

Schloss Neuschwanstein

A king and his castle

Pre-reading

What types of historical buildings interest you? Which of the following historical buildings and monuments have you visited?

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Angkor Wat | <input type="checkbox"/> The Parthenon |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Buckingham Palace | <input type="checkbox"/> The Pyramids of Giza |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The Eiffel Tower | <input type="checkbox"/> The Roman Coliseum |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The Great Wall of China | <input type="checkbox"/> The Statue of Liberty |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Macchu Picchu | <input type="checkbox"/> The Taj Mahal |

Which place(s) would you like to visit? _____

Reading text

- 1 Schloss¹ Neuschwanstein is one of Europe's most popular castles. Located on a hill overlooking the village of Hohenschwangau, near the town of Füssen in southern Germany, this nineteenth-century castle attracts 1.3 million international tourists every year. Recognized as the model for Sleeping Beauty's Castle at Disneyland in Anaheim, California, Schloss Neuschwanstein must be seen to be believed, but to fully appreciate its "fairy tale" **mystique**, one must learn about the king who planned and built it.
- 2 Ludwig Otto Friedrich Wilhelm was born to Maximilian II of Bavaria and Princess Marie of Prussia on August 25, 1845, in Schloss Nymphenburg in Munich, the capital of Bavaria. His brother, Otto, was born three years later. At the age of 18, Ludwig took the throne after his father died of a sudden illness, and he **reigned** as King Ludwig II of Bavaria from 1864 to 1886. On January 22, 1867, he became engaged to Duchess Sophie Charlotte in

Bavaria, but after 10 months he broke off the engagement. Ludwig never married or produced an **heir**, which in those days was unthinkable for a monarch. With the exception of a platonic friendship with Empress Elizabeth of Austria, Ludwig's closest friendships were with men.

- 3 As a child, Ludwig told his governess that he wanted to remain an eternal **enigma** to himself and others, and in this regard he succeeded. Ludwig spent most of his childhood in the gothic castle of Hohenschwangau, surrounded by frescoes of German sagas. He was raised with a strict sense of duty and a keen awareness of his royal status. His true interests, however, lay in poetry and theater, and he tended to spend more time alone **indulging** his fantasies than training to become a future king. Ludwig grew into a tall, slim, and handsome Prince Charming, with a shock of dark wavy hair, full pouting lips, and wide dreamy eyes that often gaze upward in portraits as if at a distant dream world. In his later years, Ludwig filled out and wore a goatee, and his youthful wistfulness matured into a stern **aloofness**.
- 4 Ludwig's lack of political experience and his shy nature made him ill-suited to the throne of Bavaria. In 1866, two years after his **coronation**, Ludwig experienced a humiliating defeat when he was forced into an alliance with Prussia against Austria. Feeling himself a mere political underling to his uncle, the King of Prussia, Ludwig began to pay more attention to his personal interests than to his duties. He was an enthusiastic fan of the composer Richard Wagner; three months after becoming king, Ludwig invited Wagner to court. Despite the ups and downs of their lifelong relationship, Ludwig sponsored Wagner lavishly and saved him from financial ruin. He also established Munich as the music capital of Europe.
- 5 Ludwig believed in a **holy** kingdom created through the grace of God, and he identified with larger-than-life heroes of Middle Age sagas and legends. To turn his fantasies into reality, Ludwig built beautiful castles, which strangers were not allowed to enter. In 1874, construction began on the relatively small, neo-French rococo Schloss Linderhof. The baroque royal palace of Herrenchiemsee, begun in 1878 and modeled on the Château de Versailles, was built on a scenic island in Lake Chiemsee.
- 6 The most private and personal of his projects was his third, Schloss Neuschwanstein. **Commissioned** in 1867, Schloss Neuschwanstein was built between 1869 and 1886 as Ludwig's personal retreat in the mountains. Dedicated to the genius of Richard Wagner, the castle was designed in the neoromantic style. The interior was ornately decorated with themes from *Parsifal* and *Lohengrin*, two of Richard Wagner's operas. Ludwig spared no

expense or luxury; hundreds of craftsmen employed the most up-to-date methods of construction and used the finest materials. The castle's many **amenities** included a central heating system, running cold and hot water, flush toilets, an electric intercom system, a telephone, and a dumbwaiter to transport food from the kitchen to the dining room. In 1884, Ludwig moved into his private upper-story suite, but the rest of the castle remained an ongoing construction site. Of the 200 planned rooms, only 15 were completed, and to this day Schloss Neuschwanstein and Ludwig's other castles remain unfinished symphonies.

