No part of this work may be reproduced or utilized in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher.

My First Britannica:
Volume 6: Europe 2008


Encyclopedia Britannica, Britannica, and the Thistle logo are registered trademarks of Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc.
# Table of Contents

**Europe**

**INTRODUCTION** .................................................. 5

**Europe: Unity in Diversity** ................................. 6

**Western Europe**

- Portugal: Life on the Iberian Peninsula .................. 8
- Spain: A Distinctive European Country ................... 10
  - Madrid, Spain: City of Tauromaquia .................... 12
- England: Heart of a Language and Culture ............... 14
  - London, England: City on the Thames .................. 16
- Stonehenge: Ancient Circle of Stones ..................... 18
- Scotland: Land of Mountains and Heath ................... 20
  - Edinburgh, Scotland: Fortress on a Hill ............... 22
- Ireland: The Emerald Isle ................................... 24
  - Dublin, Ireland: City on the Liffey River ............... 26
- Wales: Land of the Song ...................................... 28
  - English Channel:
    - “The Sleeve” Between England and France .......... 30
- France: Country of Castles, Wine, and History ......... 32
  - Paris, France: Lovely City of Light ..................... 34
- Brussels, Belgium: Belgium’s Beautiful Capital ......... 36
- The Netherlands: Country of Windmills and Dikes .... 38
  - Amsterdam, Netherlands: City of Canals and Bridges . 40

**Central Europe**

- Germany: A Country Reunited ............................... 42
  - Berlin, Germany: Once upon a Wall ...................... 44
- Switzerland: Snow and Chocolates ........................ 46
- Austria: Land of the Blue Danube .......................... 48
  - Vienna, Austria: City of Music ........................... 50

**Northern Europe**

- Reykjavik, Iceland: Bay of Smokes ....................... 58
- Denmark: A Nation That’s Almost an Island .............. 60
  - Copenhagen, Denmark: City of the Little Mermaid ..... 62
- Norway: Land of Fjords and Mountains .................... 64
- Sweden: Scandinavia’s Largest Country .................. 66
- Russia: The Largest Country in the World ............... 68

**Eastern and Southern Europe**

- Budapest, Hungary: Two-in-One City ....................... 70
- Bucharest, Romania: “Little Paris” ....................... 72
- Sofia, Bulgaria:
  - Bulgarian Capital of Today and Yesterday .......... 74
- Serbia: A Country of Many Cultures ...................... 76
  - Belgrade, Serbia: White Fortress ....................... 78
- Ukraine: Borderland Country ................................ 80
- Greece: Land of Islands ...................................... 82
  - Athens, Greece: City of the Acropolis ................. 84
  - Parthenon: Temple of Athena .............................. 86
- Italy: A Tourist’s Delight .................................. 88
  - Rome, Italy: The Eternal City ........................... 90
- Vatican City: The Smallest State .......................... 92

**Glossary** ......................................................... 94

**Index** .............................................................. 95
Europe

INTRODUCTION

Where is the Emerald Isle?
How is it possible to travel by train from England to France?
What is the Parthenon? Why was the Berlin Wall built and torn down?

To help you on your journey, we’ve provided the following guideposts in Europe:

■ **Subject Tabs**—The colored box in the upper corner of each right-hand page will quickly tell you the article subject.

■ **Search Lights**—Try these mini-quizzes before and after you read the article and see how much—and how quickly—you can learn. You can even make this a game with a reading partner. (Answers are upside down at the bottom of one of the pages.)

■ **Did You Know?**—Check out these fun facts about the article subject. With these surprising “factoids,” you can entertain your friends, impress your teachers, and amaze your parents.

■ **Picture Captions**—Read the captions that go with the photos. They provide useful information about the article subject.

■ **Vocabulary**—New or difficult words are in **bold type**. You’ll find them explained in the Glossary at the back of this volume. And there’s a complete listing of all Glossary terms in the set in the Reference Guide and **Index**, Volume 13.

■ **Learn More!**—Follow these pointers to related articles throughout the set.

■ **Maps**—You’ll find lots of information in this volume’s many maps.

■ The **Country Maps** point out national capitals. **Globes** beside Subject Tabs show where countries are located in the world.

■ The **Continent Maps** have a number key showing the location of all countries.

In Volume 6, *Europe*, you’ll discover answers to these questions and many more. Through pictures, articles, and fun facts, you’ll learn about the people, traditions, landscapes, and history that make up many of the countries and cities of Europe.
The **Icons** on the maps highlight major geographic features and climate. Here’s a key to what the map icons mean:

- ☀ Desert and Other Dry Areas
- 🌪️ Polar Regions and Other Frozen Areas
- 🌋 Mountains
- 🌳 Forests
- 🌴 Rainforests

The **Mini-Atlas**, found in Volume 13, offers detailed maps, useful data tables, and assorted photographs of each continent.

And don’t forget: If you’re not sure where to start, where you saw something before, or where to go next, the Index at the back of this volume and the **Reference Guide and Index** (Volume 13) will point the way.
Leaning Tower of Pisa, a famous tilting building in Pisa, Italy.

Stonehenge, a mysterious ancient monument in southern England.

DID YOU KNOW?
The Ural Mountains are considered part of the boundary between Europe and Asia. The mountains run through Russia. That means that part of that country is in Europe and part is in Asia.

Which of these rivers can be found in Europe?
a) Rhône
b) Mississippi
c) Nile
Europe is a continent of many countries and many different peoples. Much of it is made up of islands and peninsulas. A peninsula is a piece of land surrounded by water on three sides. Europe’s islands include Iceland and the British Isles in the Atlantic Ocean and Corsica, Crete, Malta, and Cyprus in the Mediterranean Sea. Europe’s main peninsulas are the Scandinavian, Iberian, Italian, Balkan, and Jutland peninsulas.

Europe also has many mountain ranges. Important ones are the Pyrenees, the Alps, the Apennines, the Carpathians, and the Balkans. Its long rivers include the Volga, the Danube, the Don, the Rhine, the Rhône, and the Oder.

The rivers provide water for Europe’s farms. Wheat and barley are two of Europe’s major crops. Southern Europe specializes in fruits, vegetables, olives, and wines. Other crops include oats, corn, sugar beets, and potatoes.

Europe is one of the world’s major industrial regions. In fact, the **Industrial Revolution** began in Europe. Today the factories of Europe make many different products.

In the first half of the 20th century, Europe was the center of two world wars. After World War II, the countries of Europe became divided into two groups. In general the Western countries had **democratic** governments and economies that were not controlled by the governments. In the Eastern countries the rulers were not chosen in free elections and the economies were based on **communism**. This means that the governments owned all property and controlled the economies. Some of the Western European countries formed the European Union (EU). The EU helps its member countries with issues such as trade and security. At the end of the century most of the Eastern countries gave up communism and also turned to democracy. Many of them soon joined the EU too.
Portugal is a small country in southwestern Europe. Its capital is Lisbon, and its only neighbor is Spain. Together, Spain and Portugal make up the Iberian Peninsula.

Northern Portugal is quite hilly, with many oak, beech, chestnut, and pine forests. Southern Portugal has mostly plateaus and plains. Brush and grasslands cover the plains of the south. Portuguese farmers grow wheat, corn, potatoes, and grapes. And although olives grow wild in Portugal, many farmers also plant their own olive trees. Portugal’s many cork oaks provide much of the world’s supply of cork. Portugal is also famous for its many varieties of wine, including port and Madeira.

Summers in Portugal are dry and mild. Many tourists go to Portugal in the summer to see the beautiful museums, castles, and old churches. Or they go to tour historic cities, such as Lisbon, Coimbra, and Porto. And many go to enjoy Portugal’s many beaches.

The national sport of Portugal is futebol (football, or soccer).

Portuguese bullfighting is also very popular. It is different from bullfighting in other countries, however. Portuguese bullfighters do not kill the bull in the ring.

Folk music and folk dancing are popular traditions, and most villages have their own terreiro, or dance floor. Among the most popular regional dances is the fandango. The Portuguese are especially fond of fado, a traditional folk song that reflects a sad mood.

Portugal is also famous for its explorers. Ferdinand Magellan led the first expedition to sail around the globe, and Vasco da Gama opened up a trade route around Africa to Asia.

LEARN MORE! READ THESE ARTICLES…

FOLK MUSIC (VOLUME 3) • FERDINAND MAGELLAN (VOLUME 4) • PENINSULA (VOLUME 1)
Answer: The only country to border on Portugal is Spain. So the Portuguese people have had much more contact with the Spanish than with any other people.

**DID YOU KNOW?**

The capital of Portugal was once moved to another country on another continent. From 1807 to 1821, Rio de Janeiro in Brazil was Portugal’s capital. Brazil was a Portuguese colony at the time.

Many people travel to Portugal to enjoy the country’s beautiful sunny beaches.

© Nik Wheeler/Corbis
Why is the Spanish language spoken in so many countries?

**DID YOU KNOW?**

With all the rock stars that have come from the United States and England, you might think that the guitar was invented there. The modern electric guitar was invented in the States, but the guitar itself probably originated in Spain in the early 1500s.
Spain is a country in the southwestern corner of Europe. The capital city is Madrid. Spain borders Portugal and France, but most of the country lies along the Mediterranean Sea and the Atlantic Ocean. The country’s beautiful beaches are favorite European holiday spots.

Spain’s rich and complex history has differed in many ways from other western European countries. For instance, several Islamic states were formed on its territory, some lasting for centuries. Most other Islamic states lie farther to the east or south, in the Middle East or North Africa. Modern Spain’s cultural variety shows in the different languages spoken there, including Catalan, Basque, Gallego, and, of course, Spanish.

In the 1500s and 1600s, Spain was a world power. It had a powerful navy called the Spanish Armada, and it was the first country to colonize much of the Americas. That’s why so many people in South America, Central America, Mexico, and the United States speak Spanish and are of Hispanic heritage.

Spain features seafood in much of its cooking, with dishes such as paella, a fish-and-rice dish. Spanish farmers produce lots of pork, poultry, beef, and lamb. They also grow wheat, barley, corn, sugar beets, beans, and olives. Spain also grows grapes for its large wine industry.

Bullfighting has long been a favorite pastime of Spaniards. And football (soccer) is also very popular. Another activity found in Spain is the music and dancing known as flamenco. Flamenco came to Spain with the Caló (Gitano) people, more commonly known as Gypsies. It is played on guitar as the dancers click wooden castanets and stamp their feet rhythmically.

LEARN MORE! READ THESE ARTICLES…
FRANCISCO DE GOYA (VOLUME 4)
MADRID, SPAIN (VOLUME 6)
SOUTH AMERICA (VOLUME 9)
DID YOU KNOW?

Madrid is one of the few leading cities in Europe that is not located on a major river. Many such cities use large rivers for transportation. Madrid does, however, have a small river—the Manzanares—running through it.
King Phillip II wanted to establish a capital that wasn’t linked with Spain’s earlier ruling powers. He chose Madrid. After it became the capital in 1607, Madrid grew into a city of contrasts. Around its old overcrowded center developed palaces, convents, churches, and public buildings.

The Puerta del Sol is Madrid’s main plaza, or public square. The busiest streets of the city start from the Puerta del Sol. From there you can easily get to such major attractions as the Prado art museum. The Prado has a world-famous collection of paintings, including work by El Greco, Francisco de Goya, Diego Velázquez, and many other artists.

