

#1

Three great things to do in London

There are enough things to do in London to fill a lifetime. The London Eye is the most popular tourist attraction in the UK. It attracts 3.5 million visitors a year. It is on the south bank of the River Thames. At 135 m, it is the tallest big wheel in Europe, and it provides the best views of the city. You can see the Houses of Parliament and St Paul's Cathedral at your feet, and Windsor Castle to the west, 40 km away. It costs about £16 for an adult and £8.50 for a child. People have parties on it. Some people even get married on it!

The British Museum is situated in Bloomsbury, just north of the center. It has the biggest collection of ancient Egyptian, Roman and Greek artefacts in the world. Here you can see the Rosetta Stone, made over 2,200 years ago, which provided the key to the understanding of Egyptian hieroglyphs, and the marble friezes from the Parthenon in Greece, known as the Elgin Marbles. The most amazing thing about the museum is that it is free!

Regent's park is just to the north of Oxford Street. It is not London's biggest open space - Hyde Park - but it is the most beautiful formal park and provides a huge range of attractions. The flowerbeds are in bloom all year round, and the rose garden (with 30,000 roses!) is filled with color and perfume in the summer months. There are ponds with ducks, a boating lake, cafes and restaurants, tennis courts, running tracks, and playing fields for football, baseball, and kite flying. There is also London Zoo and the wonderful open-air theatre, which has plays for all ages between May and October. There really is something for everyone!

#2

The Rolling Stones – the greatest rock 'n' roll band in the world!

The group was formed in England in 1962 by school friends Mick Jagger and Keith Richards, along with guitarist Brian Jones. Later they were joined by Charlie Watts on drums and Bill Wyman on bass. They were soon pop idols with teenage fans all over Europe and America.

In 1964, they reached the UK Top 10 and the US Top 50 with 'Not Fade Away'. The 'bad boys' were on their way. 'Satisfaction' and '19th Nervous Breakdown', written by Jagger and Richards in 1965, are considered to be two of the greatest rock songs ever. They have been touring the world ever since and have continued to write great hits such as 'Jumpin' Jack Flash' (1968) and 'Honky Tank Woman' (1969). If Mick Jagger is the 'heart' of The Stones, then Keith Richards is 'the soul'. The two have survived ups and downs in their careers and personal lives. Mick cannot even read music, but he has worked hard with Richards as songwriter, following the example of The Beatles' John Lennon and Paul McCartney.

The Stones have made 55 albums and sold over 200 million records worldwide. They have played in all kinds of places from small clubs to huge stadiums. In 2007, they played in front of the Tsar's Winter Palace in St. Petersburg, Russia, for 50,000 fans. They have given more shows internationally than any other band in the world. Their lost tour earned over \$559 million.

Since the 1960s, The Rolling Stones have been touring the world, giving their audiences the kind of music they love - rock 'n' roll. And despite their age, The Rolling Stones is a better band now than it ever was. Long live rock 'n' roll - long live The Rolling Stones!

#3

Blade Runner

Oscar Pistorius is a South African athlete. He was born in Johannesburg in 1986, as the middle child of a family with Italian roots. His grandmother had emigrated to Kenya from Italy. Pistorius lost both his legs below the knee when he was only 11 months old.

Despite his disability, he has been very active in sports all his life. He took up running after a rugby accident in 2004. In the same year he finished third in the 100 metres, and won the 200 metres with a new world record at the Paralympic Games in Athens. The following year he won both the 100 and 200 metre events at the World Cup, and broke his own world record. In 2006, he won the 100 and 200 metres and also came first in the 400-metre event at the World Championships. In 2007, he became the first sportsperson in history to set the world record for all three distances. During his career, Pistorius has broken his own world records more than 30 times!

Pistorius usually competes with athletes who still have one functioning leg, while he has to wear artificial limbs, whose special shape earned him the nickname, 'Blade Runner'.

2011 was a turning point for Pistorius: he successfully qualified for the 2011 World Championships and the 2012 London Olympic Games in the 400 metres. He said in an interview after the qualifying race, 'I have dreamed for such a long time of competing in a major championship and this is a very proud moment in my life.'

In 2006, the President of South Africa awarded him a medal for his outstanding achievements in sport. Pistorius continues to be an inspiration for people around the world.