- 7 When Ludwig's personal finances ran dry, he borrowed heavily from foreign banks. Despite his mounting debt and contrary to the advice of his financial ministers, Ludwig took on more **opulent** projects, such as a Byzantine palace in the Graswangtal and a Chinese summer palace in Tyrol. He withdrew from public life, shirked his duties, and engaged in increasingly **eccentric** behavior that earned him the nickname "Mad King Ludwig." In 1875, he began sleeping during the day and being active at night. He traveled in elaborate coaches and sleighs, and he dressed in historical costumes.
- 8 On June 10, 1886, a government commission declared Ludwig insane, and he was **deposed**. On June 12, he was taken into custody and transported to Castle Berg on Lake Starnberg. The next day, Ludwig and Dr. Bernhard von Gudden, the physician who certified Ludwig as mentally ill without a psychiatric examination, went for a walk. Their bodies were later found near the lake shore, with their heads and shoulders above the shallow water. Despite the fact that Ludwig was known to be a strong swimmer and no water was found in his lungs, his death was recorded as suicide by drowning. No investigation was ever made into the suspicious circumstances surrounding the two men's deaths. Ludwig II was **interred** on June 19 in the crypt at St. Michael's Church in Munich.
- 9 Ludwig II of Bavaria remains to this day an enigma and a source of romance and much speculation. The subject of biographies and movies, he has become an idealized and tragic figure, much like a character in a gothic romance novel. One can come to various conclusions about the man, but there is no doubt about his **legacy**. Seven weeks after Ludwig's death, Schloss Neuschwanstein was opened to the public and since then, it has become a national treasure. Every day of summer, an estimated 6,000 visitors pay a 12-euro admission to tour Ludwig's private quarters. His dream castle has more than repaid any debt that he owed to the state, and Schloss Neuschwanstein has earned him international respect and

admiration.

Vocabulary

EXERCISE 2.1

Organizing vocabulary *List the words and phrases from the reading text that relate to the following categories. An example has been provided for each category.*

1. Royalty (9) take the throne,

2. Mystery (4) mystique,

3. Crazy (4) eccentric,

4. Story (4) saga,

5. The arts (6) frescoes,

6. Build (6) construction,

7. Architectural style (5) gothic,

8. Fancy (5) lavish,

EXERCISE 2.2

Understanding vocabulary *Complete the following chart with the correct forms of the words from the reading text.*

Noun	Adjective	Verb
1. _____	_____	indulge
2. _____	_____	reign
3. aloofness	_____	X
4. _____	X	commission
5. coronation	X	_____
6. _____	X	depose
7. _____	eccentric	X
8. enigma	_____	X
9. heir	X	_____
10. _____	holy	X
11. _____	X	inter
12. _____	opulent	X
13. amenity	X	X
14. legacy	X	X
15. mystique	_____	X

EXERCISE 2.3

Using vocabulary For each of the following sentences, choose the appropriate word from the chart in Exercise 2-2 as a replacement for the underlined word or phrase. Be sure to use the correct form of each verb and to pluralize nouns, if necessary.

1. Many sacred places are located in the city of Jerusalem.

2. There is a definite air of mystery surrounding the Egyptian pyramids and the tombs of the pharaohs.

3. The city has contracted with a well-known sculptor to create a statue in honor of the Queen.

4. The new hotel and conference center offers a wide range of useful features for business travelers.

5. Queen Victoria of England ruled as monarch for 63 years and seven months.

6. In the past, members of aristocratic families were buried in a large family tomb.

7. The old lady who lives with 20 cats in the pink and green house is very strange and unconventional.

8. On special occasions such as Christmas and Thanksgiving, people like to gratify their desires and eat lots of fattening goodies and treats.

9. In Europe, tourists can visit many luxurious castles and theaters.

10. During the October Revolution in Russia, Czar Nicholas was removed from power and executed.

11. In their will, parents name their children as persons entitled to property to their estate.

12. None of the other students liked the new girl at first, because of her distant and unsympathetic behavior, but as it turned out, she was only shy.

13. The crowning ceremony of kings and queens in Great Britain has always taken place in Westminster Abbey.

14. There are many puzzles and paradoxes associated with the story of the lost city of Atlantis.

15. When Mother Teresa died, she left a gift handed down to future generations of human kindness and concern for the poor and sick.

Reading comprehension

EXERCISE 2·4

Reading for main ideas Match each of the following statements with the corresponding paragraph of the reading text.

_____ Paragraph 1	a. Despite his strict upbringing, Ludwig grows into a dreamy-eyed Prince Charming.
_____ Paragraph 2	b. Ludwig's debts mount and his lifestyle becomes increasingly eccentric.
_____ Paragraph 3	c. Schloss Neuschwanstein becomes Ludwig's lasting legacy.
_____ Paragraph 4	d. Ludwig builds Schloss Neuschwanstein as his personal retreat and homage to Richard Wagner.
_____ Paragraph 5	e. Ludwig shows more interest in the arts than in his royal duties.
_____ Paragraph 6	f. A fairy tale castle is created by a fairy tale king.
_____ Paragraph 7	g. Ludwig is removed from the throne and dies tragically.
_____ Paragraph 8	h. Ludwig builds his personal kingdom of castles.
_____ Paragraph 9	i. Ludwig Otto Friedrich Wilhelm becomes Ludwig II of Bavaria.