The botanical gardens are close to the Prado. They are said to have nearly 30,000 kinds of plants. Madrid has more than 40 parks and public gardens. Important ones include the Retiro, Campo del Moro, Casa de Campo, and Oeste Park. Also near the Puerta del Sol is the National Palace. It has one of the world’s greatest collections of armor and swords. The National Library has many rare books.

Spanish food is popular in many other countries. A meal might include gazpacho, a thick chilled soup made with tomatoes and other vegetables, and boquerones, freshly fried anchovies. Madrid is famous for its anchovies, a popular food fish. Flan is a favorite dessert, similar to a caramel custard.

Tauromaquia is the Spanish word for bullfighting. Bullfighting is one of Spain’s time-honored traditions. In Madrid, bullfights are held in Las Ventas, the 25,000-seat bullfighting ring. Thousands of people go there to cheer their favorite matadors, the main performers in a bullfight.

**Learn More! Read these articles...**

Francisco de Goya (Volume 4) • Painting (Volume 3) • Spain (Volume 6)

The Plaza Mayor is one of Madrid’s most well-known public squares. Today its grand buildings overlook many shops and outdoor cafés.

© Patrick Ward/Corbis
The English countryside contains many small villages such as this one in the south-central Cotswold district.

© Nik Wheeler/Corbis

DID YOU KNOW?
The English language has changed a lot over the years. The following are two versions of the same sentence from the story *Beowulf*:

Old English:
Wæs se grimma gæst Grendel haten.

Modern English:
Grendel was the name of this grim demon.

SEARCH LIGHT
Find and correct the error in the following sentence:
William Shakespeare was a famous English novelist.
English is one of the world’s most widely spoken languages. This is partly because it was the language of the British Empire. The empire once controlled so much of the world that it was said that the Sun never set on the British Empire.

England, the birthplace of English, takes up most of the island of Great Britain. It is one of the four lands that form the United Kingdom. The English that people speak there today is quite different from the English that was spoken long ago. If you were to read a book by Geoffrey Chaucer, one of the early writers of English, someone would have to explain to you what many words mean.

England has produced many famous writers since Chaucer. They include such poets as John Milton and Percy Bysshe Shelley and such novelists as Jane Austen and Charles Dickens. England is also known for its theater. That art has remained important since the time of playwright William Shakespeare some 400 years ago.

England’s Oxford and Cambridge are two of the oldest universities in the world. The country’s contributions to classical and folk music, as well as to rock and roll, are also important. It’s hard to imagine what rock would be like if there hadn’t been English performers such as the Beatles, the Rolling Stones, and David Bowie.

The English also invented two of the world’s most popular sports: football (known as “soccer” in the United States) and cricket.

Learn More! Read These Articles…
A British Legend: King Arthur’s
Knights of the Round Table (volume 5)
English Channel (volume 6) • William Shakespeare (volume 4)
London is the capital of the United Kingdom. It lies in southeastern England, on the banks of the River Thames. Long ago the Romans built a city near the mouth of the river. They called it Londinium. That’s how London got its name.

Tourists and Londoners alike use London’s public transportation system. The red double-decker buses are recognized worldwide. And the city’s underground railway—called the “tube”—has been reliably shuttling passengers throughout London since 1884. The city is full of monuments, historic buildings, and other interesting sights. The Tower of London is one of the city’s oldest structures. It was built by William the Conqueror as a fortress. It also served as a prison, and its famous prisoners included Sir Walter Raleigh and Elizabeth I before she became queen. The tower is now a museum that contains England’s crown jewels.

Other famous buildings include the Houses of Parliament (also called Westminster Palace). That building has 1,100 rooms and two miles of corridors. It also has a tower clock called Big Ben, whose huge bell weighs more than 13 tons. Nearby is Westminster Abbey, an ancient church where England’s kings and queens are crowned. Buckingham Palace is the home of the queen of England.

London’s British Museum is the oldest museum in the United Kingdom. It has a vast collection of things from all over the world. It also has one of the world’s largest libraries. Another well-known museum is Madame Tussaud’s, which has wax statues of famous people.

Learn More! Read these articles…
Charles Dickens (Volume 4) • Elizabeth I (Volume 4) • England (Volume 6)
The tower clock known as Big Ben is a famous sight in London. It stands next to the Houses of Parliament along the River Thames.

Find and correct the error in the following sentence: England’s kings and queens are crowned in Buckingham Palace.
Stonehenge is a very special monument in England. It’s said to be more than 5,000 years old. The “henge” in its name refers to circular structures from ancient times. In this case it refers to the circle of huge stones that stand upright at the center of the monument.

No one knows exactly why Stonehenge was built. Some people believe it might have been used as a device for predicting the movement of the Moon. Others think it was a temple for worshiping the sky or the Sun.

Stonehenge includes the largest stone constructions in the British Isles. The monument’s biggest stones are arranged in the shape of a horseshoe and are surrounded by another big circle of upright tall stones. Originally all of these surrounding stones had stones on top, covering them like caps. Some are still capped. All of these objects are made of sandstone.

DID YOU KNOW?
Stonehenge might at one time have been more accurately called “Woodhenge.” Originally the circle was built of wood posts.
Beyond these stones is a circular ditch. Inside it stand several other stones, including the Altar Stone, the Slaughter Stone, and two Station stones. On the northeast of Stonehenge is the entrance. Outside it stands the Heel Stone and a straight path called the Avenue.

The Stonehenge that you can see today is more like a ruin. Much of it has probably disappeared with time and with changes brought on by weather over thousands of years. Still, it is an awe-inspiring sight.

Learn More! Read these articles...
ASTRONOMY (VOLUME 2) • THE GREAT WALL (VOLUME 7)
ROCKS AND MINERALS (VOLUME 1)
Fill in the blanks: Although many go to Scotland to see its castles and ______, the country is best known for its natural ______.

DID YOU KNOW? Haggis, a national dish of Scotland, isn't for everyone. It's a large round sausage made of the liver, heart, and lungs of a sheep, all chopped and mixed with fat and oatmeal, and packed into a sheep's stomach and boiled.
Scotland, the northernmost part of the island of Great Britain, is a nation famous for its natural beauty. Pinewood forests dot the Highlands. Dwarf willows grow on the highest slopes of the Grampian Mountains just below the snow-covered peaks. But perhaps the most famous of Scotland’s plant life is the heather, a kind of heath. The word heath is also used to describe the wild wide-open stretches of rough land of Scotland’s countryside.

Scotland has been part of the United Kingdom since the 18th century. Its capital is Edinburgh. Scotland’s largest city is Glasgow, an industrial center.

Scotland has made many economic and cultural contributions to the world. Writer Robert Louis Stevenson wrote the well-loved Treasure Island as well as the horror story Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. And poet Robert Burns is claimed by Scots as their national poet.

Many visitors to Scotland go there to see its castles and abbeys. Tourists to Scotland enjoy the country’s wildlife. Deer, foxes, badgers, and wildcats can be seen in the countryside. Golden eagles, peregrine falcons, and kestrels fly overhead. Almost half the world’s gray seals breed off the coast in Scottish waters. And sometimes whales can be seen too.

Many tourists also visit the country’s largest lake, Loch Ness. Though its famous Loch Ness monster is probably a myth, many sightings of the monster have been reported. And the possibility that it may exist continues to fascinate many people.

LEARN MORE! READ THESE ARTICLES...
DANCE (VOLUME 3) • EDINBURGH, SCOTLAND (VOLUME 6)
MYTHS AND LEGENDS, FOLKTALES AND FABLES (VOLUME 5)
Can you guess what Auld means in “Auld Reekie?” (Hint: It sounds the same in English.)

Edinburgh Castle sits high up on Castle Rock, some 250 feet above the rest of Edinburgh. The site may have been used as a fortress as early as the 6th century.

© Larry Lee Photography/Corbis
Edinburgh is the capital city of Scotland. In the old Scottish Gaelic language, the city’s name is Dun Eideann and means “fortress on a hill.” People also call Edinburgh “Auld Reekie.” “Reek” means “smoke,” and Edinburgh got its nickname from the heavy smoke and odors that resulted when the people used a lot of coal.

Edinburgh is built on a chain of low hills separated by valleys. The city is made up of the Old Town and the New Town. The Old Town is part of the original burgh, or village. It stretches from the Castle Rock to the Netherbow Port. On top of the Castle Rock is Edinburgh Castle. The castle used to be the home of Scottish kings. Now it is a museum of old armor and weapons.

The part of the city called New Town was built beginning in the 1700s. There are two main streets in New Town—the Royal Mile and Princes Street. The Royal Mile leads up to the Palace of Holyroodhouse, where you can see the rooms of Mary, Queen of Scots. To the south of the palace is a mass of rock more than five miles around. It’s called Arthur’s Seat. Princes Street has many hotels, clubs, banks, and shops and is the main street of Edinburgh. The Princes Street Gardens feature the world’s first clock made of flowers. Princes Street also has a monument to the famous writer Sir Walter Scott, who was born in Edinburgh.

The annual Edinburgh International Festival attracts hundreds of thousands of arts, theater, and music lovers. It ends with the playing of bagpipes in front of the castle gate.

LEARN MORE! READ THESE ARTICLES…
ARCHITECTURE (VOLUME 3) • SCOTLAND (VOLUME 6) • THEATER (VOLUME 3)
Ireland is a land with no snakes. Legend has it that St. Patrick banished them all. But the real reason is that Ireland is an island, and snakes have not lived there at least since the last Ice Age thousands of years ago.

Ireland is close to the larger island of Great Britain, in northwestern Europe. The smaller northern part of the island is called Northern Ireland and is part of the United Kingdom. Northern Ireland’s capital is Belfast. The larger part of the island is the Republic of Ireland and is usually simply called Ireland. The capital of this independent country is the city of Dublin.

Because of its location in the Atlantic Ocean, Ireland has a mild climate most of the year. It rains quite often, with the hilly parts of the island getting nearly 100 inches of rain each year. The land is covered with grasslands and green mosses. Some people call Ireland the Emerald Isle because it is so beautifully green. The green lowlands and mild climate make Ireland a good place to raise cattle and sheep. Barley, wheat, and potatoes also grow well. In fact, potatoes were once almost the only food people ate. But in the 1840s disease ruined the potato crops, and many people starved or left Ireland for other countries, especially the United States.

Ireland was once a colony of Great Britain. It gained its independence in the 20th century, though Northern Ireland remains part of Britain. Ireland is very popular with tourists, and Irish music and culture are famous throughout the world.

LEARN MORE! READ THESE ARTICLES...
DUBLIN, IRELAND (VOLUME 6) • ENGLAND (VOLUME 6) • ISLANDS (VOLUME 1)
IRELAND

Answer: Ireland is such a green and beautiful island that people have for a long time called it the Emerald Isle.

DID YOU KNOW?
The best-known characters in Irish folklore are fairies called “leprechauns.” According to legend, they are little old men who live alone and make shoes. They also are supposed to have a hidden pot of gold, which they guard carefully.
Dublin is the capital of the Republic of Ireland. The city’s name means “black pool” in Irish. The River Liffey, which flows through the city, creates dark bog waters nearby.

