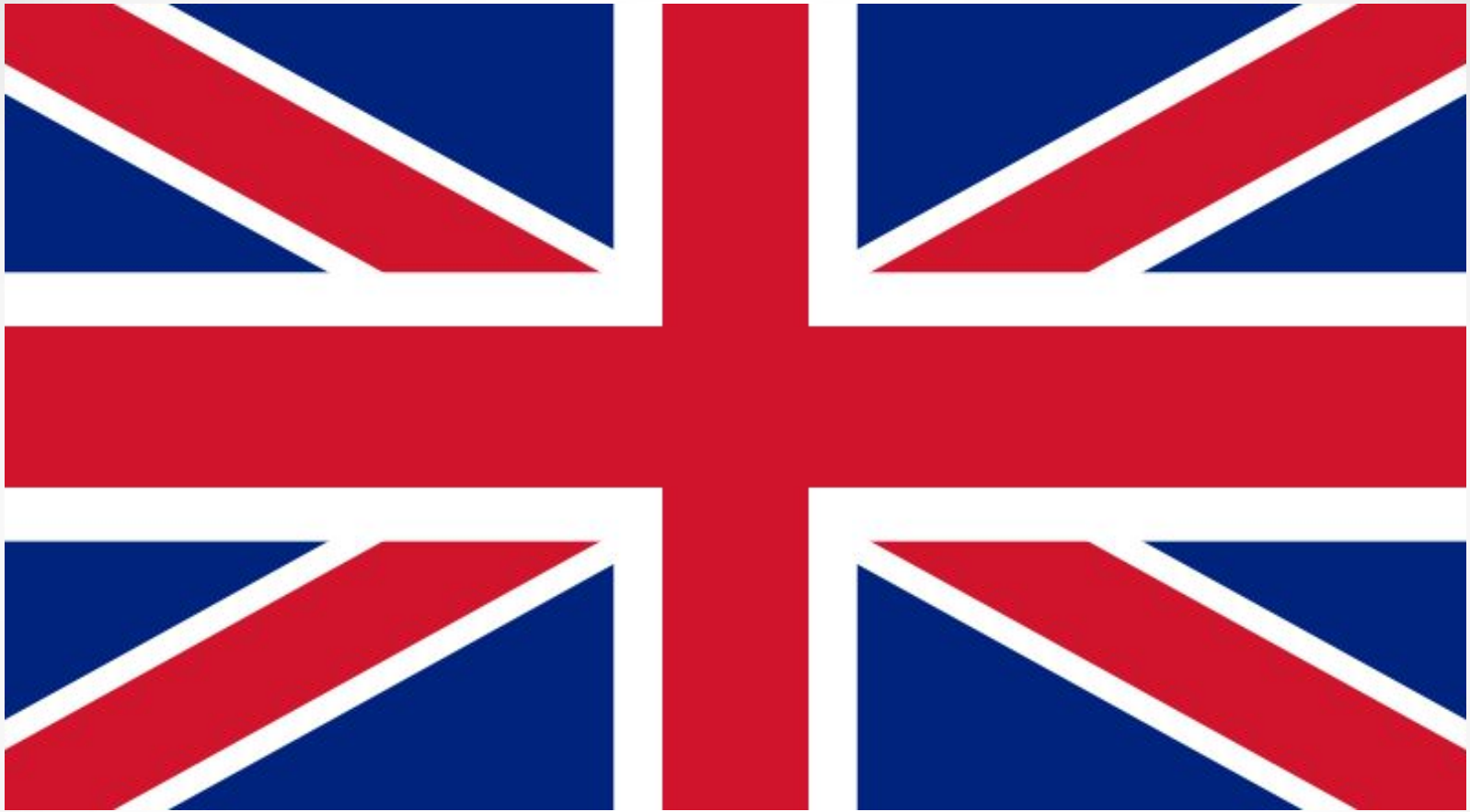




# LONDON





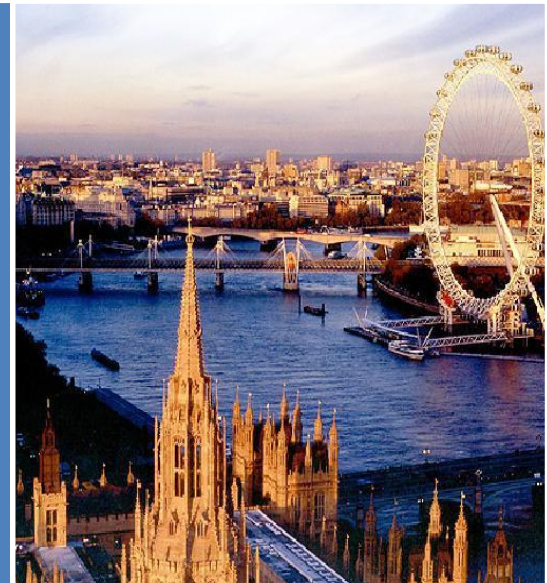


London is the capital of Great Britain.  
The full name of the country is the United Kingdom  
of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.



Today London is one of the largest cities in the world. Its population is more than eight million.

London is situated on both sides of the Thames. There are fourteen bridges across the Thames.





One of the famous bridges is Tower Bridge. It is a symbol of London. Tower Bridge was built in 1894 and it has 2 towers, each 65 meters high and its length is 224 meters. Tower Bridge can open itself for ships going to the Atlantic ocean.

Traditionally London is  
divided into several parts:  
the City, the West End,  
the East End and  
Westminster.





The City is the oldest part of London, its financial and business center. There are many offices, companies and banks in this part of the capital. The heart of the City is the Stock Exchange. The Tower of London and St Paul's Cathedral are situated in the City. During the day the City has a population of half a million. At night the City is a different place. There's no traffic and very few people. It's quiet and empty.



The Tower of London is a very old building in London. It is nine hundred years old. The Tower of London stands on the Thames.

In the early days of the history of England the English kings lived in the Tower. Then it was a prison where many people died, black ravens had much food near the walls of the Tower in those years.

The black ravens live in the gardens of the Tower now. The English people like them very much. A man looks after the ravens and gives them meat in the morning and in the evening. Old legend says that if the ravens leave, the Tower and kingdom will fall.

Now the Tower of London is a museum and many people from other countries come to see it. They see the dark stone halls with small windows and thick doors. The walls of the Tower are five meters thick. In the museum they can see many old guns.





St. Paul's Cathedral is a beautiful sight standing out above the other buildings. The massive dome is topped by a gold cross which glitters when the sun strikes. You may climb up the three hundred and sixty five steps to the dome if you wish. Half way up you reach the whispering Gallery, where , if you press your ear to the wall, you can hear the softest whisper from the other side of the dome.

Round St. Paul's is the original London, the oldest part, with the history of almost two thousand years. Old St. Paul's was built during Norman times. It was burnt in the Great Fire that destroyed London in 1666. The cathedral that replaced it, the most striking building in the City today, was designed by Sir Christopher Wren, the architect who designed many of the other City churches. Many of these were destroyed or badly damaged by bombing during the second World War. St. Paul's escaped the fires that destroyed many of the buildings all round it.





