

Capital of England

London is the capital of England, its political and business centre. London was founded at the time of the Roman Empire and now its population is about 8 million. It is situated upon both banks of the Thames. London has many great and wonderful sights, which attract the attention of thousands of people from every part of the world.



Sights of London



Standing not far from the Houses of Parliament, **Westminster Abbey** is a symbol of England. It is one of the most famous and beautiful churches in London. It is very old too. The legend says that Westminster Abbey was founded by St Peter himself. We know that Westminster Abbey was built by King Edward in 1065. The coronation of all British Kings and Queens takes place in Westminster Abbey. Some famous English people are also buried here, for example Charles Dickens and Rudyard Kipling. There are also many monuments and statues there. So the Abbey with its two tall towers is really wonderful.

Sights of London



The political centre of London is Westminster. If you go down Whitehall from Trafalgar Square on the right you will see a small street where the British Prime Minister lives. He lives at number 10 Downing Street. Whitehall is a wide street leading to Parliament Square. This square is very large. On the left you can see a long grey building with towers - the **Houses of Parliament**.

Sights of London

The large clock in one of the towers is **Big Ben**. We can hear it every hour. Big Ben is the biggest clock bell in Britain. It weighs 13, 5 tons. It was called Big Ben after Sir Benjamin Hall, who was given the job of having the bell hoisted up. He was a very tall and stout man, whose nickname was “Big Ben”. So people all over the world know the clock as Big Ben.



Sights of London

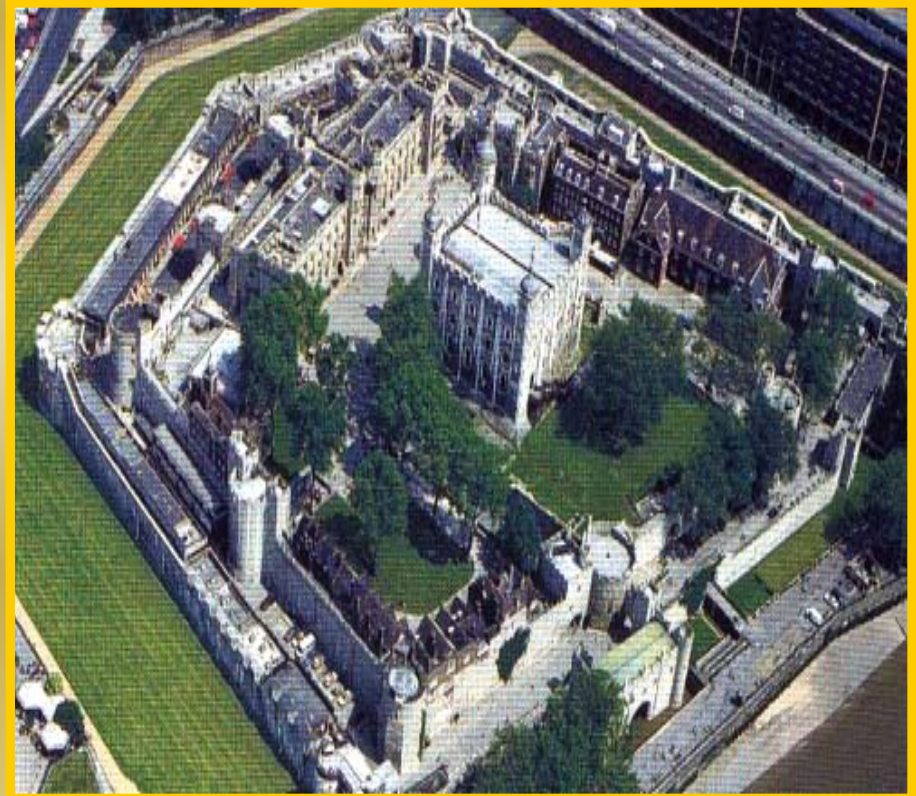
Buckingham Palace is the official London residence of the Queen. When the flag is flying on the top she is at home. It is a wonderful building with a monument in front of it which is the Queen Victoria Memorial. It was built in the 18th century and rebuilt later by the architect John Nash. A lot of tourists go to Buckingham Palace every year. They stand outside and see the Changing of the Guard. It happens every day at 11.30 a.m.



Sights of London

The heart of London is the City. It is the oldest part of London. There are many banks and other offices there too. You can visit some interesting places in the City or near it. One of them is **the Tower of London**. The Tower of London was a fortress, a palace, a prison and the King's Zoo.

Now it is the museum. The oldest part of the Tower is the White Tower. You can see a lot of interesting things in the halls of the White Tower. Its square walls are white and very tall. It was built in the 11th century by William the Conqueror. There are always black ravens in the Tower of London. People keep them in the Tower of London and look after them very well as they believe that London will be rich while ravens live there.



