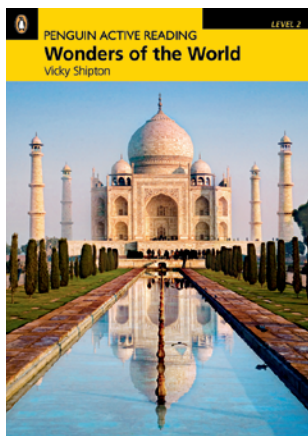




Wonders of the World

Vicky Shipton



Summary

Divided into six chapters, the book catalogues some of the wonders of our world. We learn about the location, physical dimensions, history and uses of man-made ancient and modern constructions, and also about the spectacular sights that nature herself has carved on the landscape.

Chapter 1

A long time ago, the Greek writer Herodotus made a list of the “Seven Wonders of the World.” From this list only the Great Pyramid at Giza, Egypt, can be seen today, but many other ancient wonders have survived including: the Mayan city of Chichen Itza in Mexico which, apart from its religious significance, was also the site of an extremely dangerous ball game, the Great Wall of China, which at one time stretched over 6,400 kilometers, and the city of Petra and its famous temples, one of which featured in a Hollywood movie. The Colosseum, in Rome, where men and animals fought to the death, the Inca city of Machu Picchu in Peru, the Parthenon in Athens, Stonehenge in Britain and the Old City of Jerusalem are also mentioned.

Chapter 2

This chapter talks about the world's wonders that are in some way related to water. Famous bridges include the Rialto, in Venice, London Bridge and the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco. The Akashi-Kaikyo Bridge in Japan, which opened in 1998, has the longest section of any bridge in the world, and the Millau Bridge, in France, is at one point 270 meters above the river. The Aswan High Dam in Egypt is one example of a famous dam and the Panama Canal is an example of a very important waterway for world shipping, enabling shipping to sail

between the Pacific and Atlantic oceans without the need to travel around the southern tip of South America.

Chapter 3

The world is full of important statues. The Moai Statues, on Easter Island, number almost 900, and the Leshan Buddha, in China, is the largest stone Buddha in the world. Probably the most well-known is the Statue of Liberty, followed by Christ the Redeemer in Brazil. Islands, both natural and artificial, have a place in the list of wonders. Venice was built on about 120 small islands and has canals for streets, and the man-made island of Kansai in Japan was built to accommodate an airport. In Dubai, a region that suffers from land shortage, developers have built islands in the sea to attract tourists.

Chapter 4

Throughout history, buildings have been constructed to embody the religious or political power of the ruling elite. The Forbidden City in Beijing housed twenty-four Chinese leaders over six centuries, to the exclusion of most of the rest of the population, and the Alhambra, in Spain, was the seat of power of the Moorish rulers for over two centuries. Since then, it has had many functions including a resting place for Napoleon's troops. The Taj Mahal, in India, was built in honour of a ruler's dead wife and the Hagia Sophia, in Istanbul, was and is an important focal point of Muslim, Christian and other religions. Angkor Wat, in Cambodia, is now a Buddhist temple but was originally constructed as a place of Hindu worship. The Leaning Tower of Pisa, built by the Catholic Church, is a famous tourist attraction in Italy and many people are continually speculating as to whether it is going to fall down or not.

Chapter 5

From the latter part of the nineteenth century onwards, technological advances made possible the construction of bigger and taller buildings. In 1889, the Eiffel Tower, in Paris, was the tallest building in the world. It was succeeded by the Empire State Building in 1931. This building featured in the Hollywood movie, *King Kong*, in which the huge ape stood at the top of it and fought airplanes. There then followed a race to the top, with countries competing to build the tallest building. The Petronas Towers, the Sears Towers, the Burj Dubai were contestants in this race. Not necessarily tall, but massive in scale are the buildings at Beijing Airport and Crystal Island, in Moscow, and the Sydney Opera House is noted for its architectural beauty.



Wonders of the World

Chapter 6

The last chapter is dedicated to the world's natural wonders. The Grand Canyon, in the United States, and the waterfalls of Iguazu, between Argentina and Brazil, Angel Falls in Venezuela, and Victoria Falls, in Africa, are truly remarkable examples of the work of nature. Mount Fuji, Mount Kilimanjaro, the Matterhorn are world famous mountains, each with their distinct qualities, but the most famous of all, and the highest, is Mount Everest. This mountain has claimed the lives of many climbers who have tried to conquer it. Ayers Rock in Australia, a sacred place for the indigenous Aborigine people, and the Northern Lights are two further examples nature's limitless designs.

Background and themes

Buildings as symbols of power: From ancient times up until the present day, great buildings have been constructed to symbolise political and religious power or technological supremacy. From the seventies onwards, it became an issue of national pride to have the tallest building in the world.

Technology's role in changing the face of the earth: Humankind has been running a constant battle to overcome the restraints put upon it by nature. The breakthroughs in technology enabled us to do this. Dams were constructed to control the flow of rivers, bridges were built to cross enormous distances, and canals made to link two previously separated oceans. In areas where land was scarce, islands were built in the sea.

Natural Beauty: The world is full of places of outstanding beauty which attract millions of visitors every year. There are waterfalls, mountains, canyons and spectacular atmospheric phenomena in the sky.

The need to protect and preserve our heritage: Many ancient cities, buildings and monuments give us an understanding of what life was like many centuries ago. These attract many visitors and we need to make sure they are not damaged or destroyed.