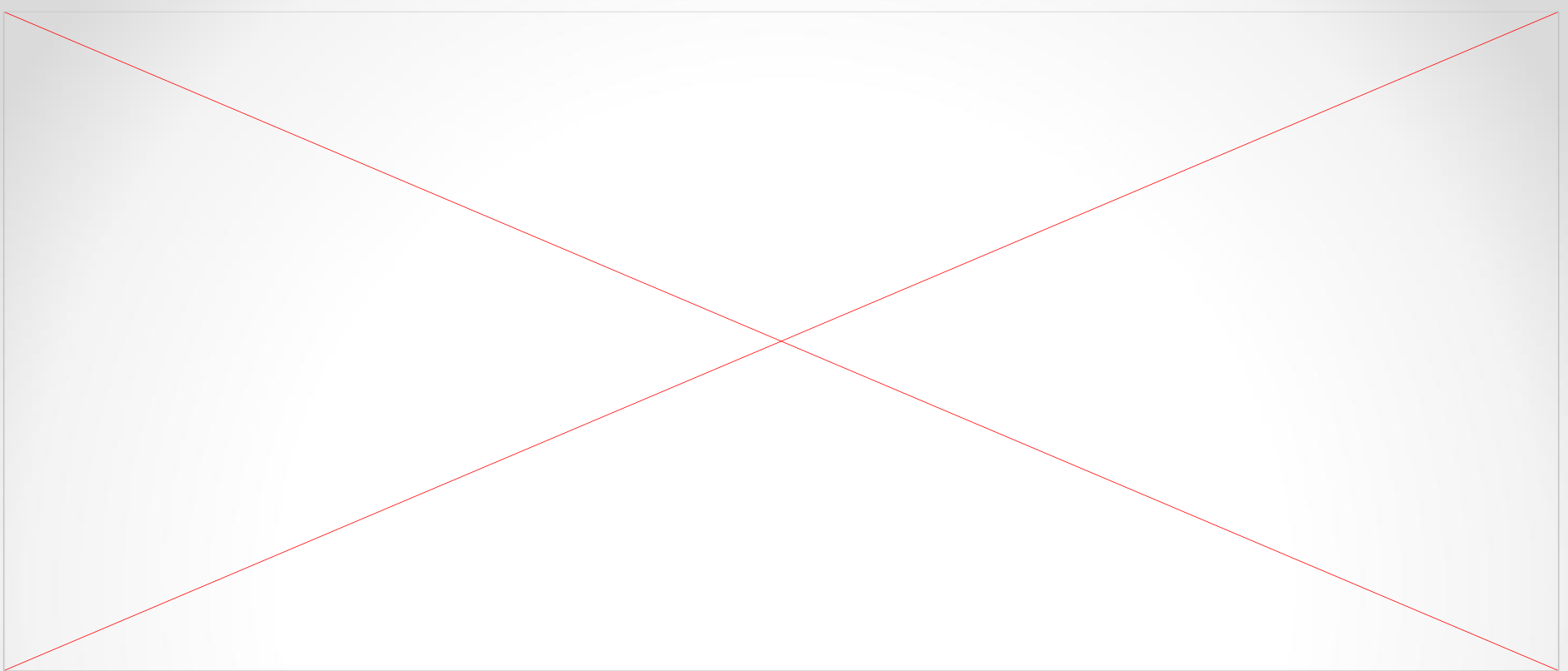


Westminster, with its Palace and Abbey, is six hundred years younger.

