

PENGUIN ACTIVE READING

Wonders of the World

Vicky Shipton





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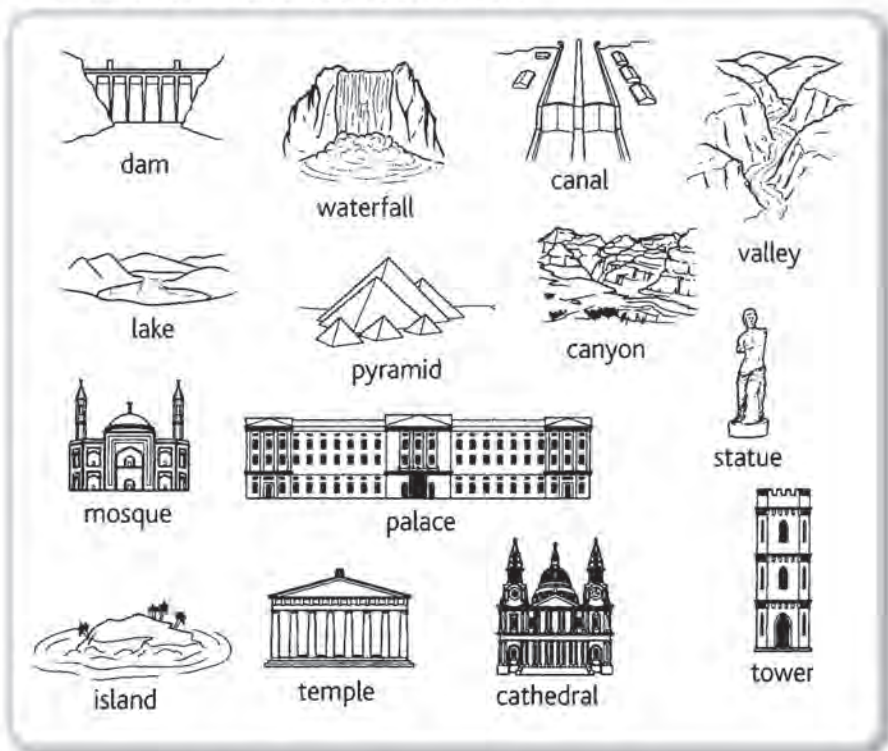
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What's the book about?

Look at the pictures and talk to another student.

- 1 Can you find all of these in your country? Name some of them.
- 2 Which are the most famous in the world?

canals: the Panama Canal, the Suez Canal ...



1.2 What comes first?

Look at the pictures in Chapter 1. What do you know about these old places? Which countries are they in? What were they for? Make notes in your notebook.

The Great Pyramid (page 2) Chichen Itza (page 3)
 The Great Wall of China (pages 4–5) Petra (page 6)
 The Colosseum (page 7) Machu Picchu (page 7).

Ancient Wonders

How can we say that one building is more “important” than another from a different time and place?

In **Ancient** Greece, about 2,500 years **ago**, the writer Herodotus made a famous **list** of seven great places. Five of these places were Greek. (Herodotus was Greek!) But Herodotus called his list the “Seven **Wonders** of the World.” Many people at that time wanted to see the famous places on the list.

Today only one thing on Herodotus’s list is standing—the Great Pyramid in Egypt—but many people today discuss the “wonders of the world.” Often they list only seven new wonders because there were seven things on the first list. But of course there are many important, interesting, and beautiful places in the world. So which seven places go on the list? This is a very difficult question. Do buildings go on the list because they are the biggest—or the most important? And how can we say that one building is more “important” than another from a different time and place?

Some of the wonders of the world are old and some are new. Some are buildings and some are **natural** wonders. In this book, you can read about all kinds of wonderful places.

ancient /'eɪnʃənt/ (adj) An *ancient* building is very, very old.

ago /ə'gəʊ/ (adv) Herodotus lived a long time *ago*.

list /lɪst/ (n/v) Before they go to a supermarket, many people write a *list*. They only buy things from their *list*.

wonder /'wʌndə/ (n) A *wonder* is a great or beautiful thing.

natural /'nætʃərəl/ (adj) Trees, rivers, and mountains are all *natural* things.



Pyramids

Some of the most famous—and the strangest—ancient buildings are pyramids.

The Great Pyramid

The Great Pyramid at Giza, near Cairo in Egypt, was on Herodotus's list of Seven Wonders, and it is very famous today, too. This pyramid is 4,500 years old and 150 meters tall. People think that there are about 2.3 **million** big **stones** in it. Each stone is very heavy—more than 2,000 kilos. So how did the Egyptians build the pyramid with these big, heavy stones? There are a lot of ideas, but we do not really know.

We do know the answer to another question—*why* did the Egyptians build the pyramids? For the ancient Egyptians, the end of life in our world was the start of another life. The pyramids were for the country's dead **rulers**. The dead rulers—and many of their things—went into the pyramid. The rulers were rich when they were dead, too!

Khufu built the Great Pyramid. It took about twenty years. Inside the pyramid there are three big rooms.

Today Giza is one of the most famous places in the world. The Great Pyramid and the other two pyramids there are a bridge to the ancient world.



million /'mɪljən/ (n) One *million* is 1,000,000.

stone /stəʊn/ (n) *Stone* is very hard ground. We often build walls with *stone*.

ruler /'ru:lə/ (n) The *ruler* is the head of a country.

Chichen Itza



The Egyptian pyramids are not the only pyramids in the world. You can also see pyramids in **parts** of Mexico.

Chichen Itza was an important city of the Mayan people in the Yucatan **area** of Mexico. The Mayans started to build it in the sixth **century**, but the city was at its biggest and most important hundreds of years later. At one time there were hundreds of buildings in the city.

Now visitors can see about thirty buildings. The biggest is the Temple of Kukulcan in the center of the city. Inside the pyramid there is a second, older temple with stairs down to a room with a ruler's chair and a statue.

Near the pyramid is a big place for a Mayan ball game. How dangerous was this game? A picture in stone on one of the walls gives the answer. It shows some ball players, and one of them has no head!



part /part/ (n) A **part** is some, but not all of something.

area /'eɪrɪə/ (n) An **area** is a big part of a country.

century /'sentʃəri/ (n) A **century** is 100 years.

Wonders of the World

Vicky Shipton

American English

Original

Around the world there are many beautiful places. There are famous buildings, old and new. Some are interesting; some are important. Some are the tallest or the biggest in the world. The Great Wall, Machu Picchu, the Grand Canyon, the Taj Mahal ... Which are your wonders of the world?

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