

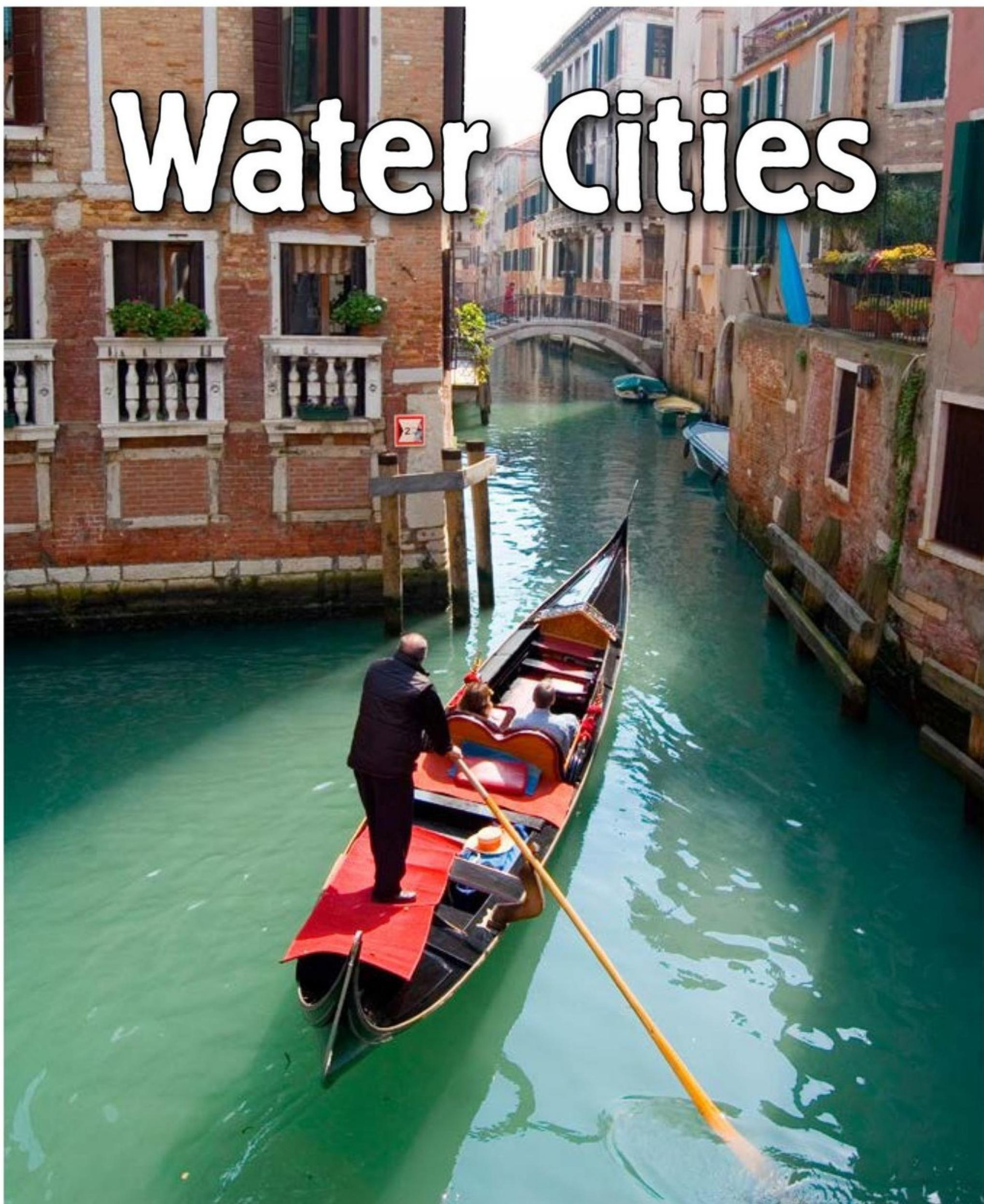
LEVELED BOOK • R

Water Cities

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level
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Written by Kira Freed

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Focus Question

What are some features of water cities?

Words to Know

drained
isthmus
pursue
reclaimed
reeds

residents
sea level
stilt
transportation

Front cover: Boats are the main transportation on the Grand Canal waterway in Venice.

Title page: A gondola in Venice floats down a small residential canal.

