

Name: _____ () Class: _____ Date: _____

You have found a travel blog entry about another World Heritage Site. Read the entry.

Text 2 Travel blog entry

Strolling through the streets of Istanbul

① Turkey's most populous city Istanbul has always been something of a paradox—a cultural crossroads between East and West, and a thriving metropolis where tradition and modernity both prevail. Straddling Europe and Asia, Istanbul is the country's cultural and financial hub. This strategic location at the gateway between two continents has not only
5 made Istanbul an important political and economic city for thousands of years, but also given it a difficult history. The historical areas of Istanbul have even been designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site. There's perhaps nowhere on earth more mesmerizing than this vibrant city.

② If you want to understand a place and its people,
10 there's nothing better than studying its history. And Istanbul's is a riveting one. The city, first built in the seventh century BC, grew in significance in 330 AD, when the Roman emperor Constantine made it the new capital of his empire, which was called
15 Constantinople in honour of the emperor.

③ Once I set foot in Istanbul, I headed for the Hagia Sophia, Turkey's most visited tourist attraction in 2015. This structure, originally designed as a basilica, was constructed in 537 AD. For almost a thousand
20 years, the Hagia Sophia had served as a cathedral, but in 1453, it was repurposed as a mosque after the invasion of the Ottoman army. It was secularized in 1935 and since then has been operating as a museum.



Hagia Sophia



Interior of Hagia Sophia

Oxford English (Second Edition) 3A

Simplified reading and comprehension

2 of 4

Unit 1

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25 ④ The giant domed roof, the most identifiable
feature of the Hagia Sophia, is considered to be the
epitome of Byzantine architecture. Historians have
marvelled at the skill and imagination of the early
architects. However, the wonders of the Hagia Sophia
30 don't just stop there. The colourful frescos painted on
the walls and countless mosaics made up of
thousands of glittering tiles covering the walls and
even the ceilings were so overwhelmingly beautiful
that they sent shivers down my spine!



Blue Mosque in the distance

35 ⑤ Visiting the Walls of Constantinople was
something I found quite interesting. These ancient
walls, which once surrounded the entire city, were
built to protect it from attacks. They were an
important fortification and had been effective against
40 attackers for more than a thousand years. In the 15th
century, a huge Ottoman army made it over the walls
and took full control of the city. These walls remind us
that nothing lasts forever.



Walls of Constantinople

⑥ Eventually, in the 19th century, the city started to outgrow the boundaries set by the
45 walls. The government decided that some sections of the walls had to be removed to make
room for all this growth. But parts of the walls remain, and nobody who sees them can help
but be impressed.

⑦ These landmarks are just a taste of the many outstanding wonders of Istanbul. I
discovered loads of other fascinating things as I strolled around the city, soaking up the
50 atmosphere. Someone said that the best way to tour any city is to throw out the
guidebooks and just wander through the streets. I couldn't agree more. I could do anything
I wanted there and none of the things I saw and did was boring. Wherever I went, I always
found something to excite me, and Istanbul is certainly exciting enough to warrant multiple
visits.

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Comprehension 2 *Your cousin is interested in visiting Istanbul. Answer her questions using information from the travel blog entry. For multiple-choice questions, choose the best answer and blacken ONE circle only.*

- 1 Why has Istanbul always been something of a 'paradox' (line 1)?

- 2 Based on the information from paragraph 1, use ONE word to complete each blank.

Istanbul is a city (i) _____
two continents. It is Turkey's most
(ii) _____ city, and a
financial and cultural hub because of
its (iii) _____ location.

- 3 Which emperor moved the capital city of the Roman Empire to Istanbul?

- 4 What does 'this structure' (line 18) refer to in paragraph 3?

- 5 According to paragraphs 6 and 7, are the following statements **True (T)**, **False (F)** or **Not Given (NG)**? Write the letter(s) in the boxes.

Statements

- i) The Hagia Sophia was designed as a mosque. ☐
- ii) The writer prefers mosaics to frescos. ☐

- iii) The Hagia Sophia is more than a thousand years old. ☐

- 6 Find words or phrases in paragraph 4 that have similar meanings to the following:

- i) a perfect example

- ii) felt great surprise at or had admiration for something

- iii) shining brightly with many small flashes of light

- 7 Why were the Walls of Constantinople built?

- ☐ A to serve as a tourist attraction
- ☐ B to protect the city from attacks
- ☐ C to keep down unemployment
- ☐ D to turn the city into a UNESCO World Heritage Site

- 8 i) What army made it over the Walls of Constantinople?

- ii) When did this army take control of the city?

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- 9 Order the following events. Number the events (1–4).

The writer marvelled at the artwork inside the Hagia Sophia. _____

The writer visited the Blue Mosque. _____

The writer arrived at Istanbul. _____

The writer felt very impressed with the Walls of Constantinople. _____

- 10 Match the main points (A–D) with one of the corresponding paragraphs on the left. Write the correct letter (A–D) on the line next to the paragraph number.

Paragraph no.	Main point
i) paragraph 1 _____	A The art and architecture of the Hagia Sophia
ii) paragraph 2 _____	B The history of the Walls of Constantinople
iii) paragraph 3 _____	C The history of the Hagia Sophia
iv) paragraph 4 _____	D The history of Istanbul

- 11 Complete the following timeline about Istanbul using information from the travel blog entry. Make sure your answers are grammatically correct.

700–600 BC The city of Istanbul is (i) _____.

330 AD The city becomes the (ii) _____ of the Roman Empire.

537 AD The Hagia Sophia is completed.

1453 AD The Hagia Sophia is repurposed as a (iii) _____.

1800–1900 AD The government (iv) _____ parts of the Walls of Constantinople.

1935 AD The Hagia Sophia begins to operate as a (v) _____.

- 12 Complete the sentences using words and expressions from Text 2. Use ONE word to complete each blank.

i) New York has a very _____ cultural life. It buzzes from dawn to dusk—this is a city that never sleeps. (paragraph 1)

ii) This film tells a _____ story of Turkey. It includes shots of the country's people, famous buildings and stunning landscapes. (paragraph 2)

iii) The tenor's performance made my first opera experience truly unforgettable. The sound of his voice was so beautiful that it _____. (paragraph 4)

iv) The travel critic found that nothing was interesting enough about the small town to _____ comment. (paragraph 7)