EXERCISE 2·5

Reading for details *Answer each of the following questions with information from the reading text. Try not to copy directly from the text.*

1. What were Ludwig's main interests?

2. Why did Ludwig build such costly and opulent castles?

3. Why did he build *Neuschwanstein*?

4. What were some of the castle's amenities?

5. How did Ludwig finance the construction of his castles?

6. Why was Ludwig given the nickname of “Mad King Ludwig”?

7. What behavior of his earned him this nickname?

8. How did Ludwig die?

EXERCISE 2•6

Reading for facts and figures *Choose the boldface word or phrase that correctly completes each of the following statements.*

1. Every year, **6,000** | **1.3 million** tourists visit Schloss Neuschwanstein.
2. Schloss Neuschwanstein was used as a model for **Cinderella’s** | **Sleeping Beauty’s** castle at Disneyland.
3. Schloss Neuschwanstein was dedicated to the genius of German composer **Richard Wagner** | **Ludwig van Beethoven**.
4. Only **15** | **200** rooms have been completed in Schloss Neuschwanstein.
5. Schloss Neuschwanstein is located in **southern** | **northern** Germany.
6. Admission to Schloss Neuschwanstein costs **12 euros** | **12 dollars**.
7. Schloss Neuschwanstein was built in the **gothic** | **neoromantic** style.
8. Ludwig became king when he was **18** | **28**.
9. Ludwig was born in **Hohenschwangau** | **Munich**.
10. The baroque **royal palace of Herrenchiemsee** | **Schloss Linderhof** was modeled after the Château de Versailles.

EXERCISE **2·7**

Reading for meaning *Based on information from the reading text, draw your own conclusions about Ludwig II. First, choose the boldface word or phrase that correctly completes each of the following statements. Then, indicate which paragraph in the reading text contains the relevant information and provides evidence for your conclusion.*

1. Ludwig **had** | **didn't** have many female admirers as a young man.

Paragraph _____

2. Ludwig **wanted** | **didn't want** to become king.

Paragraph _____

3. Ludwig **was** | **wasn't** murdered.

Paragraph _____

4. Ludwig **was** | **wasn't** crazy.

Paragraph _____

5. Ludwig **entertained** | **didn't entertain** large groups of people in his castles.

Paragraph _____

6. Ludwig **was** | **wasn't** good at managing money.

Paragraph _____

7. Ludwig **was** | **wasn't** popular with the Bavarian government.

Paragraph _____

8. Ludwig **loved** | **hated** public life.

Paragraph _____

9. Ludwig **was** | **wasn't** a great king and military leader.

Paragraph _____

10. Ludwig **is** | **isn't** a popular historical figure today.

Paragraph _____

Reading skills

EXERCISE 2·8

Summary *Construct a timeline of Ludwig II's life and his castles.*

Year	Event/milestone
1845	_____
1864	_____
1866	_____
1867	_____

1869	_____

1874	_____
1875	_____
1878	_____
1884	_____
1886	_____

Web search and writing

The activities on the next two pages prompt you to share information with a study partner and to search the Web for more information about famous castles around the world.

Famous castles around the world

ACTIVITY 2·1

Exchange experiences *Ask your partner the following questions, and add a question of your own.*

1. Which of the following castles and palaces are you familiar with?

Indicate where each is located.

- ☐ Château de Versailles _____
- ☐ Schloss Schönbrunn _____
- ☐ Windsor Castle _____
- ☐ Castello di Strassoldo di Sopra _____
- ☐ Forbidden City _____
- ☐ Himeji Castle _____
- ☐ Rhodes Castle _____
- ☐ Krak des Chevalier _____
- ☐ Bran Castle _____
- ☐ Gyeongbok Palace _____

2. What do you think it would be like to live in a castle? What would be some of the advantages and disadvantages?

3. Your question _____

Discussion *Share your answers with another partner or with the whole group.*

ACTIVITY 2·2

Search the Web *Find information on famous castles around the world,*

and record the following details.

Name of castle and location _____

URL _____ www. _____

Features and amenities _____

Name of castle and location _____

URL _____ www. _____

Features and amenities _____

Name of castle and location _____

URL _____ www. _____

Features and amenities _____

ACTIVITY 2.3

Writing *Describe the kind of castle you would build if you were King Ludwig II. Where would it be located, and what amenities would it have?*

¹ *Schloss* is the German word for “castle” or “palace.”