Near the River Liffey is Dublin Castle, which was the headquarters of the English governor when Ireland was a part of the United Kingdom. It is now where Ireland’s presidents are sworn into office. In the 19th and early 20th centuries, when Ireland was a colony of Britain, the city was a center of resistance to British rule.

Leinster House is where the parliament meets. The twin buildings on either side of Leinster House are the National Library and National Museum of Ireland. Merrion Square stands to the east, and Fitzwilliam Square is to the south. They were built more than 200 years ago. The oldest and largest of the city’s squares is St. Stephen’s Green.

Phoenix Park was once a royal deer park. It lies on the north bank of the Liffey, and it’s nearly 30 square miles—making it one of the world’s largest city parks. Its zoo is famous for breeding lions.

Theater is an important part of Dublin’s history. The famous Abbey Theater is linked with names such as the poet William Butler Yeats and dramatists John Millington Synge and Lady Gregory. It is on Synge Street that the great dramatist George Bernard Shaw lived.

Many who visit Dublin climb the mountains just outside the city. From there they can see the whole city spread out below. Those who look carefully can see all the famous buildings and squares.

Learn More! Read these articles…

England (Volume 6) • Ireland (Volume 6) • Theater (Volume 3)
Halfpenny Bridge spans the River Liffey. It is one of the many bridges connecting the north and south of Dublin. This bridge got its name from the toll you used to have to pay to get across.

© Macduff Everton/Corbis
Land of the Song

Wales is a beautiful land of hills, valleys, and ancient castles. Located on the western edge of the island of Great Britain, it’s one of the four countries that today make up the United Kingdom. Wales is called “Cymru” (pronounced “Coomrie”) in the Welsh language, and its capital, Cardiff, is called “Caerdydd.” Some people still speak Welsh, but Wales’s main language is English.

The rough Welsh countryside was created long ago by rivers of ice called “glaciers.” Wales’s many mountains—including the highest one, Snowdon—were formed mostly from volcanic rock. Along the coast are fabulous cliffs overlooking pebbled and sandy beaches. Seabirds and shorebirds are commonly seen, and bottlenose dolphins live in Cardigan Bay off the west coast.

Coal mining was once the most important part of the Welsh economy. Today, very little coal is still mined in Wales. Many more people now work in manufacturing, especially in the car, chemical, and electronics industries.

Many tourists visit Wales to see its parks and castles and to attend its many music festivals. The largest is the annual Eisteddfod, a celebration of poetry and music that began in 1176. Music is so important in Wales that it is called the “land of the song.” Choral (group) singing is especially popular among the Welsh people.

Nearly 2,000 years ago the ancient Romans built a small fort where the Welsh capital, Cardiff, now stands. Hundreds of years later, invaders from England built a castle on that same site. Cardiff eventually grew there and became an important shipping center. Cardiff Castle remains one of the city’s most impressive buildings.

Learn More! Read these articles...
England (Volume 6) • Folk Music (Volume 3) • Mountains (Volume 1)
Wales’s capital city, Cardiff, had its beginnings in Cardiff Castle. This stone keep, the strongest part of the castle, was built in the 12th century. © Neil Beer/Corbis

DID YOU KNOW?
Wales’s most famous writer was Dylan Thomas, who wrote *A Child’s Christmas in Wales*. Roald Dahl, who wrote *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, was also born in Wales, as were the actors Richard Burton and Anthony Hopkins.
The English Channel is a narrow arm of the Atlantic Ocean. It separates England from France. The French call it La Manche, which means “the sleeve.”

The English Channel is 350 miles long. Its widest point is between Lyme Bay in England and the Gulf of St. Malo in France. The channel has important ports on both sides. These are Plymouth, Southampton, Portsmouth, and Dover in England, and Cherbourg, Le Havre, Dieppe, and Calais in France. Dover is famous for its white cliffs, which are made of chalk.

There are many tourist resorts on the shores of the channel. Visitors go there to enjoy the sandy beaches and bright sunshine when the weather is good. Two famous resorts are Brighton in England and Deauville in France.

More than 100 years ago people thought of connecting the two banks of the channel by an underwater tunnel. The idea was discussed and given up several times. France and Great Britain finally signed the Channel Tunnel treaty in 1986. The construction work started the following year.

Today the Eurotunnel is very important for travel. The Chunnel—it’s nickname, from “channel” and “tunnel”—is about 31 miles long and is considered a marvel of engineering. The two ends of the tunnel are near the narrowest distance across the channel. One end is at Folkestone in England and the other is at Calais in France. Many tourists travel through it just to say they’ve been under the English Channel.

Learn More! Read these articles…

Chalk (Volume 1) • England (Volume 6) • France (Volume 6)
ENGLISH CHANNEL

Answer: The French call the English Channel "La Manche," which means "the sleeve."

DID YOU KNOW?
In 1875 Captain Matthew Webb swam the channel in 21 3/4 hours—about 1 hour for every mile. He was the first to manage the feat. In 1926 Gertrude Ederle became the first woman to swim the channel.

Swimmers enjoy the water at Lyme Regis, a resort town on the English Channel. © Nik Wheeler/Corbis
For hundreds of years France was one of the most prized countries of Western Europe. One reason is that France has wonderful farmland. Many types of crops and plants are grown in France because of the plentiful water from France’s rivers. And the French have made good use of their generous harvests—fine French cooking has long been internationally appreciated.

But France may be even better known for its wines. There are miles of lovely green vineyards—areas for growing grapes. The champagnes and wines made from these grapes are famous throughout the world.

The French river valleys are full of historic and beautiful old castles, called chateaux. These were built of stone, with thick walls that protected the people inside from attacks. At first the chateaux were used as forts, but later they were used as homes for the nobility. The king and the nobility ruled France until they were overthrown in the French Revolution of 1789. Ten years later the famous leader Napoleon began his rule of France.

Many tourists visit France to see its famous monuments and cathedrals and its beautiful countryside. Some popular spots, such as the palace of Versailles, are located outside the capital city of Paris. Others, such as the Eiffel Tower and the Cathedral of Notre Dame, are inside Paris. Other big French cities include Marseille, Lyon, and Nice.

France is separated from England by a narrow body of water called the English Channel. Today high-speed trains travel between the two countries through the Channel Tunnel, which was built underneath the Channel.

Learn More! Read These Articles…

English Channel (Volume 6) • Grapes (Volume 10)
Auguste Rodin (Volume 3)
Vineyards, where grapes are grown for wine, surround a village in eastern France. French wine is prized all over the world. This village is part of the region that produces wine called Burgundy.

© Michael Busselle/Corbis

**DID YOU KNOW?**

French writers have won more Nobel Prizes for Literature than writers from any other country.
At the time it was built, the Eiffel Tower was the tallest structure in the world. In 1903 an antenna was placed at its very top and allowed Parisians to enjoy the new invention of radio.
One of the most beautiful cities of Europe is Paris, the capital of France. It has many lovely old buildings, monuments, gardens, plazas, cafés, boulevards, and bridges. Because many of these sights are lit at night, Paris is called the “City of Light.”

The Seine River flows through the center of Paris. Visitors enjoy touring Paris by riding a boat down the river. One of the most impressive sights on this trip is the Chaillot Palace. It stands on the right bank of the Seine—that is, the right side when you’re facing downstream, the direction the water flows. The palace now contains museums and theaters. The Cathedral of Notre Dame, one of the most famous church buildings in the world, can also be seen from the river. And it is awe-inspiring when seen lit up at night.

The Louvre Museum is known throughout the world for its fine collection of art. But which is the best-known landmark of Paris? That would be the Eiffel Tower. It was designed by Gustave Eiffel in 1889 for an international fair.

At first the people of Paris disliked the tall tower, which was almost 1,000 feet high. They thought it was ugly and ruined the beauty of Paris. But when the tower was finished and the fair was opened, many people saw Eiffel’s impressive work and changed their minds. They liked the graceful tower of iron that was strung with lights and stretched into the sky. Today millions of people from all over the world visit the Eiffel Tower each year.
On the banks of Senne River lies Brussels, the capital of Belgium. There is much to see in this historic city known for its lace and chocolate. A more recent feature also sets Belgium apart: together with Strasbourg, France, it’s the center of the European Parliament.

One of the most beautiful old buildings there is the Town Hall. It has a tower with the statue of St. Michael, the patron saint of Brussels. Opposite the Town Hall across the square known as the Grand Place is the King’s House. It’s now a history museum. On a hill, rising above the modern buildings, is the Church of St. Michael and St. Gudule. It was built more than 500 years ago and has twin towers.

One of the most popular sights in Brussels is a small bronze fountain in the shape of a naked little boy. He is often called the city’s “oldest citizen” because he has been around since 1619. Other places to visit include the Royal Palace, the Palace of Justice, and the Opera House. There’s also the Palace of the Nation, which is the Belgian parliament house.

An unusual and interesting structure in Brussels is the Atomium. It shows how the atoms of a molecule of iron fit together. It is 326 feet high and is made of shining metal. It was built for the International Exhibition of Brussels, a fair held in 1958.

Chocolate candy is not the only kind of food that comes from Brussels. According to some experts, the vegetable called Brussels sprout was first there 800 years ago.

DID YOU KNOW?
Like many people worldwide, Belgians enjoy fried potatoes (French fries, or chips). But they prefer to eat them with mayonnaise rather than ketchup or some other sauce.

LEARN MORE! READ THESE ARTICLES...
ATOMS (VOLUME 2) • CABBAGE (VOLUME 10) • PARIS, FRANCE (VOLUME 6)
Brussels, BELGIUM

The river that flows past Brussels is called the
a) Seine.
b) Senne.
c) Severn.

Answer: b) Senne.

Flowers are sold in Grand Place, a beautiful public square in the city of Brussels. The square began as a marketplace during the Middle Ages.
© Bettmann/Corbis
The Kingdom of the Netherlands is located in northwestern Europe. Although Amsterdam is the country’s capital, the Hague is the home of the government and the courts. Other important cities are Rotterdam and Utrecht. The Netherlands is also known as Holland, and its people are called the Dutch.

Much of the Netherlands is made up of “reclaimed land.” This means that lakes, marshes, and low-lying land located at or below sea level have been drained and made into usable dry land. Such areas are called “polders.” The polders are surrounded by dams called “dikes.” Without the dikes, much of the Netherlands would be flooded. People once used windmills to help drain water from flooded lands. Many windmills still dot the landscape. But today electric or diesel pumps are used to pump the water out.

Several rivers flow through the central Netherlands. They used to be filled with lobsters and fish, but water pollution has killed many of these animals. Many seabirds and other sea creatures such as mollusks can be found in coastal areas.

Throughout history the Netherlands has been known for producing flowers, especially tulips. The butter, cheese, and condensed milk from the country’s dairy farms are famous the world over. Hundreds of years ago Dutch seamen were the leading merchants of Europe. Today commercial ships keep the harbors and ports of the Netherlands very busy.

Art has a long tradition in the Netherlands. The most famous Dutch painters were Rembrandt and Vincent van Gogh.

LEARN MORE! READ THESE ARTICLES…
AMSTERDAM, NETHERLANDS (VOLUME 6)
VINCENT VAN GOGH (VOLUME 3)
WIND POWER (VOLUME 2)
A polder is a
a) windmill.
b) land area that was once under water.
c) machine used to pump water out.
How was Amsterdam’s name originally spelled? Why was it spelled that way?
Long, long ago Amsterdam was a small fishing village. It was called Amsteldam then because it was close to a dam built across the Amstel River. Today Amsterdam is a busy and important city. It is the capital of the Netherlands.

