

Going underground on London Underground

Most people who visit London tend to try out the London Underground. Going on the tube is an experience in its own right. It is part of the exciting London experience when seeing the sights. Oyster cards are a popular way to get around. London Underground first opened on January 10th 1863 with the opening of the Metropolitan line between Paddington and Farringdon. Originally, there were many companies who each built separate lines. It was only in 1902 that a Charles Yerkes bought most of the lines, putting them under one company. Over the years the network grew into what it is today. Londoners and tourists alike all use the famous Underground map to get about the city. Created in 1931, Harry Beck's Tube map is a classic map design of non geographical layout and colour coded lines. Many other transport lines around the world copied the idea. Compared to the real map it simplified how to get around the capital quickly.

The most famous tube phrase must be 'Mind the gap' which one can hear at Bank Underground on the Central line. The longest escalator is at Angel Underground station. It measures some 60m (197ft) long. Underground stations are identified by their 'roundels' – a round red circle with a blue bar across it. This has the name of the Underground station on it. Victoria is London's busiest tube station with 78m passengers a year. There are a total of 270 underground stations and around 400km (248.5 miles) of tube line, making it the second longest tube network after Shanghai. It is the third busiest network in Europe after Paris and Moscow. Popular Underground stations include Piccadilly, Oxford Circus and Covent Garden. Over the years many stations have closed or been renamed. Trafalgar Square tube station in 1979 was renamed Charing Cross. Former London Underground stations include North Weald, Ongar, British Museum, Aldgate East, and Wood Lane. London in the future is to get a new East-West Crossrail similar to the North-South Crossrail routes that now operate under the River Thames.

Note: There are 11 underground lines: 1) The Central line; 2) The Bakerloo line; 3) The Circle line; 4) The Jubilee line; 5) The District line; 6) The Victoria line; 7) The Piccadilly line; 8) The Northern line; 9) The Metropolitan line; 10) The Hammersmith & City line; 11) The Waterloo & City line. A 12th line, the East London line, closed in 2007, reopened in 2010 as part of London Overground.

Category: London / The Underground / Underground stations
Level: Intermediate / Upper intermediate

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EXERCISES

1. London Underground: Briefly, what three things do you know about London Underground? Go round the room swapping details.

2. Dictation: The teacher will read four to six lines of the article slowly and clearly. Students will write down what they hear. The teacher will repeat the passage slowly again. Self-correct your work from page one - filling in spaces and correcting mistakes. Be honest with yourself on the number of errors. Advise the teacher of your total number of errors. Less than five is very good. Ten is acceptable. Any more is room for improvement! More than twenty - you need to do some work!

3. Reading: The students should now read the article aloud, swapping readers every paragraph.

4. Vocabulary: Students should now look through the article and underline any vocabulary they do not know. Look in dictionaries. Discuss and help each other out. The teacher will go through and explain any unknown words or phrases.

5. The article: Students should look through the article with the teacher.

- a) What is the article about?
- b) What do you think about the article?

6. Let's think! Think of five things you might see on a London Underground train. Then add five things you might see on a London Underground station platform. Write them below. Explain to your partner why you chose these.

| Underground train | Underground station on the platform |
|-------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1 | 1 |
| 2 | 2 |
| 3 | 3 |
| 4 | 4 |
| 5 | 5 |

The teacher will choose some pairs to discuss their findings in front of the class.

8. Let's think! In pairs. On the board write as many words as you can to do with **London Underground**. *One-two minutes*. Compare with other teams. Using your words compile a short dialogue together.

9. Let's roleplay 1: Underground FM: In pairs/groups. One of you is the interviewer. The others are one of the following people. You are in the *Underground FM* radio studio in London. Today's interview is about: *London Underground*. (Imagine!) Discuss the stations, the reconstruction, the travelling, the hold-ups, the commuting, the people you see, etc...

| | | | |
|---|---------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| 1 | A travel journalist | 3 | London Underground boss |
| 2 | A commuter | 4 | A worker on the London Underground |

The teacher will choose some pairs to roleplay their interview in front of the class.

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10. Let's roleplay 2: *In pairs.* You are unexpectedly stuck in a tube train in London. You don't know why. You have been there for 15 minutes. Get talking to your partner, who comes from another country, about where you are going, the weather, your job, London, the tube, about getting out, etc... *5 minutes.*

11. Let's do 'The Article Quiz': Have the students quiz each other in pairs. They score a point for each correct answer and half a point each time they have to look at the article for help. See who can get the highest score!

Student A

- 1) Who created the London Underground map and in what year?
- 2) What is the famous tube phrase?
- 3) What will you see at the Angel Underground?
- 4) How many Underground stations are there in London?
- 5) Name three Underground stations that have closed.

Student B

- 1) How many tube lines are there?
- 2) What year did the first underground line open in London?
- 3) Where is the longest tube network?
- 4) What is a 'roundel'?
- 5) What happened to Trafalgar Square Underground station?