#4

Textbooks vs. Laptops in Education Process

It is very striking that the question of replacing students' textbooks with individual laptops, or other similar gadgets, is an increasingly popular conception. As modern lifestyles become more efficient and more complicated, people seek ways to apply technology to mundane activities in order to simplify these tasks. The general cost of buying a laptop and maintaining it is higher as compared to school textbooks. Someday, in the future, its cost might lower significantly. Unfortunately, not every student can afford to have a laptop. Presently, the most affordable way to gradually slash costs is creating CDs of textbooks by publishers to be used in schools. This could also eliminate the need for paper, and lower printing expenses. This would also be a boon to environmental preservation.

It is also regrettable that reading long expanses of text on a screen can be harmful for students' health. Bright lights and digital text affect the eyes in a negative way, making students unable to study for extended periods. Besides, laptops possess a

serious drawback – they cannot be used for long periods of time, as they consume copious amounts of energy, so that batteries discharge in a couple of hours.

On the other hand, we can observe that laptops increase students' interactivity, as they are considered more interesting in learning than textbooks. The availability of the Internet also makes the use of computers, seemingly, more interesting. Recently, the number of schools approving the usage of technologies substituting paper textbooks has increased. The complete replacement of school textbooks with laptops seems destined to happen, despite some conspicuous disadvantages, such as the harmful effect of light on students' eyes, high purchasing and maintenance costs, and sometimes-additional expenses that deal with teaching students computer literacy.

#5

Half a century in the UK

What was life like in Britain in the 1960s? Many would say it was simpler, quieter, and safer. The 1960s was the time when the technological wonders we nowadays take for granted started to become more common.

By the end of the decade, nearly all homes had a television set. Programmes were still made in black and white, not colour. They started at five in the afternoon on weekdays, and they finished at midnight. People did not have mp3 players or CDs – they listened to music on the radio. Small, portable transistor radios were starting to replace the huge radio sets of the 1950s – which were bigger than most televisions are today. Nobody had personal computers. In the 1960s, the early computers were enormous, and only scientists with special training could use them.

Shopping was different, too. Many people bought all their groceries in local shops. Supermarkets were a new idea in the 1960s, and although they were becoming popular, less than half of the population used them. There were fashion shops in big cities, of course, but people did not spend the weekend shopping like they do now: perhaps they went to a football game or did some gardening.

Travelling abroad on holiday was becoming more popular, but most British families spent their holidays in the UK – in places like Blackpool or the West Country.

Fewer people owned cars, but there were still enormous traffic jams on roads, especially during the summer holidays. The government had just started building motorways, so people usually had to use older, narrower roads to travel long distances. So, what do you think – was life better in the 1960s or was it simply different?

#6

Men on the moon

What is your biggest ambition? For some young men in the 1960s, it was to become an astronaut and walk on the moon. Reaching the moon was perhaps humankind's greatest achievement. On 20 July 1969, Neil Armstrong became the first person in recorded history to set foot on another planet. Altogether, 24 astronauts have travelled to the moon, and only half of them have had a chance to step outside. Moreover, they all visited the moon in a brief interval from 1969 to 1972. Since then,

nobody has travelled there. Some engineers claim today it would take us another ten to fifteen years to ever do that again.

What kind of people were they? One of them, Jack Swigert, whose only trip to the moon was the near-disaster of Apollo 13, once said it was not surprising astronauts never said anything interesting about the most momentous experience in their lives.

Astronauts were strong people: psychologically as well as physically. They were selected by NASA for their ability to survive in extreme conditions. They were usually patient, focused and very calm. They were not poets or artists, they were Air Force pilots. But they could never have achieved what they did if they had been less determined. They all knew that if they made just one mistake, they could die at any moment. They all came home safely. And now, when the era of the space shuttle ends with the return of the Atlantis on the 42nd anniversary of the first moon landing, we can all remember their achievement, which was just one small step for them, but one giant step for humankind.

#7

The helicopter pilot

Linda Lewis is from North Carolina in the USA. She has been a helicopter pilot for over ten years. Linda has always been interested in jobs usually done by men. At first, she wanted to be a firefighter, but after her first flying lesson, that was it, she decided to become a pilot. It was not easy. Linda had to pay for all her flying lessons. She says 'Most pilots get their training in the military so they don't have to pay for their lessons'. Each lesson cost \$150 an hour. It took Linda two years to get her license. 'You have to have at least 150 hours of flying to be a commercial pilot so Linda spent more than \$30,000 learning to fly. To help pay for her lessons, she sold her car, her skis, and her camera. She also borrowed money from a friend.