Amsterdam is located in a low-lying area on a lake called the IJsselmeer. (IJ is pronounced “eye.”) The Amstel River flows through the city toward the waterway known as the IJ, which was once part of an inlet of the North Sea. Parts of Amsterdam lie on land that has been reclaimed from marshes, lakes, or the sea. Many dikes and canals keep the water from rushing back in over the city.

Canals are spread all over the city like a cobweb. They divide the inner city into nearly 90 islands that are connected by about 1,300 bridges. Tourists go to Amsterdam for sightseeing trips along the canals. Many people who live in Amsterdam ride bicycles to and from work.

Amsterdam is full of things to see. In the inner city are the Old Church and the New Church. The Old Church is more than 700 years old. The New Church is only about 500 years old. Next to it is what used to be the city hall and is now the Royal Palace. There are also a South Church and a West Church. The famous painter Rembrandt is buried in the West Church.

Amsterdam is one of the most important places for diamond cutting and polishing. Many of the world’s most famous diamonds have passed through Amsterdam.

Learn More! Read These Articles…

Diamonds (Volume 1) • The Netherlands (Volume 6) • Water Power (Volume 2)
When did Germany become a unified country? (Hint: there is more than one answer!)
a) 1871  
b) 1550  
c) 1776  
d) 1990

DID YOU KNOW?  
For German children, the highlight of the Christmas season is St. Nicholas Day (December 6). The night before, they leave a shoe outside their bedroom door or by the fireplace. St. Nicholas comes during the night to fill the shoes with candy and gifts.

Houses line a river at Schiltach, a village in the Black Forest region of Germany. The region is named for its thick groves of trees. © Richard Klune/Corbis
Although Germany, in the heart of central Europe, has a long history, it is actually a young country. For many years various princes and dukes and bishops ruled small states in the region. It was not until 1871 that these became united as a single nation.

Germany has produced many renowned musicians, writers, artists, scientists, and athletes. Such figures include writer Johann Wolfgang von Goethe and composer Ludwig van Beethoven.

In the early 20th century, Germany became involved in two world wars. The country was on the losing side of World War I and as a result suffered through difficult times. Many of the people were unhappy, and some supported Adolf Hitler, who wanted to make Germany strong again. As the leader of the Nazi party he soon took control of the country. Germany then tried to conquer several neighboring countries. The conflict over these actions developed into World War II.

After Germany was defeated in 1945, the country was divided into East and West Germany. East Germany became a communist country. Its rulers controlled both the government and the economy. Berlin, the former capital of Germany, was in East Germany, but it was also divided. In 1961 the East German government built the Berlin Wall to separate the two sides of the city. Many families were split up and could no longer visit each other.

In 1989 the Berlin Wall fell and the communist government of East Germany came to an end. On October 3, 1990, Germany became one country again. Berlin became its new, undivided capital.

LEARN MORE! READ THESE ARTICLES…
LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN (VOLUME 3)
BERLIN, GERMANY (VOLUME 6) • ANNE FRANK (VOLUME 4)
In 1989 on the day after East Germany opened its borders with West Germany people climbed the Berlin Wall. It was the first time in over 25 years that people could travel freely between the two parts of Berlin. Here you can see the Brandenburg Gate, an older “dividing line,” in the background.

© Anthony Suau–Liaison/Getty Images

Find and correct the error in the following sentence: The Berlin Wall was torn down in 1989, and the two parts of Germany became two countries again.
Once upon a Wall

Berlin, the capital of Germany, was bombed to mostly rubble during World War II. After the war the city was slowly rebuilt, and Germany was split into two separate countries.

The city of Berlin was actually located in East Germany, but half of the city belonged to West Germany. In 1961 the East German government built the Berlin Wall to divide the city’s western and eastern sections. The wall was unpopular with many Germans because it separated families and kept them from seeing each other. Nearly 200 people were killed trying to pass from East Berlin into West Berlin.

In 1989, however, the Berlin Wall was torn down. The next year the two parts of Germany became a single country again. And Berlin was once more its undivided capital.

The rubble caused by bombing during World War II was used to build hills. The highest of these is called Teufelsberg, which means “Devil’s Mountain.” The 380-foot-high hill is now used for winter sports such as skiing and sledding.

Berlin has many historic buildings that survived the war. Important ones include the Brandenburg Gate, Charlottenburg Castle, and the Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial Church. At the top of the Brandenburg Gate is a stone chariot with four horses. It was shattered during the war but was remade. Like the Berlin Wall, the Brandenburg Gate was an important symbol of the division between East and West Germany. Today it is a symbol of peace and unity for the German people.

LEARN MORE! READ THESE ARTICLES…
GERMANY (VOLUME 6) • THE GREAT WALL (VOLUME 7) • PRAGUE, CZECH REPUBLIC (VOLUME 6)
Switzerland’s great beauty draws visitors from all over the world to its snowcapped mountain ranges, blue lakes, green pastures, and the tall trees covering the mountainsides. Switzerland is a country in central Europe. Bern is its capital city, and its people are the Swiss. Its neighboring countries are Germany, Austria, Liechtenstein, Italy, and France. Because of its close contact with these countries, Switzerland’s official languages include German, Italian, and French.

The mountains known as the Alps cover more than half of Switzerland. The Jura Mountains occupy more than another tenth of the country. The Mittelland plateau is a flatland that lies between the two mountain ranges.

Because it has so many mountains, Switzerland has bridges and tunnels that help people travel within the country. The tunnels that run through the Alps are among the world’s longest.

High up in the Alps you’ll find snow and ice all year long. With so much snow, Switzerland has become known for its winter sports. People travel from all over the world to ski, skate, and sled in the resort towns of St. Moritz, Gstaad, and Interlaken. The mountain resorts are also popular in summer for activities such as boating, swimming, hiking, and mountain climbing.

The highest grape-growing area of central Europe is located in the Swiss Alps, at an altitude of 3,900 feet. Most people know Switzerland better for its watches and cheese, both of which are world famous. And so are the delicious chocolates the Swiss make!

LEARN MORE! READ THESE ARTICLES…
CACAO (VOLUME 10) • ITALY (VOLUME 6) • MOUNTAINS (VOLUME 1)
Answer: Some mountains in Switzerland have snow on them year-round, and many lakes freeze. This makes it ideal for sports such as skiing, skating, and sledding.

**DID YOU KNOW?**
When the new 35-mile-long Gotthard Tunnel opens in 2011, it will be the longest railway tunnel in existence. One of the longest road tunnels also happens to be in Switzerland and is also called Gotthard—the 10-mile-long St. Gotthard Tunnel.
Austria is a small beautiful country in central Europe. Most of Austria is covered with woods and meadows, so it looks quite lush and green. The lowland forests are filled with beech, birch, and oak. Fir trees cover most of the foothills, while high up on the mountains grow larch and stone pines.

Roaming in the forests are wild animals such as brown bears, deer, hares, foxes, and badgers. The birds of the meadows and woods include eagles, falcons, owls, and storks. The Danube River drains almost the entire country, and the main lakes are Lake Constance and Neusiedler Lake.

The chain of mountains called the Alps stretches across the country for nearly 340 miles from east to west. The highest peak, called Grossglockner, is 12,457 feet above sea level.

Austria has so many mountains that only about half the land is good for farming.

Austria attracts visitors with much more than scenery. Those who enjoy winter sports head for the many ski resorts in the Alps. Fans of theater and music flock to Salzburg every summer for a festival of plays and concerts. Music written by the great Austrian composer Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart is often performed at the Salzburg Festival.

Austria can satisfy not only the eyes and ears but also the appetite. Pastries such as the chocolate Sacher torte are among its most famous products.

Learn More! Read These Articles…
Mountains (Volume 1)
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (Volume 4)
Vienna, Austria (Volume 6)
People who are fond of theater and music travel from all over the world to attend the **Salzburg Festival**, a famous celebration of Austrian musicians and artists.

The city of Salzburg was the birthplace of the composer Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. It has been a music center for centuries and now hosts the Salzburg Festival every summer.

© Adam Woolfitt/Corbis
DID YOU KNOW?
The Viennese coffeehouse has been a tradition for three centuries. At one time, artists and celebrities gathered at famous literary and theatrical cafés. The word “café,” in fact, comes from a Turkish word meaning “coffee.”
Vienna, the capital of Austria, is famous for its music and its splendid buildings, especially the museums and palaces. What you might find surprising is that Vienna today looks very much like it did hundreds of years ago.

Visitors may take a trip through the city streets in a horse-drawn carriage called a “fiacre.” No well-dressed fiacre driver would be seen without a colorful shirt and an old-fashioned black hat, according to custom.

One of Vienna’s most impressive sights is the spire of St. Stephen’s Cathedral looming over the city. The cathedral bell weighs 20 tons. The metal to make it was melted down from cannons that were captured from the Turkish army in 1711.

Another important building is the State Opera, where many great composers have heard their works performed. That is where the opera composers Richard Wagner and Giuseppe Verdi conducted and where Gustav Mahler was director. The State Opera opened in 1869 with a performance of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart’s *Don Giovanni*.

Museums have been made from houses of famous composers Joseph Haydn, Mozart, Ludwig van Beethoven, Franz Schubert, and Johann Strauss. Before they became famous, Haydn and Schubert were members of the Vienna Boys’ Choir. The choir was started in 1498 and still performs in the Hofburg Chapel on Sunday mornings. Now you can see why Vienna is called one of the music capitals of the world.

**LEARN MORE! READ THESE ARTICLES…**

*LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN (VOLUME 3) • BERLIN, GERMANY (VOLUME 6) PRAGUE, CZECH REPUBLIC (VOLUME 6)*
On January 1, 1993, the nation of Czechoslovakia did a remarkable thing—the former communist country split peacefully into two independent countries. The eastern section became Slovakia. The western provinces, Bohemia and Moravia, became the Czech Republic. The Czech Republic is the larger of the two new countries. Its capital is Prague.

The Czech Republic has many hills and mountains. These include the Sumava, Ore, Sudeten, and Krkonose mountains. The country is noted for its karst region—a limestone area with many sinkholes, caverns, and underground passages and lakes. Many people visit the Czech Republic especially to participate in winter sports. Others go there for fishing and hunting and to enjoy the beauty of the mountains. Among the country’s wildlife, the mouflon, an endangered mountain sheep, is reared in game reserves.

Farming is very important in the Czech Republic. The most important crops are sugar beets, wheat, barley, potatoes, and corn. Northern Bohemia is known for a plant called the “hop,” used in flavoring beverages. The Czech Republic also has many factories that manufacture iron, steel, aluminum, fertilizers, and cement. Cotton, wool, and synthetic fibers are also produced and made into clothing.

