

Three Capital Cities

Adrian Tennant

Activity 1

In which European capital cities would you see these landmarks?



1. Little Mermaid



2. Charles Bridge



3. Torre de Belém

Activity 2

Read the texts and complete each sentence with the name of the correct city.

1. _____ faces the Atlantic Ocean.
2. _____ has a bridge with 31 statues.
3. _____ has a bronze statue that comes from a fairytale.
4. _____ has a clock that shows the time in other countries.
5. _____ has a garden full of plants from around the world.
6. _____ has a number of buildings that are protected by UNESCO.
7. _____ has some amazing gothic buildings.
8. _____ is built on seven hills.
9. _____ is built on two sides of the river Vltava.
10. _____ is famous for its fountains.
11. _____ is situated on an island.
12. _____ was rebuilt after an earthquake.
13. _____ was ruled by Charles IV.
14. _____ was started in the 13th century.
15. _____ was twice destroyed by fire.

Texts

Copenhagen

Copenhagen has been the capital of Denmark for over 600 years. It is situated on the island of Sjælland and faces East towards Sweden. Copenhagen actually means 'Merchants Harbour' but it is more commonly known as the city of green spires because of the green roofs that cover many of its churches and castles. Many of the buildings are around 200 years old and are built of brick and stone. This is because much of the medieval city burnt down in two great fires in 1728 and 1795.

At the heart of the city is Rådhuspladsen, but this was not always the centre of the city. In fact, just over 100 years ago the square was actually outside the gates of the old town. Leading from one of these gates is Strøget, the longest pedestrian street in Europe.

On the square is the Rådhuset, or Town Hall. Just inside the entrance is Jen Olsen's world clock which shows the time around the world, the position of the planets and the Gregorian calendar. Outside the building is a statue of Hans Christian Anderson, the famous fairytale author and, a little further out in the square, the dragon fountain.

Not far from the square is the famous Tivoli Gardens. The park, opened in 1843, is a mixture of gardens, a lake, cafes, a concert hall, open-air dancing space and an amusement park and has more than five million visitors every year.

However, probably the most famous of all the sights in Copenhagen is The Little Mermaid. Walk down cobbled streets to the waterfront to get a look at this bronze statue which was inspired by one of Hans Christian Anderson's stories.

Lisbon

Facing the Atlantic Ocean, Lisbon is the most western of all European capital cities. Like Rome it is built on seven hills and it was the centre of sea exploration in the 17th century. At the heart of the city is Baixa, which was laid out after the great earthquake of 1755. Overlooking Baixa is Castelo São Jorge which was built by the Moors. Now only ten towers, the ruins of the palace and the walls are left, but it is still an imposing place and has some beautiful gardens and fountains. The *miradouro*, or lookout spot, has amazing views of much of the city.

Walk down from the Castelo through the narrow streets of Alfama towards the riverside and you will come to the Sé, or Cathedral. Although a lot of the cathedral has been restored over the years, the two towers, that are probably the most striking feature, are the originals. Inside the cathedral is the tomb of St Vincent, the patron saint of Lisbon.

The Portuguese love gardens and Lisbon is full of green spaces. Probably the best of these, and within walking distance of the city centre, is the Jardim Botânico full of palm trees, banana trees and many tropical plants.

No visit to Lisbon is complete without heading west to Belém. It is here that you can find the Torre de Belém and the Mosteiro dos Jerónimos built in honour of Vasco da Gama's successful voyage to India in 1498. In 1983 these two buildings were declared World Heritage Sites by UNESCO.

Prague

With a population of less than 1.5 million Prague is one of the smallest capitals in Europe, certainly if compared to London, Madrid or Paris. The oldest part of the town, Staré Město, dates back to the 13th century. It is in this part of the city that you can find Staroměstské náměstí, or Old Town Square, with its amazing astronomical clock, the Hus monument and the gothic Týn church.

On the opposite bank of the river Vltava is Pražský hrad, Prague Castle, and the beautiful Malá Strana, or Little Quarter, with its winding cobbled streets. The right bank of the river with Staré Město and the left bank with the castle are connected by probably Prague's most famous monument, Karluv Most – Charles Bridge.

For many years Charles Bridge was the only link between the two parts of the city. The bridge is named after Charles IV as it was during his reign that the bridge was started. However, it was originally called the Stone Bridge and was only given its modern name in 1870. The most striking feature of the bridge is the 31 statues that decorate its entire length. The first of these statues wasn't added to the bridge until 1683, more than 300 years after it was started. This statue is of St John of Nepomuk and can be found about half way along on the right side as you walk across the bridge from Staré Město.

Activity 3

Read the texts and find the words that have the following meanings.