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Correlation

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Water Cities Around the World



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|---------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Venice, Italy | 5. Palm Jumeirah, Dubai | 9. Mexcaltitán, Mexico |
| 2. Amsterdam, Netherlands | 6. Ganvié, Benin | 10. Auckland, New Zealand |
| 3. Reine, Norway | 7. Fadiouth, Senegal | 11. Sausalito, California |
| 4. Singapore | 8. Uros Floating Village, Peru | 12. Manarola, Italy |

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The Grand Canal is the main waterway of Venice.

Living Near Water

Each year, millions of people from around the world travel to Venice, Italy. This famous city of canals and bridges was built on more than a hundred islands. Venice is the world's best-known water city, but it is certainly not the only one.

Water cities are places that are built on or near a body of water. Some water cities are tiny, while others are huge. They are found near—or in—water on every continent except Antarctica. They exist for many different reasons, and each one has an interesting story to tell.

Europe

Amsterdam, Netherlands

Amsterdam is another European city that is famous for its canals. It is the capital and largest city in the Netherlands. About one-third of the Netherlands is ***below sea level***, and one-sixth is built on **reclaimed** land—land that was once underwater. The city of Amsterdam is about 2 meters (6.6 ft.) below sea level. The water was pumped out so people could build there. Pumping stations keep the land dry.

Amsterdam was surrounded by a moat in the 1500s. More people moved there in the 1600s as the city grew. Workers **drained** swamps and built three new canals around the downtown area.



Amsterdam has more than 1,200 bridges over its canals.

Since that time, 161 other canals have been built. Amsterdam's canals total over 100 kilometers (62 mi.) in length. They divide the city into almost 100 small islands joined by over 1,200 bridges. The canals were the city's main **transportation** routes for centuries. Now they are mainly used by smaller boats. However, they are still an important part of Amsterdam's character.



Reine, Norway

A tiny fishing village more than 100 kilometers (62 mi.) above the Arctic Circle has earned the nickname "The Most Beautiful Place in the World." Reine, Norway, is located along the coast of one of the Lofoten Islands. The village offers fishing, kayaking, skiing, whale watching, hiking, and beautiful beaches. It's also a perfect place for amazing views of the northern lights.



Singapore is one of the world's busiest port cities.

Singapore

Asia



Singapore is the world's only island city-state—an island that is both a city and an independent country. It is made up of about sixty-three islands. Singapore depends on goods from other places since it has few natural resources of its own.

Singapore is much larger than it was before the 1960s. Like Amsterdam, it has grown by reclaiming land that was once underwater. However, instead of pumping out the water, Singapore has added land by dumping rocks and sand into the sea. A project begun in 2016 will use Amsterdam's methods to increase its land area.

Dubai, United Arab Emirates

Dubai is a modern city in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). One of its largest building projects is Palm Islands—three human-made islands shaped like palm trees. The islands are being built along the coast by piling up huge amounts of sand and rock. They are adding hundreds of miles of coastline to the city as well as thousands of homes. Construction began in 2001. The first island was finished in late 2016.



Palm Jumeirah is one of the largest human-made islands in the world. A curved seawall protects the island from strong waves and storms.



The village of Ganvié is sometimes called the Venice of Africa.



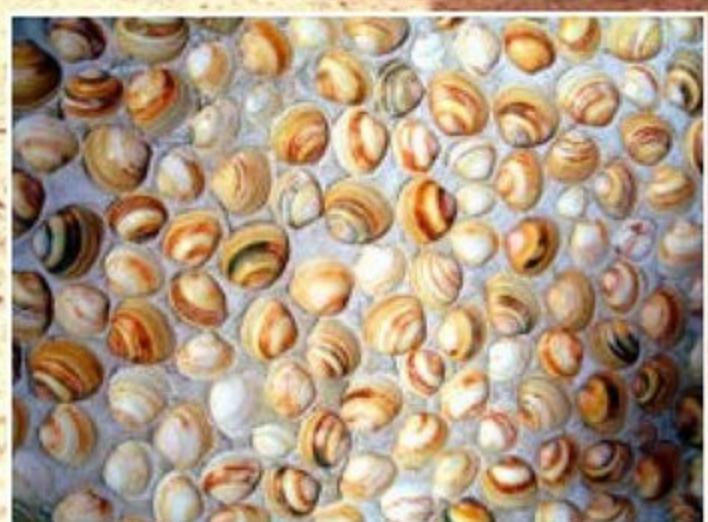
Africa

Ganvié, Benin

Ganvié (GAWN-vye) is the largest **stilt** village in Africa. The village is located in the middle of Lake Nokoué (NOHK-we) in the country of Benin. Ganvié has about twenty thousand people and three thousand buildings. Only the school and a cemetery are located on land.