When she got her license, Linda spent six years working in logging camps in Wisconsin. She had to carry huge logs from the forest to trucks. Today she works as a rescue pilot. She carries patients to care centers and hospitals.

Linda has to work 12 hours a day for six days. She waits in a bunkhouse with other pilots for a call. 'If the weather is bad, I have to decide if the flight is possible or not.' After six days of work, she has six days off.

Linda has also opened a helicopter school for students from all over the world. 'Training students is fun. They are so excited about flying.' She has made friends with many of the students. She says 'It's still hard for women. They have to compete with all the military pilots who have the advantage of excellent training. There should be more scholarships for women pilots.'

#8

The refugee from Afghanistan

Ten years ago, a boy called Mohammad Razai arrived in England with nothing but a few clothes. Aged just 15, Mohammad set out from his home country of Afghanistan with his cousin. His mother told him to leave his own country when life became very dangerous for the family. They got on a plane but had no idea where they were going. Finally, they got to England.

When they arrived, Mohammad was very surprised. 'People were so kind to us' We lived with a foster family. The mother made us feel very welcome. He went to an English school, where he met a math teacher. The teacher lent him a computer and persuaded him to take an IT exam. 'All the other teachers thought it was too soon, but I passed.'

How did he learn so fast? 'I knew I had to succeed, and to succeed I had to work hard.' He passed more exams and went to University College London, where he studied biology. But his dream was to study medicine at Cambridge.

He became a British citizen two years ago. He says, 'I love this country. I feel part of British society. I will get married and stay here now, I really want to do something useful. I want to show people that asylum seekers are human beings with feelings, ambitions, and dreams, just like everyone else. People do not leave their own country without a good reason. Leaving home, family, and friends and going to the other side of the world is not easy.'

Mohammad's dream now is to become a pediatrician. He is going to work for the International Red Cross and would like to help children. 'If people have the chance to improve their lives, they will do it with all their heart and soul,' he says, 'They just need the opportunity.'

#9

Caught in the act

Crowd shouts abuse as burglar is stuck hanging upside down.

John Pearce, a 32-year-old burglar, thought he had another easy job as he was breaking into an empty house.

He smashed the window of the house in Dartford, Kent, with a hammer. But while he was climbing in through the smashed window, his foot got stuck, and he couldn't free himself.

He was hanging upside down in the window for more than three hours while neighbours laughed and shouted at him.

When the owner of the house, Paul Ives, arrived home from work, he didn't understand why people were standing outside his house. Then he saw the burglar trapped in his own window. Paul said, 'He kept saying, "I haven't done anything. I was stopping the burglars".'

Unsurprisingly, Mr. Ives did not believe him. Police arrived at the scene and got him down. He was arrested and taken to the police station.

Mr. Ives, 44, an engineer, said, 'He must be the world's worst burglar. He was screaming at everyone to get him down, and we were all saying, "I don't think so".'

Next-door neighbour, Nicola Daniels, 34, said, 'I heard banging and thought Paul and his girlfriend were moving furniture. When the banging continued, I looked out of the window and saw this man hanging upside down. He was swearing and shouting "I'm not the burglar!"'

'Another neighbour called the police, and there was quite a crowd standing and laughing at him. It was his own fault. He deserved it all.'

#10

The role of a teacher in modern education

Teaching can without any doubts be called the leading power of the society's development. It is well known that there exist three main factors that influence the development of the personality. They are heredity, social encirclement and education. Usually the term education is used meaning the great impact that parent have on the future personality of their child. However, this also includes school education, because nowadays, when parents are very busy they are the people, who teach children what is beautiful and what is ugly, what is right and what is wrong.

Therefore, there is much more to a teacher than high professionalism. A good teacher is a person who not just reproduces the knowledge he got. Not a person that only brings up the interest to the subject. It is a person who finds individual approach to every pupil, taking care about the child's adaptation in class, increasing one's social status in class and making sure the children learn to take into account and respect the thoughts of other people.

One of the indicators of a "good" teacher it is his desire to teach in a new, original form, adding something new and personal to make the learning process as exciting as it can possibly be.

In addition, I would rather say being a good teacher is about loving children and wanting to give them only the best the teacher has inside of him.