Discussion activities

Before reading

- 1 **Write and predict:** Put students into small groups and ask them to look at the contents page. Ask them to make a list of as many wonders they can think of in each category, and give a brief description of each one.

Chapter 1

While reading (p. 6, after "But these games were very different from sports today.")

- 2 **Discuss:** Write a list of sports on the board. Put students into groups and ask them to discuss the following questions: *What sports do people like to play in your country? Is your country famous for playing a sport? What sports do you play? What sports do you watch? Which country is the best in the world at each sport? Which sports are dangerous? Which sports do women play better than men?* See Discussion activities key for a list of sports.

After reading

- 3 **Pair work:** Write the following words on the board: *2.3 million stones, Khufu, ball game, 500 years ago, the moon, movie, animals, and train.* Ask the students to talk and write in pairs to say how these words were used in Chapter 1, without looking back at the book.
- 4 **Research and write:** Ask the students to look on the Internet for information about the wonders that were on Herodotus's list. Ask them to write a brief description of each one. See Discussion activities key for the list.

Chapter 2

After reading

- 5 **Write and guess:** Write *Drivers between London and Spain know the Millau Bridge well.* on the board. Elicit which word is wrong from the students (Paris not London). Now students choose a sentence from Chapter 2 and rewrite it changing one word. Students walk around the class, reading out their sentences, and the other students have to identify and correct the mistake.

Chapter 3

Before reading

- 6 **Write and discuss:** Put students into small groups and ask them to make a list of all the famous statues in their country. Then ask them to discuss the following questions: *Who is the statue of? What did that person do? How old is the statue? How big is it? Do you like the statue?* Then ask the students to think of a famous person they would like to see a statue of in their country.

While reading (p. 19, after "But people like beaches and Dubai wanted more.")

- 7 **Role play:** Put students into pairs. Student A loves to go the beach on vacation and hates vacations in the countryside. Student B is the opposite. Tell them to highlight the advantages and disadvantages of the two types of vacation. See Discussion activities key for an example of the start of the conversation.



Wonders of the World

After reading

- 8 **Research:** In groups, students find out as much as they can about the city of Venice. This should include information about history, population, the weather, customs, music, festivals, typical food, etc. Students give either an oral or written presentation, with illustrations, about the country.

Chapter 4

Before reading

- 9 **Research:** Put the following on the board: *The Kremlin, The White House, The House of Parliament in the UK, and the European Parliament in Brussels.* Tell them they are all important government buildings for world rulers. Put the students in groups of four. Each student chooses one of the buildings and looks for information about it on the Internet. Then they each give a short presentation to the group about what they have found out.

While reading (p. 22, after "The Forbidden City was not open to most people.")

- 10 **Discuss and draw:** Put students into groups of four and tell them they are going to design a city for just 6,000 people. Tell them to think of all the things they would like to have in the city and then ask them to make a drawing of their city. Groups then compare their cities. See Discussion activities key for possible suggestions.

After reading

- 11 **Write and guess:** Put students into pairs and ask them to choose a short paragraph from Chapter 4. Tell them to rewrite the text, making five changes. Students then read out their paragraphs to the other students, who have to identify the mistakes.
- 12 **Research and discuss:** Write the following religions on the board: *Islam, Buddhism, Christianity and Hinduism.* Put the students in groups of four and tell them each to choose a religion. The students then look for information about their religion on the Internet. Each student tells their group about the religion and the others ask questions. Tell them to think of the following questions: *How many countries have the religion? How many people in the world have the religion? Where is the center of the religion? What does the religion say about what happens when you die? What religions does your country have? What famous religious buildings does each religion have?*

Chapter 5

While reading (bottom of p. 29.)

- 13 **Quiz game:** Put students into groups of four. Tell two of them to study the text on the Eiffel Tower and the other two to study the text on the Empire State Building. Tell them to write as many questions about the texts as they can. The two teams then ask each other questions, without looking at the book. Teams get a point for each correct answer. See Discussion activities key for example questions.

After reading

- 14 **Pair work and draw:** In pairs, have students design a very tall or very big building for their town. They must also think of what rooms there will be in the building, where in the town it is going to be and what they are going to call it.

Chapter 6

Before reading

- 15 **Discuss:** In groups, ask the students to talk about a beautiful natural place they have visited. Tell them to consider the following questions: *When did you go there? Who did you go with? How long did you stay? Did you stay in a hotel? What did you like about it? Do you go there often?*

After reading

- 16 **Research:** Put students into pairs. Student A looks for information about the Aborigine people of Australia and Student B looks for information about the native American people. Then the students tell their partner what they have found out. Ask them to consider the following: *What do the people look like? What buildings did they live in? What food do they eat? What language do they speak?*
- 17 **Game:** After the students have done the activities on page 40 and they have a list of world wonders, tell them they are going to play a game of twenty questions. Put them in small groups of four or five. Student A then thinks of a wonder and the others have to ask the student questions and try and guess what the wonder is. Student A can only reply "yes", "no", or "sometimes" to the questions. The group can ask a maximum of twenty questions. If they guess correctly in less than twenty questions, they win. Otherwise Student A wins. Write the following example questions on the board: *Is it big/small? Is it beautiful? Is it old/new? Is it in our country? Is it used for religion? Does a ruler live in it? Is it a natural wonder? Does it have a lot of water? Does it have stones in it? Is it an important place for some people?*