The Czechs are known for traditional crafts. They make beautiful glass and porcelain objects and are especially known for their fine crystal. Some people make pretty lace and others make delightful wood carvings. And among the many Czechs who have contributed to the arts are the novelist Franz Kafka, composer Antonin Dvorak, and poster artist Alphonse Mucha. Playwright Vaclav Havel became the first president of the independent Czech Republic.
The town of Telc is in southern Moravia, one of the two provinces that make up the Czech Republic. © Dave Ball/Corbis

DID YOU KNOW?
The Czech Republic has been greatly affected by acid rain. Because of this pollution, many trees have been cut down. By the end of the 20th century, nearly three-fifths of the republic’s forests had been destroyed or seriously damaged.
DID YOU KNOW?
Prague is home to a number of film studios. Czech cinema has been admired worldwide. Director Milos Forman has earned world renown. And Jan Sverak’s 1996 film Kolya won major awards in Japan, Italy, and the United States.
Prague, CZECH REPUBLIC

City of 100 Spires

Prague is nicknamed the “City of 100 Spires” because of its many church steeples. It is the capital of the Czech Republic and is known as Praha to the people who live there.

Prague lies on the banks of the Vltava River. The city center has many historic buildings, bridges, and museums. From the beautiful Charles Bridge, you can see the great castle of Hradcany, also called Prague Castle, which was first built in the 9th century. It is now the home of the president of the Czech Republic.

At the center of the Old Town is the Old Town Square, where the 600-year-old Tyn Church is found. The church clock tells the season as well as the time. In the center of the square is a statue of Jan Hus, a religious leader who died in 1415 but is still a hero to the Czech people.

Southeast of the Old Town is a broad street called “On the Moat.” It divides the old and the new parts of Prague. It is now the main shopping street. At its northern end stands the old city gate, called Powder Tower.

In the center of Prague is Wenceslas Square. At one end of this broad public square is the National Museum. Long ago Wenceslas Square was the city’s horse market. It now has many hotels, stores, and cafés. Charles University (also called the University of Prague) was started in 1348 and is the oldest university in central Europe. Prague also has the oldest Jewish cemetery in Europe.

Unfortunately, much of this beautiful city was damaged during the great flood of 2002.

Learn More! Read these articles...

CINEMA (VOLUME 3) • A JEWISH LEGEND: THE GOLEM OF PRAGUE (VOLUME 5)

CZECH REPUBLIC (VOLUME 6)
How could Poland have gone from being Europe's largest state to being no state at all? (Hint: The answer isn't in the article, so you'll have to think it through.)
If someone had asked “Where is Poland?” at different times in the past 1,000 years, they would have been given many different answers.

In the mid-1500s, for example, Poland was the largest country in Europe. But at other times, there was no Polish state at all! In the late 1700s it was no longer a separate country after it was divided by the countries of Russia, Prussia, and Austria. The boundaries of modern Poland were marked out in 1945. Its constitution (laws of government) of 1791 is the oldest in Europe.

About two-thirds of Poland’s more than 38 million people live in cities. Warsaw, the capital, is the largest city. Other important cities include Lodz, Gdansk, and Krakow. About 90 percent of Poles are Roman Catholics. They are especially proud because in 1978 Karol Jozef Wojtyla became Pope John Paul II, the first Polish leader of the Roman Catholic church.

Polish ham is one of the country’s most famous exports. In addition to raising pigs, people also raise cattle and sheep throughout the country. Nearly half of Poland’s land is used for farming.

Poland has had a changeable history, with shifting boundaries, but it’s always enjoyed a rich cultural heritage. In literature Polish poet Czeslaw Milosz won the 1980 Nobel Prize for Literature, and poet Wislawa Szymborska won it in 1996. Frédéric Chopin, a famous composer, was from Poland. And one of the most famous scientists in history, Mikolaj Kopernik, was born in Poland. You may know this great astronomer as Nicolaus Copernicus.

LEARN MORE! READ THESE ARTICLES…

NICOLAUS COPERNICUS (VOLUME 4) • MARIE CURIE (VOLUME 4) • RUSSIA (VOLUME 6)
This power plant produces heat for the city of Reykjavik using steam from hot springs.

© Roger Ressmeyer/Corbis
Reykjavik is the capital and largest town of Iceland, a small island country in the North Atlantic Ocean. The word Reykjavik means “bay of smokes.” The city’s name comes from the steaming hot springs nearby. The town is heated by the hot water carried by pipes from these springs. The water is made hot by the many volcanoes underneath Iceland.

Even though the city is very far north, it has a fairly mild climate. However, winters are long and very dark. Much of Iceland’s area outside the city is covered by glaciers.

According to legend, a Viking named Ingolfur Arnarson founded the city about 1,200 years ago. For many years Reykjavik remained just a small fishing village. It was occupied and ruled by the Danes, the people of Denmark. Today Reykjavik is a major fishing port. It is also Iceland’s main center for business. Not surprising for a fishing city, Reykjavik’s chief industries are processing fish and building ships.

Iceland has one of the highest literacy rates in the world. Almost all of the people can read. Iceland has a rich literary tradition, and Icelandic sagas date from the 13th century. Folklore is also popular, especially stories about trolls.

The city has many museums and art galleries. The country’s traditional cuisine includes many seafood dishes and skyr, a dessert made with skim milk and served with fresh bilberries.

LEARN MORE! READ THESE ARTICLES…
GLACIERS (VOLUME 1) • THERMAL POWER (VOLUME 2) • VIKINGS (VOLUME 4)
Find and correct the error in the following sentence: The Kingdom of Denmark is a small European city that lies between the North Sea and the Baltic Sea.
The Kingdom of Denmark is a small European country that lies between the North Sea and the Baltic Sea. With the countries of Norway and Sweden, Denmark makes up the area known as Scandinavia. Denmark is surrounded by water on nearly all sides. Most of the country lies on a long stretch of land called Jutland and two large islands called Fyn and Zealand. It also has about 480 other smaller islands, but only 97 have people living on them. Copenhagen, the capital of Denmark, is on Zealand. People in Denmark are called Danes and speak the Danish language.

Denmark once had many trees, but most were cut down to make room for farming. There still are some spruce and fir plantations in Denmark. These are the types of trees often used as Christmas trees. Many of the wild animals—such as elk, brown bear, and wild boar—died when most of the forests were cut down. But roe deer still roam the countryside, and there are more than 300 kinds of birds in Denmark.

The seafaring warriors known as Vikings came from Scandinavia. But Danes have given much to world art and knowledge. Perhaps you’ve read or heard the stories of Hans Christian Andersen. He wrote about his native Denmark in stories such as “The Little Mermaid” and “The Fir Tree.” Karen Blixen gained fame writing under the name Isak Dinesen. And Søren Kierkegaard was an important thinker and writer. Scientist Niels Bohr won the Nobel Prize for Physics for his work on the structure of atoms, the tiny building blocks of all matter.
Copenhagen is Denmark’s capital and largest city. It is located on two islands: Zealand and Amager. Denmark is an unusual country because it’s made up of a peninsula (Jutland) and over 400 islands. What used to be Copenhagen’s city center is located on a little island called Slotsholmen (meaning “castle islet”).

In 1167 Bishop Absalon of Roskilde had a fortress built on Slotsholmen. This was the beginning of the city. The Christiansborg Palace replaced the fortress, and now it houses the Danish parliament and the Supreme Court. The Danish royal family today lives in the Amalienborg Palace.

To the west of Slotsholmen is the Town Hall. It has a very interesting feature. Apart from the usual offices, it also has Jens Olsen’s astronomical clock. This huge clock shows the time in different parts of the world. It also shows the orbits of planets and two different calendars.

Nearby is Charlottenborg Palace, the home of the Royal Academy of Fine Arts. The palace was built in the 17th century. Close to it is Tivoli, a world-famous amusement park that opened in 1843.

If you go farther north, you’ll see the Citadel, a military fortress still used by the Danish army, though it was built nearly 400 years ago. On the harbor outside the fortress is the statue of the Little Mermaid. It is said to be the symbol of the city. The story of the Little Mermaid is a fairy tale written by Hans Christian Andersen, who spent many years of his life in Copenhagen.

LEARN MORE! READ THESE ARTICLES…
ASTRONOMY (VOLUME 2) • DENMARK (VOLUME 6) • PENINSULAS (VOLUME 1)
Copenhagen, DENMARK

Answer: The city of Copenhagen lies on two islands.

DID YOU KNOW?
In World War II when the Germans occupied Copenhagen, the Danish king rode daily through the city on his horse to give his people courage. When asked why the king had no bodyguard, a boy supposedly said, “All of Denmark is his bodyguard.”
Fill in the blanks:
Two major Norwegian languages are _______ and __________.
Norway is a country in northern Europe. It lies on the western half of a peninsula it shares with Sweden. Together with Denmark, these countries are known as Scandinavia. The many arms of the sea that stretch into Norway are called “fjords.” The longest and deepest of these is Sogne Fjord. Almost every part of the country is close to the sea or a fjord.

Norway is also covered with mountains. The two highest peaks are Galdhø Peak and Mount Glitter. Each of them is more than 8,000 feet tall. Glaciers can be found in some mountain ranges. The Jostedals Glacier is the largest in Europe.

Norway is a leading producer of oil, which comes from the North Sea. Many people work in forestry, harvesting trees for lumber. Most of Norway’s forests have evergreen trees such as pine and spruce. To the south, though, there are ash, birch, and aspen trees. Elk, wild reindeer, lemmings, and wolverines live in the mountains and forests.

Fishing is a major industry in coastal areas. Other countries buy fish from Norway, especially frozen cod, canned sardines, and herrings. And whales can be seen, too, off the Norwegian coast. Norway’s long seagoing tradition includes many famous explorers, such as the Viking explorer Leif Eriksson and the adventurer-scientist Thor Heyerdahl.

Some of Norway’s native Sami people (also called Lapps) still practice traditional reindeer herding. Most of the people of Norway speak either Bokmal or Nynorsk, though many also speak English. Painter Edvard Munch, playwright Henrik Ibsen, and composer Edvard Grieg are famous Norwegians who have made important contributions to the arts.

LEARN MORE! READ THESE ARTICLES...
GLACIERS (VOLUME 1) • SWEDEN (VOLUME 6) • VIKINGS (VOLUME 4)
The Kingdom of Sweden in northern Europe is the largest of the Scandinavian countries. **Scandinavia** is the area occupied by Sweden, Norway, and Denmark. Norway and Finland are on Sweden’s borders. The rest of the country is bounded by water.

The capital of Sweden is Stockholm, nicknamed the “Venice of the north.” Like that Italian city, Stockholm has many waterways and bridges. Sweden has many rivers and lakes. And rivers provide half of the country’s electric power. The rivers and lakes also have a large variety of fish.

Sweden is a cold country. But the temperatures depend on the elevation of the land and its nearness to the sea. It’s warmer near the sea and colder on the mountains. Evergreen forests of spruce and pine cover more than half of Sweden. In the south there are also deciduous trees (trees that lose their leaves). Because of its rich forests, Sweden is known for its timber, wood pulp, paper, and furniture industries.

Within its forests Sweden has many animals and birds. There are hares, weasels, shrews, foxes, ermine, and elk. Snipes, plovers, wagtails, partridges, ptarmigans, grouse, and woodcocks are just some of Sweden’s many birds.

The Swedes celebrate many special festivals. On December 13 they celebrate St. Lucia’s Day. On that day young girls wear green wreaths with lighted candles on their heads and serve coffee and buns to older family members. Midsummer Eve is celebrated with singing and dancing on about June 24, around the time of the longest day of the year.

**Learn More! Read these articles…**

**Denmark (Volume 6) • Peninsulas (Volume 1)**

**Rabbits and Hares (Volume 12)**
Answer: Half of Sweden’s electricity comes from its rivers. As the rivers flow through large dams, the water turns motors known as “turbines.” The turbines make electricity.

