3.7	4.8	Gdansk	2.8	4.7	6.4	7.7	6.7	5.2	8.0
Warsaw	—	2.5	3.2	2.7	1.9	3.4	4.9	Warsaw	—	3.6	5.6	4.3	5.3	7.4	10.9
Kielce	1.9	2.9	3.4	2.9	2.2	2.9	2.4	Kielce	3.8	5.2	4.2	4.1	3.3	3.8	5.2
Vienne	2.7	2.6	4.4	3.5	3.2	3.0	2.1	Vienne	4.0	3.9	5.5	5.2	4.8	4.8	3.2
Leipzig	—	1.9	3.5	3.9	3.7	3.1	4.4	Leipzig	2.9	3.3	6.8	7.0	6.2	5.0	6.7
Augsburg	2.1	3.1	4.5	4.7	4.2	4.3	—	Augsburg	3.5	4.2	5.4	6.5	6.0	5.4	5.8
Other	Other														
Southern England	10.1	6.3	4.0	5.4	8.0	7.0	8.8	Southern England	16.9	9.4	6.9	8.0	11.8	10.8	13.0
Amwerp	8.8	7.2	7.7	7.4	9.8	9.6	—	Amwerp	15.3	12.6	12.7	12.2	16.3	16.1	—
Paris	6.8	4.9	6.0	7.2	7.2	6.0	8.4	Paris	10.7	8.0	8.6	11.5	11.5	10.8	13.9
Valencia/Madrid	10.7	7.4	6.3	7.6	8.6	4.8	—	Valencia/Madrid	16.4	12.0	11.5	13.9	16.1	8.5	—
Florence/Milan	4.7	3.4	4.4	6.1	5.2	3.3	2.8	Florence/Milan	8.6	6.8	8.8	11.8	9.9	6.2	5.6
Ay	Ay														
Amsterdam	10.3	8.6	11.5	13.3	17.8	14.0	10.7	Amsterdam	15.0	12.8	16.6	18.7	23.4	18.1	14.1
Kielce	48.7	27.9	15.7	18.7	22.7	23.0	—	Kielce	97.4	50.0	19.4	26.5	34.0	30.2	—
Vienne	18.6	7.6	9.9	9.0	8.0	7.0	9.1	Vienne	27.6	11.5	12.4	13.4	12.0	11.2	4.7
Leipzig/Augsburg	9.6	5.6	6.0	9.5	8.4	6.1	5.3	Leipzig/Augsburg	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

Clockwise from top left: Figure 4. The silver pay for unskilled workers; Figure 5. The silver pay for skilled workers; Figure 6. The grain pay for unskilled workers; Figure 7. The grain pay for skilled workers. Broadberry, Stephen, and Gupta, Bishnupriya. "The early modern great divergence: wages, prices and economic development in Europe and Asia, 1500-1800." *The Economic History Review*. 2005.

## Conclusion

With a score of 65, Shakespeare's London, as the Economist Intelligence Unit Global Livability Report assigns, presents factors that "negative factors have an impact on day-to-day living", and suggests an allowance of 10% to move a worker to a city with this rating (Economist Intelligence Unit Global Livability Report). While this supports that London would be livable for Shakespeare's contemporaries, but not necessarily ideal, data for the conditions of smaller villages in England were unavailable, so the relative livability of London compared to surrounding areas, and the potential impact such data would have on this research, remains unmeasured.