1. (n) the central part of something (Copenhagen & Lisbon)
2. (adj) covered in small stones to make the surface of the road (Copenhagen & Prague)
3. (n) an image of an animal or human usually made from stone, wood or metal (Copenhagen & Prague)
4. (v) to give someone the idea for a particular piece of work (Copenhagen)
5. (n) the parts of a building that remain after it has been damaged (Lisbon)
6. (adj) large and impressive (Lisbon)
7. (v) to clean and repair something old, dirty or damaged so that it looks the same as the original (Lisbon)
8. (adj) attracting your interest or attention because of something unusual about it (Lisbon & Prague)
9. (adj) not straight / with lots of bends and curves (Prague)
10. (v) to make something look attractive by putting nice things on it (Prague)

Three Capital Cities
Adrian Tennant**Level**

Intermediate/Upper Intermediate

Topic

Three capital cities

Subject(s)

Geography & History

Time (approx)

Activity 1: 5 – 10 minutes

Activity 2: 15 – 30 minutes

Activity 3: 10 – 20 minutes

Activity 4: 30+ minutes

Preparation

All activities: one photocopy for each student.

Activity 1

- 1 Put the students in small groups.
- 2 Ask them to look at the photos and discuss where each photo is from i.e. which European capital city.
- 3 Monitor and, if they need a clue, write up the three capitals – *Copenhagen, Lisbon* and *Prague* on the board. You could also write up one or two others as distracters.
- 4 Check the answers as a class.

AnswersPhoto 1: *Little Mermaid* – *Copenhagen*Photo 2: *Charles Bridge* – *Prague*Photo 3: *Torre de Belém* – *Lisbon***Activity 2**

- 1 Hand out the worksheet with the sentences and the three texts.
- 2 Ask the students to read through the sentences first – they could discuss their ideas with a partner.
- 3 Then, ask them to read through the texts quickly, trying to find the information they need. Put the students in pairs and get them to check their answers together.
- 4 Monitor and help where necessary.
- 5 Check the answers as a class.

Alternative procedure

- 1 As there are three texts and each one is quite long, you could do this activity as a jigsaw reading activity.
- 2 Divide the class into three groups and give each group the sentences plus one of the city texts.
- 3 Ask the students to read through their text and identify the sentences which refer to their city (text). Ask them to check and discuss their answers together.
- 4 Then make new groups of three students – one for each of the cities.
- 5 Get the students to share their answers before checking as a class.

Answers

- | | |
|---------------------|----------------------|
| 1 <i>Lisbon</i> | 9 <i>Prague</i> |
| 2 <i>Prague</i> | 10 <i>Copenhagen</i> |
| 3 <i>Copenhagen</i> | 11 <i>Copenhagen</i> |
| 4 <i>Copenhagen</i> | 12 <i>Lisbon</i> |
| 5 <i>Lisbon</i> | 13 <i>Prague</i> |
| 6 <i>Lisbon</i> | 14 <i>Prague</i> |
| 7 <i>Prague</i> | 15 <i>Copenhagen</i> |
| 8 <i>Lisbon</i> | |

Activity 3

- 1 Hand out the worksheet and explain that you want the students to find words in the texts that match the definitions.
- 2 If you like, go through the first definition as an example. Read it out and ask the students where they'll find the word (in the texts about Copenhagen and Lisbon).
- 3 Give the students a couple of minutes to read through one, or both, of the texts and then see if anyone can give you the correct word: *heart*.
- 4 Put the students in pairs and get them to work together reading the definitions and then finding the corresponding word in the texts together.
- 5 Monitor and help where necessary.
- 6 Get the pairs to check their answers together.
- 7 Finally, check the answers with the class.

Answers

- | | |
|---------------------|---------------------|
| 1 <i>heart</i> | 6 <i>imposing</i> |
| 2 <i>cobbled</i> | 7 <i>restore(d)</i> |
| 3 <i>statue</i> | 8 <i>striking</i> |
| 4 <i>inspire(d)</i> | 9 <i>winding</i> |
| 5 <i>ruins</i> | 10 <i>decorate</i> |

Activity 4

Note: This is an optional activity, or can be set as homework.

Ask the students to use the Internet, a reference book/guide book, or information collected from a tourist information office and to collect information about the capital city of their country.

Tell them they should try and write a short text – two or three paragraphs – about the city. These can either be posted around the classroom walls, or, if you're feeling really adventurous, up on the Internet.

Useful websites

Two useful websites to find out more about Copenhagen.

- <http://www.copenhagen.com/>
- <http://www.timeout.com/travel/copenhagen/intro>

Two useful websites to find out more about Lisbon.

- <http://www.timeout.com/travel/lisbon/intro>
- <http://www.visitlisboa.com/home.asp?lng=uk>

Two useful websites to find out more about Prague.

- <http://prague.cz/>
- <http://www.timeout.com/travel/prague/>