Sights of London

Not far from the Tower of London is **Tower Bridge**, built in 1894. It is one of the famous bridges across the Thames. It was designed so that it opens and ships go up and down the River Thames.



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The centre of London is **Trafalgar Square**. Some people say it is the most beautiful place in London. In the middle of the square stands a tall column. It is a monument to Admiral Nelson. Four bronze lions look at the square from the monument.



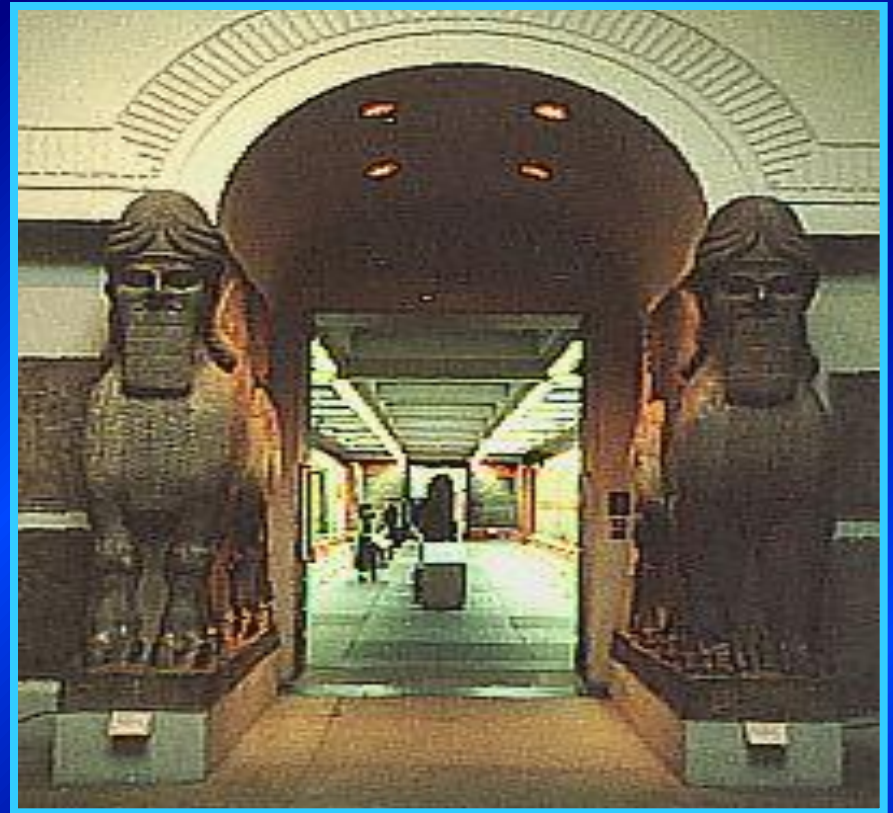
Sights of London

There are two beautiful fountains in the square. They are in front of the **National Gallery** which is one of the best picture galleries of the world. There are more than 850 masterpieces of all the European schools of painting. Every day many tourists visit this fine building with tall columns.



Sights of London

Another famous museum in London is the **British Museum**. It is in Great Russell Street. The British Museum is very old. It was founded in 1753. It has many departments covering a vast variety of subjects. One of its most interesting sections is a large library with a Reading Hall. It has more than six million books.



Sights of London

One of the greatest English churches, St. Paul's Cathedral, is not far from the Tower of London. The famous English architect Sir Christopher Wren built it in the 17th century after the Great Fire. It took Sir Christopher Wren 35 years. It is a beautiful building with many columns and towers. In one of its towers there is one of the largest bells in the world.



Sights of London

London has many parks. Londoners call them the “lungs of London”. They are St James’s Park, Regent’s Park, Hyde Park and others. The city’s largest park is **Hyde Park**. In spring and summer Londoners spend their time there. They walk, sit, play on the grass. Inside Hyde Park there is the Speakers’ Corner, a place famous for its open – air meetings. In the park anyone can stand up and say what he want. It is a very democratic park.



Sights of London

St. James's Park is one of the Royal Parks of London in the City of Westminster, just east of Buckingham Palace and west of Downing Street. The park has a small lake, St James's Park Lake, with two islands, Duck Island and West Island.



Sights of London

Piccadilly Circus is London's theatreland, and at night it is bright with electric signs. It is the meeting point of six streets. In the centre of the Circus stands the bronze statue of Eros on a high pedestal above the fountain. It was erected by architect Alfred Gilbert in 1892.



Sights of London

One of the most famous London theatres is the **Royal Opera House** or **Covent Garden** in Fleet Street.

It was a big fruit and vegetable market. It is now a tourist shopping centre with cafes and restaurants.