This water village began at least three hundred years ago. During that time, a powerful tribe called the Fon captured and sold members of other tribes into slavery. The Fons' religion did not let them **pursue** people who lived on water. Another tribe, the Tofinu, escaped to Lake Nokoué to avoid capture. They built the stilt village and set up a way of life that continues to this day. The name of their village means "we survived."

Most villagers make their living by fishing. They keep and breed fish using underwater fences. They also keep chickens and goats on patches of grass that grow in the water. People travel in long, narrow canoes.



Fadiouth (Shell Island), Senegal

The people of Fadiouth (fad-YOOT), Senegal, live on an island made of clamshells. For over three hundred years, they have been eating clams and recycling the shells. The shells are held in place by the roots of trees and reeds. The island's buildings and streets are also made of shells.



The Uru people make reed canoes for transportation.



South America

Uros Floating Village, Peru

Like the Tofinu, the people of Uros Floating Village moved to water for safety. The Uru people escaped to Lake Titicaca over five hundred years ago when other people took over their land. About two thousand Uru now live on about seventy floating islands made of **reeds**. The islands, which are 1.2 to 2.4 meters (4–8 ft.) thick, break down from the bottom. New reeds must be added on top all the time. The Uru people also use the reeds to make canoes, homes, and furniture.



Mexcaltitán sits on a long sandbar off the coast of Mexico.

North America

Mexcaltitán, Mexico

The Aztec people ruled large parts of Mesoamerica between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries. A story says that they came from an island near the Pacific coast of Mexico. The story also says that their gods told them to find a new place to live. After looking for two hundred years, they founded a city that is now known as Mexico City.

Some historians think that Mexcaltitán (mes-kahl-tee-TAHN) is where the Aztec people came from. This small human-made island is in the same place as the Aztec island shown on a 1579 map. Also, the early people used small canoes almost exactly like the ones used there today.

Mexcaltitán is home to about eight hundred people. This water town is sometimes called the Mexican Venice. In summer, during the rainy season, boats are the only way to travel through the streets. Children play “water soccer” on the island’s underwater soccer field.



Locals boat and swim in the streets during the flood season in Mexcaltitán.



Auckland is New Zealand's largest city.

Oceania

Auckland, New Zealand



This city of 1.5 million people is on the North Island of New Zealand in the South Pacific Ocean. It is located between two large harbors on an **isthmus** less than 2 kilometers (1.24 mi.) wide at its narrowest point.

Auckland's nickname is the "City of Sails." About one-sixth of its **residents** own a boat. The city has thousands of beaches. Water-related activities include swimming, surfing, fishing, diving, kayaking, and beach horseback riding.



California



Italy



Aircraft carrier

People and Water

Many kinds of water cities exist besides the ones you've just read about. For instance, Italy has a tiny fishing town with brightly colored homes built on steep cliffs. Northern California has a floating community made up of houseboats. People in the military may spend months living on aircraft carriers.

Water means different things to different people. For residents of water cities, it may mean fun, work, safety, a connection with nature, or a way of life. The world's water cities are proof that people can make a home for themselves just about anywhere.

Glossary

drained (<i>v.</i>)	caused liquid or energy to flow or run out of something (p. 5)
isthmus (<i>n.</i>)	a narrow strip of land connecting two larger landmasses (p. 14)
pursue (<i>v.</i>)	to follow in order to catch or attack; to follow a course of action to achieve a goal (p. 9)
reclaimed (<i>adj.</i>)	regained; restored to a usable condition (p. 5)
reeds (<i>n.</i>)	tall plants in the grass family that have slender leaves and grow in water or wetlands (p. 11)
residents (<i>n.</i>)	people or other animals that live in a place (p. 14)
sea level (<i>n.</i>)	the height of the ocean's surface, used as a standard in measuring the height and depth of other things (p. 5)
stilt (<i>n.</i>)	a post that supports a structure above the ground or water level; one of two long poles that allow a person to walk high above the ground (p. 9)
transportation (<i>n.</i>)	the act of moving things or people from one place to another (p. 6)

Water Cities

A Reading A-Z Level R Leveled Book

Word Count: 995

Connections

Writing

Using a Venn diagram, compare two water cities from the book. Write a paragraph that summarizes the information.

Social Studies

Research a water city not described in the book. Create a travel brochure persuading tourists to visit the city. Include a map, photographs, and interesting information about the city.

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