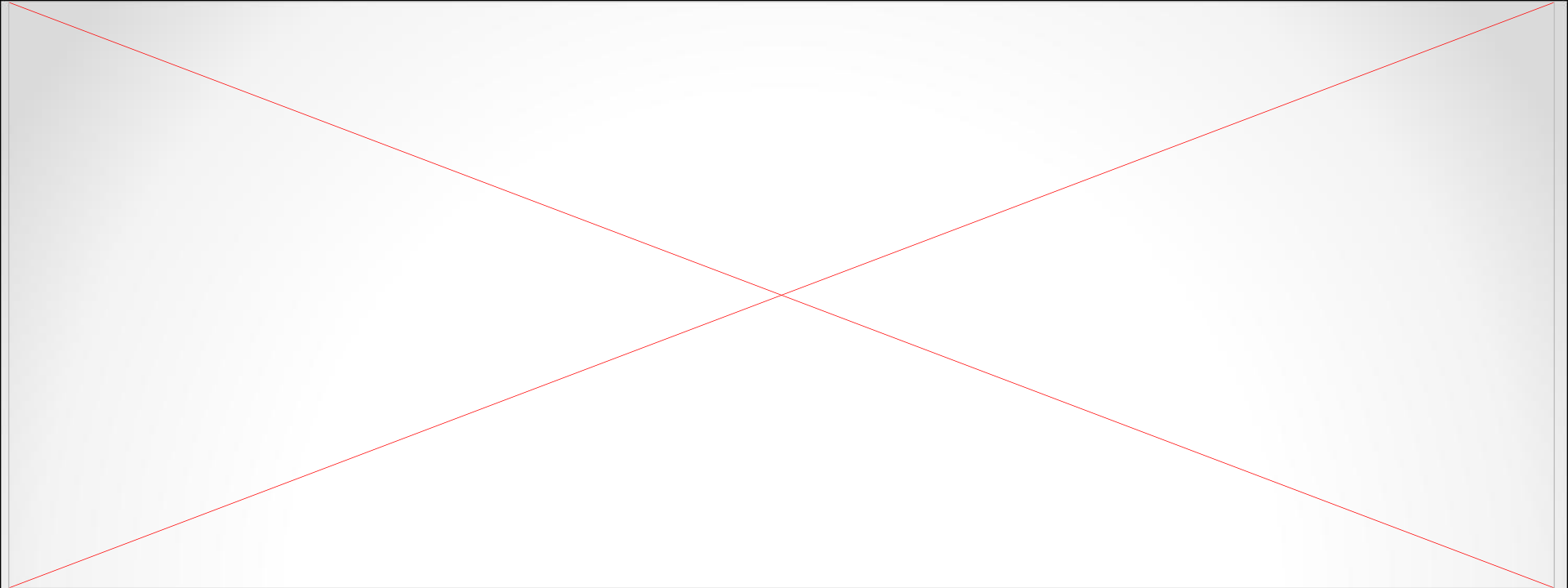


Westminster Abbey is regarded as the center of the Westminster area. In this lovely building we can learn much about events of long ago. Most of the kings and queens of England since William the Conqueror have been crowned here, and you may see the ancient Coronation Chair. Many great men have been honoured by burial in Westminster Abbey, and the church is full of memorials to kings, queens, statesmen, writers, scientists and explorers .