DID YOU KNOW?
Although Sweden can be cold, you still may want to consider moving there when you get a little older. By law all Swedish citizens get at least five weeks of paid vacation a year.

Much of Stockholm, the capital of Sweden, is built on islands. The islands are connected to each other and to city districts on the mainland by old bridges and modern overpasses. © Macduff Everton/Corbis
Which country is bigger in land area than Russia?
a) United States
b) China
c) Romania

DID YOU KNOW?
It would take all the rivers in the world a year to fill Russia’s Lake Baikal just once.
Russia is the largest country in the world—nearly twice the size of China or the United States. Russia is so large, in fact, that it stretches across two continents, Europe and Asia.

Until 1917, Russian tsars such as Peter the Great and Catherine the Great had long ruled the country. The communist nation known as the Soviet Union was founded in 1922, and Russia was its largest and most important republic. The Soviet Union dissolved in 1991, however, and Russia became an independent country again.

Most of Russia is covered by large rolling plains. Through the plains flow Russia’s rivers, including the Volga, Europe’s longest river. “Mother Volga” flows into the Caspian Sea, the world’s largest inland body of water. Many rivers drain into the Arctic Ocean or into Lake Baikal, the world’s deepest lake. More than one-fifth of all the world’s fresh water is in Lake Baikal. That’s more water than is in all five of the Great Lakes in North America put together.

Roughly 145 million people live in Russia. About three-fourths of them live in cities. Moscow, the capital, is the largest city. It has more than 8 million citizens. St. Petersburg is the second largest city, with more than 4 million people. Both cities have many world-famous museums and buildings.

Russians have contributed greatly to the arts. The works of writers Aleksandr Pushkin, Leo Tolstoy, and Anton Chekhov are still popular today. So is the music of composer Pyotr Ilich Tchaikovsky. And Russia’s ballet companies have trained some of the world’s most gifted dancers, including Anna Pavlova and Mikhail Baryshnikov.

LEARN MORE! READ THESE ARTICLES…

ASIA (VOLUME 7) • CZECH REPUBLIC (VOLUME 6) • DANCE (VOLUME 3)
Budapest is the capital of Hungary and is located on the banks of the Danube River. It is made up of two main sections, Buda and Pest, which were once separate cities. These two communities and another, Old Buda, joined to form a single city in 1873. Buda is on the west bank of the Danube, and Pest is on the east bank. A railway tunnel and many bridges connect the two.

Buda sits on several hills and is the older and more beautiful part of the city. At its center is the Varhegy, or Castle Hill. Buda is also the site of the old Citadel, or fortress, and the Royal Palace. Here you’ll see the Matthias Church, where many of Hungary’s kings were crowned. Janos Hill is the highest of the Buda Hills. You can take a chairlift to the peak for a glorious view of the whole city.

Pest is mostly flat. Although it is now an industrial center with many modern buildings, Pest is the home of the world’s second largest synagogue, which was built in 1859.

Classical music has a long history in Budapest, and traditional folk music, sometimes played by people known as Roma, can be heard in some restaurants. It might surprise you to know that Budapest is Europe’s largest spa city. There are about 120 thermal springs in the city, and some of the baths built around them are hundreds of years old.

Learn More! Read these articles…
Bucharest, Romania (Volume 6) • Europe (Volume 6)
Sofia, Bulgaria (Volume 6)
Both cities are on the Danube River, and together they're the capital of Hungary. Buda is older and more hilly. Pest is younger and has more industrial areas.

The combined city was originally called Pest-Buda. This is because at the time Pest was the larger of the two, with many more people living in it.

DID YOU KNOW?

The Danube River reflects the streetlights of Budapest at dusk. The city was once nicknamed the “Queen of the Danube.”

© Tim Thompson/Corbis
DID YOU KNOW?

In his novel *Dracula*, Bram Stoker based the character of the famous vampire on a Romanian prince, Vlad Tepes. The Romanian word *tepes* means “stake.” In English the prince is known as Vlad the Impaler.

---

Bucharest is the capital and largest city of Romania. It is the center of business, government, and the arts for the country. © Sandro Vannini/Corbis

---

Which of these tourist sights cannot be found in Bucharest?

a) Revolution Square
b) Danube River
c) Cretulescu Church
d) Antim Monastery
Bucharest, the capital of Romania, has many public squares. A square is an open area that’s formed where two or more streets meet. Many of the city’s streets and boulevards lead into squares. The famous Revolution Square contains the former royal palace and Cretulescu Church, which was built in 1722. It is one of the most beautiful squares in the city. With its tree-lined boulevards and varied architecture, Bucharest was once known as “Little Paris.”

You can experience some of the city’s long history in many of its old buildings. The Antim Monastery and the churches of Stavropoleos and Saint Spiridon are treasured for their age and for their fine architecture. The University of Bucharest was founded in 1864.

Bucharest also has preserved much of its history in its many museums. Two of the most popular are the Museum of the History of the City of Bucharest and the National Art Museum, which is now in the royal palace. Some tourists prefer the Village Museum. It is an open-air building near the Arch of Triumph that displays many kinds of peasant houses.

There is much to do in the city, even after the museums close. Bucharest has a national philharmonic orchestra, as well as the “I.L. Caragiale,” the National Theater, which is named for a famous Romanian playwright. There are also a Theater of Opera and a Ballet of Romania. A typical Romanian meal enjoyed before or after going to the theater might include a kind of bread called mamaliga with cheese and sour cream.

LEARN MORE! READ THESE ARTICLES…
ARCHITECTURE (VOLUME 3) • PARIS, FRANCE (VOLUME 6) • YEREVAN, ARMENIA (VOLUME 7)
Sofia is the capital of the Eastern European country of Bulgaria. It is also the largest city in the country. It lies in a valley in the western part of Bulgaria.

Sofia has had many different names. When the Romans conquered it long, long ago, they called it Serdica. This name came from the Serdi, a tribe of people who had settled there. When it became part of Bulgaria, it was called Sredets. That name means “in the middle,” and it refers to the position of the city in the center of the Balkan Peninsula. The Turks conquered Bulgaria in the late 1300s. And about that time the city was given the name Sofia, after its St. Sofia church. In the Greek language, sofia means “wisdom.”

Like many old cities, Sofia has an old section and a new one. The old section has narrow streets and small houses that are built close to each other. There were once many mosques in this part of the city. They were built during the Turkish rule.

The modern part of the city has large apartment buildings and wide avenues. Most people in Sofia live in these buildings. There are similar apartments and broad roads in the suburbs too.

If you like history, you’d like to visit the churches of St. George, Boyana, and St. Sofia. You can also find the Alexander Nevsky Cathedral in Sofia. It was built to honor the Russians who helped Bulgaria to become an independent country in the 1870s.

LEARN MORE! READ THESE ARTICLES…
ATHENS, GREECE (VOLUME 6) • BELGRADE, SERBIA (VOLUME 6) ISTANBUL, TURKEY (VOLUME 7)
DID YOU KNOW?
In Bulgaria, Christmas is celebrated on two days, December 25 and 26. Under communism, religious holidays weren’t allowed. So people invented a supposedly “non-religious” holiday, and they celebrated it the day after Christmas.

SEARCH LIGHT
Choose the answer that puts the city’s different names in order from earliest to most recent.

a) Sredets, Sofia, and Serdica
b) Serdica, Sofia, and Sredets
c) Serdica, Sredets, and Sofia

Sofia is a busy but beautiful city. Its buildings display a mixture of many different styles of architecture.
The country of Serbia was part of a bigger country called Yugoslavia until 2003. It lies on the Balkan Peninsula in southeastern Europe. The country’s capital is Belgrade. Yugoslavia once included several other regions that are now independent countries. These were Montenegro, Croatia, Slovenia, Macedonia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Before the 20th century, Serbia was ruled by many different powers. This made it a country with many diverse cultures. The Slavs, the Turks, the Italians, and the Austrians have all influenced the food, folk costumes, and buildings of Serbia. This large mix of people has sometimes caused problems. In the 1990s there was war between the Serbs and several other ethnic groups in the area, including Albanians, Croats, and Bosnians. There were many wars earlier in the 20th century. By the beginning of the 21st century, much of the fighting had ended, and the country was beginning to rebuild itself.

The many mountains of Serbia include the Balkan Mountains and the Dinaric Alps. The country’s highest peaks reach more than 6,600 feet. People raise sheep and goats in the mountain pastures. The main flatland area in the country is the Mid-Danube Plain. It’s the best and most important place for growing crops. The main crops are maize, sugar beets, and wheat. Fruits and vegetables are also grown.

Many people go to Serbia to see its very old churches and to visit its mineral springs.

**LEARN MORE! READ THESE ARTICLES…**

BELGRADE, SERBIA (VOLUME 6)
BUCHAREST, ROMANIA (VOLUME 6)
PENINSULA (VOLUME 1)
Serbia was part of Yugoslavia for many years. When did it become a separate country?
The city of Belgrade grew up around the Kalemegdan fortress. The original fortress was built more than 2,000 years ago. It has been changed many times in the years since then.

**DID YOU KNOW?**

The Danube River was traditionally called the Blue Danube because of its beautiful color. There is even a waltz about the river, also called “The Blue Danube,” by Johann Strauss the Younger. Sadly, the water is so polluted now that it’s more brown than blue.
Belgrade is the capital of Serbia. Serbians call the city Beograd, which means “white fortress.” The city lies at the meeting point of two rivers, the Danube and the Sava.

Belgrade is a very old city. It grew up around the Kalemegdan fortress, which was built by an early people called the Celts in the 4th century BC. The fortress was known by the Romans as Singidunum. Its remains are a major feature of the present old city, and it is now a history museum. The city was ruled by the Turkish Ottoman Empire for much of the period between the 16th and the 19th century.

Stari Grad, the oldest part of the city, is near the fortress. A few old Turkish houses are still there. Nearby you can see medieval gates, churches, tombs, and the old Turkish baths.

The best museums of Belgrade are in the old city. The Ethnographic Museum has an excellent collection of Serbian costumes. There are also many displays of art from different parts of the country. In the Gallery of Frescoes you can see full-size paintings copied from famous churches in Serbia.

Prince Michael Street is the busiest part of the city. It is full of people, shops, and some of Eastern Europe’s best cafés, which offer excellent Turkish coffee. In the cafés you can try punjena paprika (stuffed peppers) or sarma u vinovoj lozi (stuffed grape leaves). Baklava is a popular nut-and-honey dessert.

LEARN MORE! READ THESE ARTICLES…
BUDAPEST, HUNGARY (VOLUME 6) • ISTANBUL, TURKEY (VOLUME 7) SERBIA (VOLUME 6)
Ukraine has one of the largest populations of any European country. It is located at the eastern edge of Europe, near Asia (the word Ukraine means “borderland” or “bordering country”). Ukraine’s capital is Kiev, an ancient city that was founded more than 1,000 years ago.

Ukraine is a rather flat country, with only a few mountains. Its major mountains are the Carpathians in the west and the Crimean Mountains in the south. It also contains a portion of the Polissya (also known as the Pripet Marshes), the largest swamp in Europe. The marshes have a great variety of wildlife, including elk, wolves, lynx, mouflon (wild sheep), and wild boars.

