

The world's newest landmark

The world's tallest building, the Burj Khalifa, opened in Dubai in January 2010. At 828 metres high, it houses a hotel, offices and apartments, with a restaurant and an observation deck at the top. When fully open, it will hold up to 35,000 people at one time. The Burj Khalifa is part of a new business development and is a striking landmark on the Dubai horizon, attracting business and tourists.

Whether natural or man-made, ancient or modern, landmarks become a symbol of a town, city, region, country or even a continent. They may be inspired by art, pride, religion, fear, power, or the need to honour a person or event, but they all have two things in common: they are clearly visible and distinctive.

Cities across the world have different sorts of man-made landmarks. One of the best-known symbols of Moscow is St Basil's Cathedral, while for New York it is probably the Statue of Liberty. It is impossible to imagine cities such as Sydney, Kuala Lumpur, Rio de Janeiro and Cairo without their distinctive landmarks. Some are not built to be the powerful symbol that they become: at first the Eiffel Tower, which was made to be a temporary structure, was not liked by some of the French public at first. However, today it is one of the most iconic symbols of Paris.

Recently, in northern England a huge steel statue called 'The Angel of the North' was put up, with wings measuring 54 metres across. Built on a former coal mine, once the main industry of the area, for many people it is now the symbol of the North; it is situated near a busy road, seen by about 33 million people a year.

Later this year work on the 'Angel of the South' is expected to start in Kent, an area east of London. In fact, this is not an angel but a giant white horse (33 times larger than life-size). The statue will be built close to Eurostar's international rail station, hopefully in time for the 2012 Olympics. It also has links with the past: a white horse is the historical symbol of the region.

The Burj Khalifa is perhaps the world's youngest landmark, representing the status and pride of Dubai. However, like other landmarks, it is also a breathtaking symbol of human potential.

1 Read the text quickly and find the six different landmarks that are mentioned.

2 Decide if the following statements are true (T) or false (F) or don't know (?), according to the text.

- 1 The Burj Khalifa opened in February 2010.
- 2 The Burj Khalifa will hold up to 35, 000 people.
- 3 Landmarks can be old and new, as well as natural and man-made.
- 4 Landmarks exist for many different reasons.
- 5 Everybody liked the Eiffel tower when it was first built.
- 6 Landmarks are always built to be landmarks.
- 7 Millions of people drive past the Angel of the North in their cars.
- 8 The planned landmark in the south will look like an angel.
- 9 The Angel of the South is both a historical and modern-day symbol.
- 10 Landmarks are more than just a symbol of a place.

3 Match the adjectives to their definitions.

striking visible ancient breathtaking giant distinctive powerful iconic

- 1 when something is so beautiful that you might even stop breathing for a few seconds.
- 2 very large;

- 3 something or someone that is able to control or influence what people do or think, e.g. *Barack Obama*.
- 4 extremely old.
- 5 easy to recognize because of being different from other people or things of the same type.
- 6 very famous and well-known, and believed to represent a particular place or idea.
- 7 attracting your interest because of an unusual feature.
- 8 able to be seen

4 With your partner, think of at least four landmarks and describe them using different adjectives from the list above. You can use one or two of the adjectives in each sentence, e.g. *The Pyramids are both ancient and iconic*.

5 The text mentions that landmarks are inspired by art, pride, religion, fear, power, to honour someone or something. Look at the following landmarks. What do you think was / were the main reason(s) why they were built?

- 1 St Basil's Cathedral, Moscow
- 2 The Great Wall, China
- 3 The Sydney Opera House, Sydney
- 4 The Colosseum, Rome
- 5 The Taj Mahal, India
- 6 Mount Rushmore National Memorial, South Dakota, US
- 7 Petronas Towers, Kuala Lumpur
- 8 The Tower of London, London
- 9 The Blue Mosque, Istanbul
- 10 Christ the Redeemer, Rio de Janeiro

6 Think about these questions:

- a Which famous landmarks have you seen? What did you find memorable about them?
- b Which landmarks would you like to see and why?
- c Do you think landmarks are sometimes a waste of money?
- d Which modern landmarks do you think will last 500-1000 years, as other ancient monuments have, such as the Colosseum, The Pyramids or The Great Wall?
- e If you were able to design a landmark for your own town / city / region, what would it be and why?

Glossary

observation deck (*noun*) - a place near or at the top of a high building, from where have good views of the surrounding area

symbol (*noun*) - someone or something that represents a particular idea or quality

represent (*verb*) - to be a sign or symbol of something: *the colour red commonly represents danger*.

potential (*noun*) - the possibility to develop or achieve something in the future

pride (*noun*) - a feeling of pleasure at your own achievements or those of someone you love

religion (*noun*) - belief in god or gods, or a particular system of beliefs in a god or in gods: *the Christian / Hindu / Muslim religion*.

statue (*noun*) - an image of a person, animal or thing that is made of stone, wood, metal, etc.

mine (*noun*) - a large hole or tunnel underground from which people take coal, gold, etc.

wing (*noun*) - one of the parts on a bird or insect that move up and down and allow it to fly