

Speaking Card 25

London

● Where is London?

London is the capital city of the United Kingdom. The UK is made up of England, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales. London is located in southern England. The Romans started this city in the year 43. The River Thames [temz] flows between North and South London.

● How big is the capital city?

London is one of the biggest cities in Europe. About 8.5 million people live in the capital. It is a very multicultural city, with over 300 different languages spoken.

● What famous buildings and landmarks can you see?

The Tower of London was a prison. William the Conqueror (= Dobyvatel) built it in the year 1066. It is the place where the crown jewels are now kept. Next to it, there is the famous Tower Bridge, which opens up for ships so they can pass along the River Thames. Buckingham Palace is where the Queen lives when she is in London. Westminster Abbey is a church where kings and queens are crowned and buried. Other famous buildings include St Paul's Cathedral, the clock tower Big Ben and the Houses of Parliament. The most popular tourist attraction now is the London Eye, a 135-metre-tall Ferris wheel, from which you can see the city.

● Can you tell me about any museums or art galleries?

The national museums are free in London. The biggest museums are the British Museum, the National History Museum and the Science Museum. There are also many smaller museums, like the Museum of London Docklands and the Museum of London. Famous art galleries include the Tate Modern, the National Gallery and the National Portrait Gallery.

● Can you tell me about the transport in London?

London has famous red double-decker buses (tall buses with two levels) and black cabs. It was

the first city to build an underground railway line, in 1863. It is called the 'tube'. There are over 270 stations on the tube! You can also get a train from London to mainland Europe. It's called the Eurostar and goes from St Pancras Station through a tunnel under the English Channel to Paris and Brussels.

● What can you do in London?

You can do lots of tourist activities: go on the London Eye, travel on a red London bus, walk along the River Thames, visit Buckingham Palace or see the Changing of the Guard (a special ceremony where the guards march) and visit museums (Madame Tussauds) and sights. You can also go shopping in London in Oxford Street, in Camden Market or at Covent Garden.

● What entertainment can you find in the capital?

There is always something happening in London – it could be a big pop band playing at the O2 arena or a small concert in a pub or bar. You can find all types of music from pop to jazz, classical concerts to hip-hop. There are many theatre productions and the 'West End' is where some of the largest theatres show famous musicals like *Cats*, *The Phantom of the Opera* or *Mamma Mia*. There are lots of restaurants, pubs and clubs for dancing.

● Can you tell me about London's parks?

There are lots of parks and green open spaces in the city. In Hyde Park you can find Speaker's Corner, where people can debate or talk about things. Kensington Gardens is where you can find Kensington Palace (another royal palace). Green Park is on one side of Buckingham Palace, and St James's Park is on the other side, with a large lake and lots of ducks and birds. Regent's Park is near London's Zoo and Greenwich Park has a famous observatory, with a planetarium and the National Maritime Museum, where you can learn everything about ships.

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