12. Let's think! Think of five London Underground stations. Then add five things you might see in a London Underground station (BUT not what you might see on the platform!). Write them below. Explain to your partner why you chose these.

| London Underground stations | Underground station - what you might see (not on the platform area!) |
|-----------------------------|--|
| 1 | 1 |
| 2 | 2 |
| 3 | 3 |
| 4 | 4 |
| 5 | 5 |

The teacher will choose some pairs to discuss their findings in front of the class.

13. Underground networks: In pairs, compare London Underground to other tube networks (the U-Bahn, the Metro etc...) around the world, (for example, Shanghai, Paris, Berlin, Moscow, Budapest, New York, Amsterdam, Singapore). Which is best? Why? Which is worst? Why?

14. Let's write an e-mail: Write and send a 200 word e-mail to your teacher about: **London Underground**. Your e-mail can be read out in class.

15. Sentence starters: Finish these sentence starters. Correct your mistakes. Compare what other people have written.

- a) Underground trains _____
- b) The tube _____
- c) My favourite Underground station is _____

DISCUSSION

Student A questions

- 1) Did the headline make you want to read the article?
- 2) Have you ever been on London Underground? If yes, explain.
- 3) What do you think of travelling by tube?
- 4) Does your city/town have an underground? Do you think it should have? Explain.
- 5) Think of three advantages of travelling by tube.
- 6) Think of three disadvantages of travelling by tube.
- 7) When was the last time you went on the tube? Why?
- 8) What do you think of London Underground?
- 9) What do people do on the tube when travelling? Explain.
- 10) Have you ever been stuck on the tube for a long period of time? If yes, explain.

Student B questions

- 1) What do you think about what you read?
- 2) Have you ever been on an underground train? If yes, where?
- 3) How does the tube economically help a city?
- 4) Think of four other types of public transportation systems.
- 5) What do you think of the modernisation of London Underground?
- 6) Should London Underground evolve further?
- 7) Why do you think some London Underground stations closed?
- 8) How big does a city need to be in order to get a tube network built?
- 9) When are you next planning to visit London? Will it include a visit on the tube?
- 10) Did you like this discussion?

SPEAKING

Let's discuss! Underground networks

Allow 10-15 minutes – As a class / small groups / pairs / 1 to 1

Consider the following points to discuss:

Maybe compare London Underground with another tube network you know.

Facilities, toilets, ticket machines, ticket booths, escalators, lifts, modernisation of stations, original station décor, vending machines, overhead sign information, old tube train compartments, old tube trains, new tube trains, air conditioning in new compartments, smoking, buskers, commuters, tourists, tube network maps, tube connections at certain Underground stations, security, security cameras, litter, litter bins, mice and rats!

Add more of your own ideas...

The teacher can moderate the session.

GAP FILL: READING:

Put the words into the gaps in the text.

Going underground on London Underground

Most people who visit London (1)_____ to try out the London Underground. Going on the (2)_____ is an experience in its own right. It is part of the exciting London experience when seeing the sights. Oyster cards are a popular way to get around. London Underground first opened on January 10th 1863 with the opening of the Metropolitan (3)_____ between Paddington and Farringdon. Originally, there were many companies who each built separate lines. It was only in 1902 that a Charles Yerkes bought most of the lines, putting them under one (4)_____. Over the years the network grew into what it is today. Londoners and tourists alike all use the famous (5)_____ map to get about the city. Created in 1931, Harry Beck's Tube (6)_____ is a classic map design of non geographical (7)_____ and colour coded lines. Many other transport lines around the world copied the idea. Compared to the real map it (8)_____ how to get around the capital quickly.

layout

company

line

tube

map

tend

simplified

underground

The most famous tube phrase must be 'Mind the (1)_____' which one can hear at Bank Underground on the Central line. The longest escalator is at Angel Underground station. It measures some 60m (197ft) long. Underground stations are identified by their 'roundels' – a round red circle with a blue bar across it. This has the name of the Underground station on it. Victoria is London's busiest tube station with 78m (2)_____ a year. There are a total of 270 underground (3)_____ and around 400km (248.5 miles) of tube line, making it the second longest tube network after Shanghai. It is the third busiest (4)_____ in Europe after Paris and Moscow. (5)_____ Underground stations include Piccadilly, Oxford Circus and Covent Garden. Over the years many stations have closed or been renamed. Trafalgar Square tube station in 1979 was renamed Charing Cross. (6)_____ London Underground stations include North Weald, Ongar, British Museum, Aldgate East, and Wood Lane. London in the future is to get a new East-West Crossrail (7)_____ to the North-South Crossrail routes that now (8)_____ under the River Thames.

popular

operate

network

stations

passengers

gap

similar

former

GAP FILL: LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

Going underground on London Underground

Most people who visit London _____ London Underground. Going on the tube is an experience in its own right. It is part of the exciting _____ when seeing the sights. Oyster cards are a popular way to get around. London Underground first opened on January 10th 1863 with the opening of _____ between Paddington and Farringdon. Originally, there were many companies who each built separate lines. It was only in 1902 that a Charles Yerkes bought most of the lines, putting them under one company. Over the years the network grew into what it is today. Londoners and tourists _____ famous Underground map to get about the city. Created in 1931, Harry Beck's Tube map is a _____ of non geographical layout and colour coded lines. Many other transport lines around the world copied the idea. Compared to the real map it simplified _____ the capital quickly.

