

## LONDON – PORTRAIT OF A CITY

The largest city in Europe, **ellipse** London is home to an eighth of the entire population of the UK (6, **decimal point** 8 million people). It is the seat of its government and all major national institutions as well as an economic, **enumeration** transport and communications heart of the country. It is a world centre of politics, **enumeration** trade and finance, **enumeration** art and science, **enumeration** publishing and entertainment.

Present-day London was the site of a Celtic settlement at what was then a strategic place at the mouth of the Thames (through centuries, **prepositional phrase** the river's deposits have moved the mouth several miles south). There is evidence that it was an important port even before BC. It continued to thrive for 350 years under Romans. In the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD the area now known as the City was surrounded by a town wall. After the invasion of Anglo-Saxon tribes, **prepositional phrase** London lost its importance, **separates two coordinate clauses** but regained it after the Christianization of Britain, **separates two coordinate clauses** and in 796 Anglo-Saxons established it as the seat of the king. In 1066, **prepositional phrase** William the Conqueror was the first to be crowned King of England in Westminster Abbey. London Bridge was built under his rule, **separates two coordinate clauses** and it remained the main link between both banks of the Thames for 600 years. In the 13<sup>th</sup> century, **prepositional phrase** the City of London was granted special rights by the King, **separates two coordinate clauses** among others the right to elect a Lord Mayor. In the 15<sup>th</sup> century, **prepositional phrase** the powerful trade organizations called the Guilds made the city the economic heart of the country. The 16<sup>th</sup> century saw battles for the throne between Protestant and Catholic pretenders, **separates two coordinate clauses** and many were executed at the Tower of London. The 16<sup>th</sup> century was the time of bloom for the theatre (Shakespeare's plays were performed), **separates two coordinate clauses** and the first water supply system was installed. In 1603 the Palace of Westminster, **subordinate clause** which had been the seat of government since the 11<sup>th</sup> century, almost blew up in the so called Gunpowder Plot, **ellipse** remembered nowadays on Guy Fawkes' Night. In 1665 the Great Plague killed 90, **number higher than 999** 000 people of London, **separates two coordinate clauses** and the next year, **interrupt1/2** in 1666, **interrupt2/2** the Great Fire destroyed four-fifths of the city. Sir Christopher Wren proposed plans for rebuilding within days of the fire and was rejected at first, **separates two coordinate clauses** but then rebuilt St. Paul's Cathedral and about 320 other churches. In 1801, **prepositional phrase** the first census showed London to have 860, **number higher than 999** 035 inhabitants. In 1851, **prepositional phrase** London hosted the Great Exhibition – the first international exhibition in the world. The first underground line was built in 1863. The period of industrialization resulted in great pollution – some decades ago people falling into the Thames had to have their stomachs cleaned, **separates two coordinate clauses** and the famous fogs from the times of Jack the Ripper were called 'peasoupers'. Fortunately, **disjunct** pollution has since been reduced and these two problems are no longer characteristic of London. During WW1 and WW2, **prepositional phrase** the city was a target of German air raids. In the 80s and 90s, **prepositional phrase** two massive development projects were started: a rebuilding of the old Docklands and the construction of the Millennium Dome.

Through centuries, **prepositional phrase** the city has not only grown tremendously but also become extremely diverse. Each of the boroughs or parts of the city has a special character.

The original walled city, »the Square Mile« is now a financial district, **enumeration** home to the Bank of England, Lloyd's of London. The Houses of Parliament are still used by the Government, **separates two coordinate clauses** but the Prime Minister Resides at the nearby 10 Downing Street, and most of the government business happens in Whitehall. The Royalty's main residence is the Buckingham Palace, **separates two coordinate clauses** but they have several splendid palaces on the outskirts such as Windsor Castle and Hampton Court. West End is known for theatres and expensive shops, **enumeration** Mayfair and Belgravia are home to the aristocracy, **enumeration** Chelsea to the young and artistic, **enumeration** Soho, **interrupt1/2** the Chinese quarter, **interrupt2/2** is known for its night-life, **enumeration** Kensington has world-famous museums, **enumeration** Bloomsbury teems with intellectual energy, **enumeration** Holborn has law courts, **enumeration** and East End poor people and the Jewish Whitechapel and so on... Huge suburban areas make up the so called »commuterland« of Greater London.

The city is extremely cosmopolitan. The British joke about it being the capital of the world, **separates two coordinate clauses** and they say that if you stand at Picadilly Circus long enough, every person in the world will eventually come by. It is true, **interrupt1/2** however, **interrupt2/2** that even its permanent residents speak 137 different languages, **separates two coordinate clauses** and year-round it is visited by millions of tourists from every corner of the globe. These come because of some of the richest museums and galleries and best theatres in the world, **enumeration** endless entertainment and shopping options, **enumeration** unique historical sights, **enumeration** beautiful parks and gardens, **enumeration** business and science centres and universities ...

The city also hosts some famous annual events: the Boat Race between Oxford and Cambridge university teams on the Thames, **enumeration** London Marathon, **enumeration** football and rugby finals, **enumeration** the posh Derby horse race at Epsom outside London, **enumeration** the Wimbledon Grand Slam, **enumeration** Chelsea Flower Show, **enumeration** the Royal Tournament army parade, **enumeration** the Proms (a music festival), festivals of film and theatre, **enumeration** Notting Hill Carnival, **enumeration** Gay Pride Parade and more.

Because of its importance throughout history, **subordinate clause** London has also been the setting of numerous works of literature and film productions. The novelist who immortalised London of the 19<sup>th</sup> century was definitely Charles Dickens. Some other famous works include Pygmalion, **enumeration** The Picture of Dorian Gray and Sherlock Holmes (you can even visit 'his' house in Baker Street).