

London

advanced version

London is the capital and the largest city of the United Kingdom. It is one of the most important cities for business, finance and politics in the world. It has 9 million inhabitants. Most people in London are British, but there are also many immigrants. The River Thames flows through the city.

History

London was established by the Romans about four years after the invasion of AD 43. It was called Londinium. During the 2nd century it replaced Colchester as the capital city of Roman Britain. In 180-225 the Romans built the defensive London Wall. After the collapse of Roman rule London went into rapid decline. In 886 it was captured by the West Saxon king Alfred the Great. By the 11th century, London was the largest town in England. Westminster Abbey was one of the biggest churches in Europe. The Black Death killed nearly a third of the population in the 14th century. There was an assassination attempt on James I in Westminster, in the Gunpowder Plot on 5th November 1605. The Great Fire of London broke out in 1666 in Pudding Lane. In 1888 London became home to a series of murders by Jack the Ripper. It was the largest city in the world in 1831-1925. London was bombed by the Germans during the First and the Second World War. It hosted the Olympic Games in 1908, 1948 and 2012.

Buckingham Palace

It is the official residence of the Queen and the Royal Family. It was built for the Duke of Buckingham in 1703. The Royal Flag flies on top when the Queen is at home. You can see the Changing of the Guard at 11 am.

London Eye

The London Eye is a large Ferris wheel. It is one of the largest observation wheels in the world. It was opened in 2000. It is the most popular paid tourist attraction in the United Kingdom.

Palace of Westminster

It is commonly known as the Houses of Parliament. It serves as the meeting place of the House of Commons and the House of Lords. The Palace is located on the north bank of the river Thames. Big Ben is the nickname for the Great Bell, which is situated in Elizabeth Tower.

Trafalgar Square

It celebrates the Battle of Trafalgar, a British naval victory in the Napoleonic Wars in 1805. There is Nelson's Column, a statue of Nelson with four lions around it. The National Art Gallery is one of the most important buildings.

Tower of London

It was built by William the Conqueror. It used to be a prison and a place of execution. Today, the Crown Jewels are kept there. At least six ravens are kept at the Tower at all times. People believe that if they are absent, the kingdom will fall.

Tower Bridge

Tower Bridge is a suspension bridge. It crosses the River Thames near the Tower of London.

Westminster Abbey

Westminster Abbey is a large, mainly Gothic Anglican church. It is the traditional place of coronation and burial site for British monarchs. Since the coronation of William the Conqueror in

1066, all coronations have been in Westminster Abbey. It is the burial site of more than 3,300 people.

St Paul's Cathedral

It is an Anglican church and the seat of the Bishop of London. It was designed in the English Baroque style by Sir Christopher Wren. The old Cathedral had been completely destroyed by the Great Fire of London in 1666.

Royal Observatory, Greenwich

It is situated on a hill in Greenwich Park. It is best known for the fact that the prime meridian passes through it. It gave its name to Greenwich Mean Time.

The Shard

This skyscraper is the tallest building in the United Kingdom. Its construction was completed in 2012. It is 309.7 metres tall and has 72 habitable floors.

Doplňující otázky

1. Which famous museums and galleries are there in London?

The British Museum is the largest museum in the world. You can see for example the Rosetta Stone. The National Gallery is located in Trafalgar Square. The Tate Gallery is the United Kingdom's national museum of British and Modern Art. Madame Tussaud's is an exhibition of life-size wax models.

2. Where can you go shopping in London?

The most popular places are Oxford Street, Regent Street, Harrods and Portobello Road Market.

3. Which well-known parks are there in London?

St James's Park, Hyde Park, Kensington Gardens and Regent's Park.

4. What do you know about the Great Fire of London?

It happened in Central London in 1666. It started at a baker's house on Pudding Lane and lasted for three days. It destroyed the homes of 70,000 of the 80,000 people who lived in the city.

5. Which means of transport are typical of London?

The Tube, red double-decker buses and black cabs.

6. What do you know about the London Underground?

It is the oldest and third longest underground system in the world. It started running in 1863. The Tube is a slang name for the London Underground. It has 11 lines and 274 stations.

7. What is Heathrow?

It is a major international airport in London. It is one of the busiest airports in the world.

8. What do you know about sport in London?

The city has hosted the Summer Olympics three times. The most popular sport is football. London has six clubs in the English Premier League: Arsenal, Chelsea, Crystal Palace, Fulham, Tottenham Hotspur and West Ham United. Wimbledon is the oldest tennis tournament in the world.

9. Where does the British Prime Minister live?

The British Prime Minister lives at 10 Downing Street.

10. What is Gunpowder Plot?

It was a failed assassination attempt against King James I. It was organized by Robert Catesby in an effort to end the persecution of Roman Catholics by the English government. He and other conspirators planted gunpowder in the cellar of the Parliament building. Lord Monteagle, the brother-in-law of one of the conspirators, received an anonymous letter warning him not to attend Parliament. He alerted the Government. Around midnight on 4th November, 1605, one of the conspirators, Guy Fawkes, was discovered in the cellar with 36 barrels of gunpowder. He was taken into custody and tortured. During the next few weeks, all the plotters were killed or captured and sentenced to be hanged. In 1606 5th November was established as a day of public thanksgiving. It is called Guy Fawkes Night or Bonfire Night. People light bonfires, set off fireworks and burn effigies of Fawkes.

Důležitá slovíčka

defensive	(difensiv)	obránný
decline	(diklajn)	úpadek
capture	(kepčr)	chytit
assassination	(esesinejšn)	atentát
gunpowder	(ganpauđr)	střelný prach
duke	(ďůk)	vévoda
Ferris wheel	(feris wíl)	ruské kolo
column	(kol'm)	sloup
conqueror	(konkr'r)	dobyvatel
execution	(eksikjůšn)	poprava
raven	(rejev'n)	krkavec
suspension bridge	(saspenšn bridž)	visutý most
bishop	(bišop)	biskup
meridian	(meridij'n)	poledník
shard	(šárd)	střep
cab	(keb)	taxi
cellar	(selr)	sklep
custody	(kast'dy)	vazba
torture	(torčr)	mučit
bonfire	(bonfájr)	ohněň, táborák
effigy	(efidži)	podobizna