The most famous tube phrase must be '_____', _____ one can hear at Bank Underground on the Central line. The longest escalator is at Angel Underground station. It measures some 60m (197ft) long. Underground stations are identified by their 'roundels' – _____ with a blue bar across it. This has the name of the Underground station on it. Victoria is London's busiest tube station with 78m passengers a year. There are a total of 270 underground stations and around 400km (248.5 miles) of tube line, making it the _____ network after Shanghai. It is the third busiest network in Europe after _____. Popular Underground stations include Piccadilly, Oxford Circus and Covent Garden. Over the years many stations have closed or been renamed. _____ tube station in 1979 was renamed Charing Cross. Former London Underground stations include North Weald, Ongar, British Museum, Aldgate East, and Wood Lane. London in the future is to get a new East-West Crossrail similar to the North-South Crossrail routes that now operate _____.

GRAMMAR

Put the words into the gaps in the text.

Going underground on London Underground

Most people who visit London tend to try out the London Underground. Going on the tube is an experience in its own right. It is part of the exciting London experience (1)___ seeing the sights. Oyster cards are a popular way to get around. London Underground first opened on January 10th 1863 (2)___ the opening of the Metropolitan line between Paddington and Farringdon. Originally, there were many companies who each built separate lines. It was (3)___ in 1902 that a Charles Yerkes bought (4)___ of the lines, putting (5)___ under one company. Over the years the network grew into (6)___ it is today. Londoners and tourists alike all use the famous Underground map to get (7)___ the city. Created in 1931, Harry Beck's Tube map is a classic map design of non geographical layout and colour coded lines. (8)___ other transport lines around the world copied the idea. Compared to the real map it simplified how to get around the capital quickly.

them

about

when

many

with

only

what

most

The most famous tube phrase must be 'Mind the gap' which one (1)___ hear at Bank Underground on the Central line. The longest escalator is (2)___ Angel Underground station. It measures some 60m (197ft) long. Underground stations are identified (3)___ their 'roundels' – a round red circle with a blue bar across (4)___ . This has the name of the Underground station on it. Victoria is London's busiest tube station with 78m passengers (5)___ year. There are a total of 270 underground stations and around 400km (248.5 miles) of tube line, making it the second longest tube network after Shanghai. It is the third busiest network in Europe after Paris (6)___ Moscow. Popular Underground stations include Piccadilly, Oxford Circus and Covent Garden. Over the years many stations have closed (7)___ been renamed. Trafalgar Square tube station in 1979 was renamed Charing Cross. Former London Underground stations include North Weald, Ongar, British Museum, Aldgate East, and Wood Lane. London in the future is to get a new East-West Crossrail similar to the North-South Crossrail routes that now operate under (8)___ River Thames.

at

or

it

can

a

and

by

the

SPELLING TEST

The teacher will ask the class individually to spell the following words that are in the article. Afterwards, check your answers with your teacher, using the following ratings: **Pass = 12, Good = 15, Very good = 18, Excellent = 20**

| | | | |
|----|--------------|----|--------------|
| 1 | Underground | 11 | busiest |
| 2 | tube | 12 | quickly |
| 3 | originally | 13 | escalator |
| 4 | Metropolitan | 14 | phrase |
| 5 | routes | 15 | geographical |
| 6 | former | 16 | roundels |
| 7 | operate | 17 | passengers |
| 8 | River Thames | 18 | transport |
| 9 | Oyster | 19 | network |
| 10 | experience | 20 | simplified |

LINKS

<http://video.search.yahoo.com/search/video?p=london+underground+life>
<http://www.tfl.gov.uk/modalpages/2625.aspx>
<http://www.london-tubemap.com/>
http://images.search.yahoo.com/search/images?adv_prop=image&fr=chr-greentree_ff&va=london+underground+map
<http://www.afn.org/~alplatt/tube.html>
<http://www.tfl.gov.uk/gettingaround/1106.aspx>

ANSWERS

GAP FILL: Going underground on London Underground: Most people who visit London **tend** to try out the London Underground. Going on the **tube** is an experience in its own right. It is part of the exciting London experience when seeing the sights. Oyster cards are a popular way to get around. London Underground first opened on January 10th 1863 with the opening of the Metropolitan **line** between Paddington and Farringdon. Originally, there were many companies who each built separate lines. It was only in 1902 that a Charles Yerkes bought most of the lines, putting them under one **company**. Over the years the network grew into what it is today. Londoners and tourists alike all use the famous **Underground** map to get about the city. Created in 1931, Harry Beck's Tube **map** is a classic map design of non geographical **layout** and colour coded lines. Many other transport lines around the world copied the idea. Compared to the real map it **simplified** how to get around the capital quickly.

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