Ukraine has a rich tradition of storytelling and folk music. Ukraine’s folk traditions can be seen in the country’s many festivals. At the festivals people in brightly colored costumes perform traditional dances and music. The country’s written language is similar to Russian and uses the Cyrillic alphabet.

The region that is now Ukraine has a long history. Many years ago Kiev was the center of a country called Kievan Rus. In the 1700s Ukraine came under the control of the Russian tsars. In the 19th century it was the main site for battles in the Crimean War between Russia and the Ottoman Turks. Ukraine became part of the Soviet Union in the early 20th century. It was known as the country’s breadbasket because it produced large amounts of grain (particularly wheat). In 1991, with the fall of the Soviet Union, Ukraine became an independent country.

LEARN MORE! READ THESE ARTICLES…

FOLK MUSIC (VOLUME 3) • RUSSIA (VOLUME 6) • SWAMPS (VOLUME 1)
Ukraine was the center of what war in the 19th century between Russia and the Ottoman Empire?

DID YOU KNOW?
The Ukrainian city of Chernobyl was the site of the world’s worst nuclear power station accident. The accident occurred in April 1986.
Fill in the blank:
Greece includes about _______ islands, though not all have people living on them.

a) 3,000  
b) 9,750  
c) 2,000

DID YOU KNOW?
Even today doctors take the oath of Hippocrates, a famous early Greek doctor. They promise to do no harm and to follow the highest standards in their work.
The country of Greece is surrounded on three sides by seas. To the south is the Mediterranean Sea, to the west is the Ionian Sea, and to the east is the Aegean Sea. More than 2,000 islands in the Ionian and Aegean seas belong to Greece. But people live on only about 170 of them. The islands are divided into two groups—the Ionian Islands and the Aegean Islands—depending on which sea they’re in.

Besides its many islands, Greece also has many mountains. The tallest is Mount Olympus. It is 9,570 feet high. Zeus, Ares, Athena, and all the other Greek gods and goddesses were said to live on Mount Olympus.

Greece was the ancient birthplace of Western civilization. The Greeks learned to read and write more than 3,000 years ago. And it was in Greece that the Olympic Games began some 3,500 years ago. The first modern Olympic Games were held in Athens in 1896.

Many great thinkers and philosophers, such as Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, came from ancient Greece. It also produced such poets and playwrights as Homer and Sophocles, as well as famous historians such as Herodotus and Thucydides. Pythagoras was one of the earliest mathematicians, and Hippocrates is considered the father of modern Western medicine. Greece was also known for its famous speakers, called “orators.” One of the most famous was Demosthenes.

Many rare plants grow in Greece, and medicines are made from some of them. But probably the most important plants are the olive trees of Greece. Much of the olive oil that people all over the world buy comes from Greece.

LEARN MORE! READ THESE ARTICLES...

ATHENS, GREECE (VOLUME 6)
ATLAS: BEARER OF THE WORLD (VOLUME 5)
OLIVE (VOLUME 10)
The Theater of Dionysus in Athens is more than 2,300 years old. If you had lived in ancient Athens, you’d probably have gone to see plays in this huge stone theater. The whole community was expected to attend performances there.

© Michael Nicholson/Corbis

DID YOU KNOW?
So many tourists visit the Acropolis every year that buses are no longer allowed to drive to the top. The exhaust from the buses was polluting the buildings and causing them to fall apart.
City of the Acropolis

One of the first things you notice in Athens, the capital of Greece, is a flat-topped mass of rock at the city’s center. It’s called the Acropolis and is more than 500 feet high. At the top are buildings that were built very long ago. One of them, the famous Parthenon, was built in honor of the goddess Athena. The city was named after her.

Not too far away is the Theater of Dionysus. This was the city’s drama center. It had 13,000 seats arranged in 67 rows. Nearby is the Odeum theater, which seated 5,000 people. It is now used for the Athens summer festival of music and drama.

Theater was very important to the ancient Greeks. When these theaters were built thousands of years ago, the actors wore masks when they performed. The types of plays they performed are called classical Greek tragedies and comedies. These are still performed today.

The modern city grew from the small town at the base of the Acropolis. Many newer parts of the city have been built in the last hundred years or so. Some public buildings were made of white marble to match the buildings on the Acropolis. Today Constitution Square is the center of the city. And the Old Royal Palace that stands on one side of it is the home of the Greek parliament.

When the Olympic Games were revived in 1896, the first Games were held in Athens in the newly remodeled 70,000-seat Panathenaic Stadium. It was originally built in 329 BC for the Panathenea athletic contests, part of ancient Athens’ most important festival.

Learn More! Read these articles…

Parthenon (Volume 6) • Socrates (Volume 4) • Theater (Volume 3)
According to Greek mythology, Athena was born straight out of Zeus's head. That is, Zeus thought of her, and then she was real.

DID YOU KNOW?

The Parthenon has been damaged over the centuries. At one time it was even used to store gunpowder, which exploded by mistake! But its basic structure is still preserved, and art lovers come from all over to see it.

© Charles O’Rear/Corbis
According to Greek mythology, the king of the Greek gods—Zeus—announced that a new city would be given to the god who offered the most useful gift to the people. Athena, his favorite daughter, was the goddess of war and wisdom. She struck the soil with her spear, and an olive tree sprang up. The people were delighted. Zeus gave the city to Athena and named it Athens in her honor. The olive branch became the symbol of peace, and olives became one of Greece’s most important crops.

As the goddess of war, Athena represented the goals of war that include peace, justice, and unity. She is usually shown wearing a helmet and carrying a spear and a shield. The owl was her sacred animal, so owls came to be associated with wisdom like she was.

The Greek people built Athena a beautiful temple on the Acropolis in Athens. The Acropolis was the fortified upper part of the city. It was made of pure white marble and was called the Parthenon. Within the temple stood an ivory and gold statue of the goddess, called the Athena Parthenos.

The rows of pillars on the outside of the temple were carved to represent stories from Greek mythology. On the outer walls, sculptures showed the celebration of the most important festival, Panathenaea. The festival was held on the birthday of Athena.

Today much of this beautiful temple has been destroyed. Many of the sculptures have been moved to the British Museum in London. Other sculptures are in museums in Paris, France, and in Copenhagen, Denmark. However, it is still a beautiful building and remains one of Athens’ most popular sights.

Learn More! Read these articles…

Athens, Greece (Volume 6)

A Greek Legend: Odysseus and the Cyclops (Volume 5)

Taj Mahal (Volume 7)
Which of the following can all be found in Italy?

a) Milan, Sicily, Rome, and Mount Everest
b) Mount Vesuvius, Paris, and the Statue of Liberty
c) Mount Etna, Pisa, and the Alps

The Ponte Vecchio spans the Arno River in the art-filled city of Florence. It connects several historic palaces and contains space for shops.
The country of Italy in south-central Europe has a rich history and many interesting places to visit. Rome, Italy’s capital, is one of the world’s oldest cities. Other historic Italian cities are Milan, Naples, Florence, and Venice, which has many canals.

In Rome the Colosseum is an arena where many years ago thousands of people went to watch gladiators fight. Vatican City lies within Rome too. It’s the world headquarters of the Roman Catholic church and is where the pope lives. The Sistine Chapel in the Vatican is one of the most beautiful buildings in Europe. Its ceiling and walls have famous paintings by the artist Michelangelo.

Pisa in central Italy is best known for its leaning tower. Soon after its construction started, the ground underneath sank. The Leaning Tower of Pisa leans over so much that to climb its stairs you have to lean in the opposite direction. Engineers have stopped it from sinking. They could have straightened out the whole tower, but then it wouldn’t be such fun to visit.

On the island of Sicily in southern Italy is Mount Etna, an active volcano. A thin column of smoke always rises from it, and sometimes red-hot lava spills out. Perhaps even more famous are the breathtaking snow-covered Italian Alps in northern Italy. These mountains aren’t volcanoes, though. People travel from all over the world to enjoy winter sports in the Alps.

Italy’s wine, food, arts, and culture are prized around the world. Famous Italians include artist Leonardo da Vinci, writers Dante and Petrarch, scientist Galileo, and filmmaker Federico Fellini.

LEARN MORE! READ THESE ARTICLES…

MICHELANGELO (VOLUME 3) • VATICAN CITY (VOLUME 6)  
VOLCANOES (VOLUME 1)
Parts of several temples and monuments of the ancient Roman Forum (front of picture) still stand in modern Rome. The Forum was the heart of public life in Rome. © Massimo Mastrorillo/Corbis

DID YOU KNOW?

In Rome’s Piazza Navona stands a famous structure, the Four Rivers fountain, designed by sculptor Gian Lorenzo Bernini. In medieval times the piazza was flooded to stage naval games.
People from all over the world visit Rome, the capital of Italy. Pilgrims, scholars, art lovers, and tourists all go there to see the “Eternal City” on the banks of the Tiber River. For 3,000 years Rome has been a popular destination for travelers. There is a legend that if you throw a coin into the Trevi Fountain there, you will be sure to return to Rome some day.

Many of the buildings and monuments from the city’s early days can still be seen. Some of them, such as the Colosseum and the Forum, give us an idea of how the ancient Romans lived and worked. The Colosseum is where gladiators fought bloody battles, and the Forum was the site of temples, courts, and public meetings. These buildings were partly destroyed over the years, but Capitoline Hill offers fine views of their remains.

Ancient Rome was surrounded by the Aurelian Wall, which was built about AD 270. Much of the wall still survives. The city contains many broad streets and town squares known as piazzas, some of which contain beautiful fountains. One of the joys of Rome is a nighttime visit to a lighted piazza. One of the largest monuments in Rome is a white marble building dedicated to King Victor Emmanuel II, who united modern Italy.

On the right bank of the Tiber is the Vatican. This is the headquarters of the Roman Catholic church and the home of the pope. It also houses famous buildings such as St. Peter’s Basilica, the Sistine Chapel, and the Vatican’s many museums and gardens. Though the Vatican grounds are surrounded by the city of Rome, they actually occupy a separate independent state, Vatican City.

LEARN MORE! READ THESE ARTICLES…
JULIUS CAESAR (VOLUME 4) • ITALY (VOLUME 6)
VATICAN CITY (VOLUME 6)
DID YOU KNOW?

No one is born a citizen of the Vatican, as people are in other countries. However, all Roman Catholic cardinals are automatically citizens of the Vatican even though most of them live in other countries.
Vatican City is the smallest fully independent state in the world. It stands on the banks of the Tiber River in Italy and is surrounded by the city of Rome. Though it occupies a small area, Vatican City does function as a country. It has its own telephone network, post office, bank, power supply, and railway line.

Both the government and the palace structure itself are simply called the Vatican. The Vatican palace is also the official home of the pope, the head of the Roman Catholic church. He leads the more than one billion Catholics throughout the world. Vatican City is also called the Holy See. A see is the area that a Catholic bishop rules over.

The entrance to the Vatican is St. Peter’s Square. At one end of the square is St. Peter’s Basilica. It is one of the largest churches in the world. Pilgrims—that is, people who travel to holy places—have been visiting it for hundreds of years. Many artists and sculptors helped make St. Peter’s Basilica beautiful. Michelangelo helped create the great dome. It is so high that it can be seen throughout Rome. There are many masterpieces inside the basilica. One statue of St. Peter is famous because the kisses of countless pilgrims have worn out one of its feet.

