

Introduction

Download the LearnEnglish Themes podcast. You'll find more information on this page:
<http://www.britishcouncil.org/learnenglish-podcasts-themes.htm>

This support pack contains the following materials:

- the article that you can listen to in the podcast
- a comprehension activity based on the article
- a vocabulary activity based on the article
- links to other activities on the LearnEnglish website on this theme (cultural heritage).

Read the article

World Heritage

by Linda Baxter

If you think about World Heritage Sites, you probably think of places associated with ancient art and culture, historical buildings and monuments. And of course, many of these are on the World Heritage List.

Remains of ancient cultures, like Cuzco in Peru, Angkor in Cambodia, or the famous rock city of Petra in Jordan. Or old city centres, such as Rome in Italy, or Sana'a in Yemen. Or places of artistic or cultural significance, like the Stonehenge stone circle in England, or the Tsodilo rock paintings in the Kalahari Desert in Botswana. But The World Heritage List contains a lot of sites that are not so obvious. Some of them are well known. For example, the Galapagos Islands, which inspired Darwin's theories of evolution, or the Victoria Falls waterfalls in Africa, and the Grand Canyon in the United States.

Let's look at a few of the more unusual sites on the World Heritage List and why it is important to preserve them.

Citadel of Haiti

These monuments were built at the end of the nineteenth century when Haiti became independent and the many thousands of black slaves in Haiti were free for the first time. These ex-slaves built the monuments, which The World Heritage List (WHL) describes as 'a universal symbol of liberty'.

Robben Island in South Africa

This island was used through the centuries as a prison, a hospital and a military base. But it's probably most famous as a maximum-security prison for political prisoners in the twentieth century. Nelson Mandela was one of its most famous residents. The WHL says it represents 'the triumph of democracy and freedom over oppression and racism'.

The Darjeeling Himalayan Railway in India

This railway was opened in 1881 and is still operating today. It crosses a difficult area of mountain landscape and it is a great example of railway engineering. The WHL says that it is 'the first, and still the most outstanding, example of a hill passenger railway.'

Borders of France and Spain

This is an area of great natural beauty and the mountains have many interesting geological formations. But it is also an area of small farms. People there still use a type of agriculture that used to be common in mountainous areas of Europe but has almost completely disappeared in modern times. The WHL has listed the site because it shows us about 'past European society through its landscape of villages, farms, fields, upland pastures and mountain roads.'

The city of Brasilia, Brazil

Brasilia is a capital city that was created from nothing in 1956. The WHL calls it 'a landmark in the history of town planning.' The different areas of the city and the buildings themselves were all designed at the same time so that they would harmonise with each other. Every part of the city shows the ideas of the planner and architect.

Dorset and East Devon Coast, United Kingdom

This part of the coast in the South West of England is famous for its fossils and is popular with scientists and amateur fossil hunters. The cliffs also show rock formations from millions of years ago. The WHL says that they 'have contributed to the study of earth sciences for over 300 years.'

Alto Douro, Portugal

This is an area in the North of Portugal where wine has been produced for thousands of years. Nowadays it is world famous for the 'port wine' that is produced there. The WHL says that this long tradition of winemaking 'has produced a cultural landscape of outstanding beauty that reflects its technological, social and economic evolution.'

After reading

Exercise 1

Choose the answer to each of the six questions below, depending on the information in the text.

1. Why is the Citadel of Haiti included on the list?

- a. It shows a traditional way of life.
- b. It represents freedom.
- c. The buildings are thousands of years old.

2. Why is the Darjeeling Railway listed?

- a. The landscape is very beautiful.
- b. It was difficult to build.
- c. It carries a lot of passengers.

3. What is the most important reason for listing the area on the borders of France and Spain?

- a. We can learn about the history of Europe.
- b. The geology is interesting.
- c. It's very beautiful.

Rio Platano Reserve, Honduras

The WHL says that this site is 'one of the few remains of a humid tropical forest in Central America.' It's a mountainous area on the Caribbean coast with many different species of plants and animals. The people who have always lived there still have the same traditional lifestyle.

Simien National Park, Ethiopia

Simien National Park was one of the first sites to be listed in 1978. It is one of the highest mountain areas in Africa, and the WHL calls it 'one of the most spectacular landscapes in the world'. It is also important for its wildlife. Rare animals like the Gelada baboon and the Simien fox live there. It is also the only place in the world where you can find the Walia ibex, a type of goat. The population of this animal is getting smaller and smaller. That's why the site is now on the List of World Heritage in Danger.

So, the World Heritage List isn't only about ancient monuments and buildings. It's also concerned with technology, natural beauty, wildlife and traditional ways of life.

4. Why is Brasilia listed?

- a. It's an interesting example of town planning.
- b. It was the ancient capital of Brazil.
- c. It was difficult to build.

5. Why is the Dorset and East Devon Coast listed?

- a. The wildlife is unusual.
- b. It's important for scientific study.
- c. You can find fossils there.

6. Why is the Simien National Park on the List of World Heritage in Danger?

- a. Because of the animals that live there.
- b. Because of the people that live there.
- c. Because of the natural landscape.

Exercise 2

In the table below are 10 words from the text. Below the table are definitions of the 10 words. Can you match the words to their definitions?

Evolution	Fossils	Geology
Heritage	landmark	landscape
Outstanding	preserve	symbol
triumph		

1. means features belonging to the culture of a particular society, such as traditions, languages or buildings, which still exist from the past and which have a historical importance.
 2. means gradual development.
 3. To something means to keep it as it is, esp. in order to prevent it from decaying or being damaged or destroyed.
 4. A is a sign, shape or object which is used to represent something else.
 5. A is a very great success, achievement or victory, or a feeling of great satisfaction or pleasure caused by this.
 6. means excellent; clearly very much better than what is usual.
 7. the study of the rocks and similar substances that make up the Earth's surface, esp. in order to understand its structure, origin, etc.
 8. A is a large area of countryside, esp. in relation to its appearance.
 9. A is a building or place that is easily recognized, esp. one which you can use to judge where you are.
- are bones, shells or shapes of a plant or animal which have been preserved in rock, ice or earth for a very long period.

More activities on this topic

You'll find links to all the following activities connected to the theme of cultural heritage at:
<http://www.britishcouncil.org/learnenglish-central-themes-cultural-heritage.htm>

- **Word game: World heritage.** Match the names and descriptions of national parks in each continent, which feature on the World Heritage List.
- **Poem: Ozymandias.** In this poem on the theme of the ruined monument to himself built by Pharaoh Ramses II in the Egyptian desert, Shelley reflects on the nature of political power, and those who hold it.
- **Trivia:** Everything you (n)ever wanted to know about cultural heritage.
- There is also a cultural heritage-related cartoon, and some carefully selected external links.

Answers

Exercise 1: 1. *b*; 2. *b*; 3. *a*; 4. *a*; 5. *b*; 6. *a*

Exercise 2: 1. *Heritage*; 2. *Evolution*; 3. *preserve*; 4. *symbol*; 5. *triumph*; 6. *Outstanding*; 7. *Geology*; 8. *landscape*; 9. *landmark*; 10. *Fossils*

www.britishcouncil.org/learnenglish