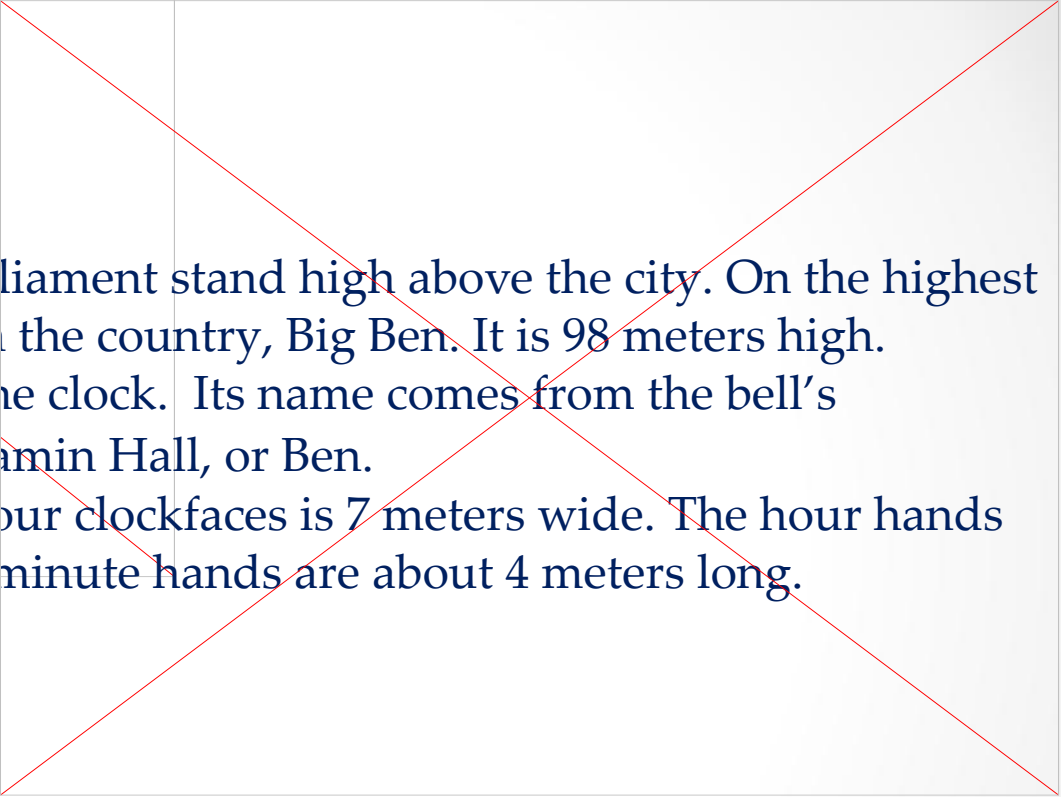


Buckingham Palace is one of the major tourist attractions in London. It is the official residency of the British monarchy. At the moment British monarchy is led by Queen Elizabeth II. Each time the royal family is in the palace, a flag flies on the roof. The palace was built in 1705 by the Duke of Buckingham. Queen Victoria was the first monarch to reside in the palace. She moved there in 1837 leaving Kensington Palace, where she grew up. Buckingham Palace has nearly 600 rooms, including a throne room, a ballroom, a dining-room, picture gallery and even a swimming-pool. Some of its rooms can be visited in summertime, only when the Queen is not at home.

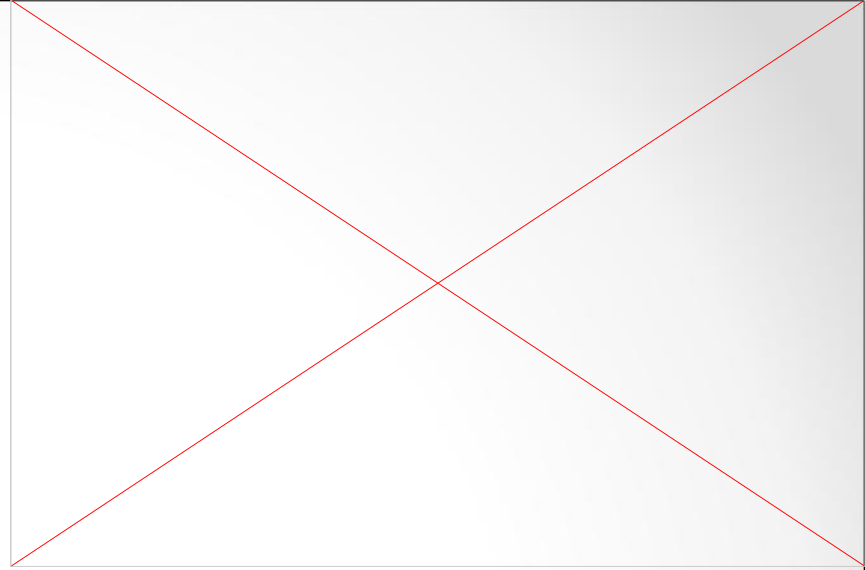


Westminster is the administrative center of London. The Houses of Parliament, the seat of the British Government, are there. Parliament is made up of two chambers — the House of Commons and the House of Lords. The members of the House of Lords are not elected: they qualify to sit in the House because they are bishops of the Church of England, aristocrats who have inherited their seats from their fathers, people with titles. The House of Commons, by contrast, has 650 seats which are occupied by Members of Parliament (MPs) who are elected by the British public.