The artwork in the Vatican Museum is known throughout the world. Another famous building in Vatican City is the Sistine Chapel. It is best known for Michelangelo’s paintings on its ceiling showing scenes from the Old Testament in the Bible.

Learn More! Read these articles…

Christianity (Volume 5) • Michelangelo (Volume 3)
Rome, Italy (Volume 6)
Glossary

**abbey**  place where a community of monks or nuns live and work; also, the church serving that community

**altitude**  the distance of an object above a specific level (such as sea level) on a planet or other heavenly body

**architecture**  the art of designing and building structures, especially buildings that can be lived and worked in

**arena**  enclosed area used for public entertainment

**astronomy**  (adjective: astronomical) the science of the heavenly bodies and of their sizes, motions, and composition

**banish**  to force or drive away

**basilica**  Roman Catholic church that has special ceremonial privileges

**bog**  wet spongy ground

**botanical**  (noun: botany) having to do with the wet spongy ground that has special ceremonial

**boulevard**  wide avenue often having grass strips with trees along its center or sides

**canal**  artificial waterway for boats or for draining from or supplying water to land

**cathedral**  large church where a bishop is in charge

**chapel**  smaller, sometimes private place for prayer or special religious services

**climate**  average weather in a particular area

**colony**  (verb: colonize) settlement set up in a distant territory and controlled by a more powerful and expanding nation

**commercial**  having to do with the buying and selling of goods, especially on a large scale and between different places

**communism**  system of government in which all property is owned by the state or community and all citizens are supposed to have a share in the total wealth

**composer**  person who writes music

**continent**  one of the largest of Earth's landmasses

**corridor**  passageway into which compartments or rooms open

**crystal**  clear colorless glass of very good quality

**Cyrillic**  having to do with the alphabet for writing in Russian and other Eastern European languages

**democracy**  (adjective: democratic) government in which the highest power is held by the people and used by them directly or indirectly through representation

**diesel**  type of fuel-fed engine

**dike**  mound of earth built to control water

**diverse**  varied; different

**elevation**  the height of an object above sea level (that is, the surface of the ocean)

**engineering**  design and production of complex objects or structures

**ethnography**  (adjective: ethnographic) the study of human cultures

**forestry**  the science and work of caring for forests

**fortify**  to strengthen with weapons and by military defenses

**fortress**  well-defended place

**fresco**  painting done on freshly spread moist plaster

**glacier**  large riverlike body of ice moving slowly down a slope or spreading over a land surface

**gladiator**  in ancient Rome, a person who fought to the death as part of a public entertainment

**heath**  low evergreen shrub with needlelike leaves and clusters of small flowers

**heritage**  background or descent

**Industrial Revolution**  18th-century era that began when power-driven machinery became common

**industry**  business and manufacturing

**inland**  part of a country away from the coast

**international**  having to do with two or more countries

**islet**  small island

**literacy**  the ability to read and write

**lumber**  wood used for building or carpentry

**marsh**  area of soft wet land usually overgrown by grasses and sedges

**medieval**  the period in European history from the 5th to about the 14th century AD

**mollusk**  animal of a group that has no backbone and are usually enclosed in a shell (for example, snails, clams, and squids)

**monument**  stone or building set up in memory of a person or event

**mosque**  Muslim place of worship

**mythology**  the stories dealing with the gods and heroes of a particular people or culture

**nobility**  a nation's upper-class social group

**oil**  (or crude oil) liquid taken from the ground and not yet cleaned or separated into such products as gasoline and kerosene; also called petroleum

**orbit**  object's path around another object

**parliament**  the lawmaking division of some governments

**patron saint**  holy person who is chosen to specially protect a group or place

**peninsula**  finger of land with water on three sides

**philharmonic**  large orchestra that plays classical music

**plaza**  open place or area formed at the meeting of two or more streets

**plaque**  large farming property, usually worked by resident laborers

**plateau**  wide land area with a fairly level surface raised sharply above the land on at least one side

**porcelain**  hard white ceramic ware (earthenware) used especially for making dishes

**port**  protected harbor where ships dock to load or unload goods

**predict**  to foretell an event on the basis of study, experience, or reasoning

**pulp**  mashed-up pasty material

**reclaim**  change to a wanted condition

**remains**  (noun) parts that are left after time passes or some event occurs

**resort**  (noun) fancy vacation spot

**rubble**  confused mass of rough or broken things

**sacred**  holy

**saga**  tale of historic or legendary figures and events of Norway and Iceland

**Scandinavia**  area in northern Europe that includes the countries of Denmark, Norway, and Sweden

**scholar**  person who has done advanced study in a special area

**sea level**  the height of the surface of the sea midway between the average high and low tides

**square**  open place or area formed at the meeting of two or more streets

**synagogue**  Jewish house of worship

**synthetic**  produced artificially

**tannery**  place where animal hides are turned into leather, especially by soaking in a tannin solution

**thermal springs**  a source of hot water coming from underground

**tollhouse**  building or booth where a fee is collected for some permission (such as using a highway)

**tsar**  one of the emperors of Russia until 1917

**unity**  oneness or harmony
INDEX

Acropolis (ancient citadel in Athens, Greece)  
   Athens page 85  
   Parthenon page 87

Alps (mountains in Europe)  
   Austria page 48  
   Italy page 89  
   Switzerland page 46, photograph page 47

Amsterdam (city in the Netherlands) page 41  
   the Netherlands page 38

Athens (city in Greece) page 85  
   LEARN MORE look under Parthenon

Austria (country) page 48  
   LEARN MORE look under Vienna

Baikal, Lake (lake in Russia)  
   Russia page 69

Belfast (city in Northern Ireland, U.K.)  
   Ireland page 24

Belgium (country): look under Brussels

Belgrade, also called Beograd (city in Serbia and Montenegro) page 79

Berlin (city in Germany) page 45  
   Germany page 43

   London page 16, photograph page 17

Black Forest (region in Germany)  
   Germany photograph page 42

Brandenburg Gate (gate in Berlin, Germany)  
   Berlin page 45, photograph page 44

Brussels, also called Brussel, or Bruxelles (city in Belgium) page 36

Bucharest (city in Romania) page 73

   London photograph page 16

Budapest (city in Hungary) page 70

Bulgaria (country): look under Sofia

bullfighting, also called tauromaquia  
   Madrid page 13, photograph page 13  
   Portugal page 8

Spain page 11

Cardiff, also called Caerdydd (city in Wales, U.K.)  
   Wales page 28

Cardiff Castle (castle in Cardiff, Wales, U.K.)  
   Wales page 28, photograph page 29

chateaux (French castles)  
   France page 32

Chunnel: look under Eurotunnel

Colosseum (arena in Rome, Italy)  
   Rome page 91, photograph page 91

Copenhagen (city in Denmark) page 62

Cymru (country in the U.K.): look under Wales

Czech Republic (country) page 52  
   LEARN MORE look under Prague

Czechoslovakia (historic nation in Europe)  
   Czech Republic page 52

Danube, also called Blue Danube (river in Europe)  
   Austria page 48  
   Budapest page 70, photograph page 71  
   Did you know? page 78

Denmark (country) page 61  
   LEARN MORE look under Copenhagen

“Dracula” (book by Stoker)  
   Did you know? page 72

Dublin (city in Ireland) page 26  
   Ireland page 24

Edinburgh, also called Dun Eideann (city in Scotland, U.K.) page 23

Edinburgh Castle (castle in Edinburgh, Scotland, U.K.)  
   Edinburgh page 23, photograph page 22

Eiffel Tower (tower in Paris, France)  
   Paris page 35, photograph page 35

Eisteddfod (Welsh festival)  
   Wales page 28

England (country in the U.K.) page 15  
   LEARN MORE look under English Channel; London; Stonehenge

English Channel, also called La Manche (waterway) page 30  
   France page 32

Etna, Mount (volcano in Italy)  
   Italy page 89

Europe (continent) 6

European Union (international organization)  
   Europe page 7

Eurotunnel, also called Chunnel  
   English Channel page 30

fjords  
   Norway page 65, photograph page 64

flamenco (music and dance)  
   Spain page 11

Florence (city in Italy)  
   Italy photograph page 88

folk dances  
   Portugal page 8  
   Ukraine photograph page 81

folk music  
   Portugal page 8  
   Ukraine page 80  
   Wales page 28

folklore  
   Did you know? page 25

France (country) page 32  
   LEARN MORE look under English Channel; Paris

Gaelic (language)  
   Did you know? page 26

Gdansk (city in Poland)  
   Poland photograph page 56

Germany (country) page 43  
   LEARN MORE look under Berlin

Gotthard Tunnel (tunnel in Switzerland)  
   Did you know? page 47

Great Britain (country): look under United Kingdom

Great Fire of London (English history)  
   Did you know? page 16

Greece (country) page 83
haggis (food)
Did you know? page 20
Hague, the (city in the Netherlands)
Did you know? page 41
Netherlands, the, also called Holland (country) page 38
LEARN MORE look under Amsterdam
Northern Ireland (country) flag page 24
Norway (country) page 65
Notre-Dame de Paris, Cathedral of (church in Paris, France) page 35, photograph page 34
Olympic Games
Athens page 85
Greece page 83
Paris (city in France) page 35
France photograph page 32
Parthenon (temple in Greece) page 87
Pest (former town in Hungary): look under Budapest
Poland (country) page 57
Portugal (country) page 8
Prague, also called Praha (city in the Czech Republic) page 55
Prague Castle (castle in Prague, Czech Republic): look under Hradcany Castle
Reykjavik (city in Iceland) page 59
Roman Forum (area in Rome, Italy) Rome page 91, photograph page 90
Romania (country): look under Bucharest
Rome (city in Italy) page 91
Italy page 89, photograph page 89
LEARN MORE look under Vatican City
Russia (country) page 69
Saint Basil’s Cathedral (church in Russia) Russia photograph page 68
Saint Peter’s Basilica (church in Vatican City) Vatican City page 93, photograph page 92
Salzburg (city in Austria) Austria page 48, photograph page 49
Scandinavia (region in Europe): look under places: Denmark; Norway; Sweden
Scotland (country in the U.K.) page 21
LEARN MORE look under Edinburgh
Serbia (country) page 76
LEARN MORE look under Belgrade
Sistine Chapel (chapel in Vatican City) Vatican City page 93
Sofia, also called Serdica, or Sredets (city in Bulgaria) page 74
Spain (country) page 11
LEARN MORE look under Madrid
Stockholm (city in Sweden) Sweden page 66, photograph page 67
Stonehenge (monument in England, U.K.) page 19
Europe photograph page 6
Sweden (country) page 66
Switzerland (country) page 46
tauromaquia: look under bullfighting
Thames, River (river in England) London page 16
Tivoli Gardens (garden in Copenhagen, Denmark) Copenhagen page 62, photograph page 63
Ukraine (country) page 80
United Kingdom (island country): look under England; Scotland; Wales
Vatican City (city and state) page 93
Italy page 89
Rome page 91
Vienna (city in Austria) page 51
Volga River (river in Russia) Russia page 69
Wales, also called Cymru (country in the U.K.) page 28
Warsaw (city in Poland) Poland page 57
windmills
Kinderdijk windmill photograph page 39
Netherlands, the page 38
Yugoslavia (historic nation) Serbia page 76