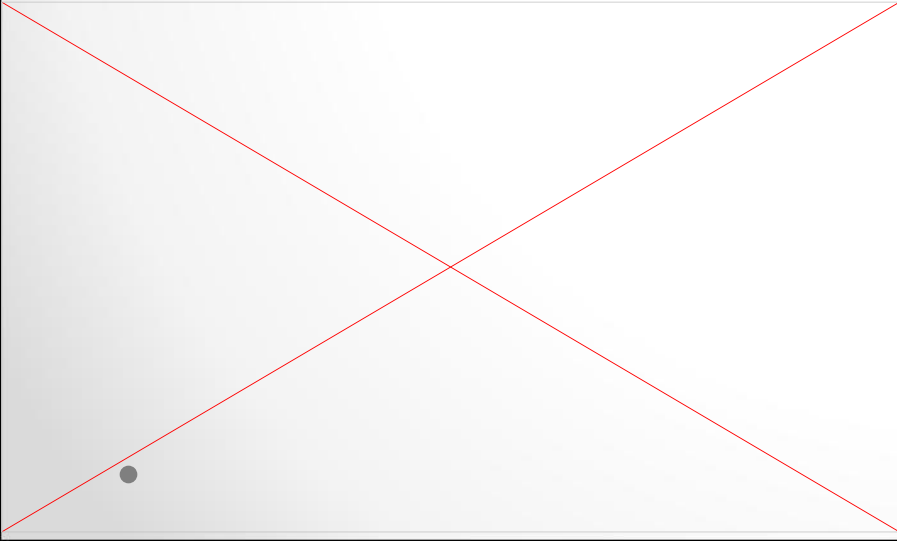




The Towers of the Houses of Parliament stand high above the city. On the highest tower there is the largest clock in the country, Big Ben. It is 98 meters high. But Big Ben is really the bell of the clock. Its name comes from the bell's commissioner of works, Sir Benjamin Hall, or Ben. It weighs 13.5 tons. Each of the four clockfaces is 7 meters wide. The hour hands are about 3 meters long and the minute hands are about 4 meters long.



To the west of Westminster is West End, the richest part of London. There are a lot of theatres, cinemas and concert halls, large museums, the most luxurious hotels, the largest department stores, and the most famous shops.







In the center of the West End there is a famous Trafalgar Square with the statue of Lord Nelson. The Square is named in honour of the British victory, led by Admiral Lord Nelson, at the Battle of Trafalgar in 1805.



Not far from Trafalgar square is Piccadilly, a very well-known London name. Piccadilly Circus is the center of night life in the West End. This is one of the most popular meeting points of London.

Piccadilly was named after Robert Baker, who lived near where Piccadilly is now. Here he manufactured shirt frills of “pikadills” which earned his house the nickname of “Piccadilly Hall”, and in time “Piccadilly” we use to describe the surrounding area.







There are many museums in London. For example, the British Museum, the Natural History Museum, the Science Museum. The British Museum is one of the most famous museums in the world with the richest collections. It exhibits a lot of things from all over the world from prehistoric period to modern times. The most famous exhibits of the British Museum are the Parthenon Sculptures, the Rosetta Stone, the mummies of Ancient Egypt. The entry to the museum is free but for several special exhibitions you need tickets.

The most famous museum of wax figures is Madame Tussaud's. It was opened in 1835. Thousands of famous people, artists, writers, politicians and other celebrities have been created in wax. During the tourist season waiting lines can be very long.







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The city of London is well known for its large and beautiful parks. Hyde Park is the largest of London's royal parks. It is about 2km long and over 1 km wide. Hyde Park is a popular area for free time activities, including jogging, running and horse riding. Speaker's Corner, near the north-eastern entrance of Hyde Park is a place where Londoners gather and listen to people who talk about all kinds of things.





**London Zoo** is the world's oldest scientific zoo. It was opened in London on 27 April 1828, and was originally intended to be used as a collection for scientific study. It was eventually opened to the public in 1847. Today it houses a collection of 755 species of animals, with 16,802 individuals, making it one of the largest collections in the United Kingdom. London Zoo is situated in Regent's Park and the zoo is sometimes called **Regent's Zoo**.



Every large city is full of contrasts,  
but London is the city of contrasts.

