

The New 7 Wonders of the World

Essential facts

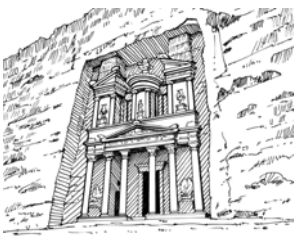


The Colosseum, Italy

- The Colosseum was built around AD70–80.
- It measured approximately 48m

tall, 188m long and 156m wide. It could accommodate 50,000 spectators.

- The sand-covered, wooden amphitheatre floor no longer exists. Below it ran a system of tunnels which were used to flood the arena for mock naval battles.
- The most popular events were chariot races and gladiators' games – fights were usually to the death.
- The Colosseum remained in use for almost 500 years, until it became too severely damaged by lightning and earthquakes.
- The design of the Colosseum has influenced the look of many modern sports arenas.

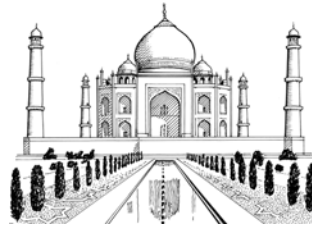


Petra, Jordan

- The rock-carved, city of Petra was once the capital of the Nabataean Empire.
- It lies in mountains

south of the Dead Sea, on the edge of the Arabian Desert.

- The elaborate Al-Khazneh (The Treasury), carved from sandstone cliffs, is believed to be a tomb or royal temple.
- Petra may once have boasted more than 20,000 inhabitants, but by the end of the Byzantine Empire in AD700, the city had declined and it eventually disappeared from most maps.



The Taj Mahal, India

- The Taj Mahal was built in Agra by the Emperor, Shah Jahan, in memory of his wife, Mumtaz Mahal, who was buried there.

- Construction of the Taj Mahal began in about 1631 and was completed in 1653.
- Around 20,000 workers and 1000 elephants were involved with its construction, with building materials imported from all over India and central Asia.
- The central dome stands 57m tall and is surrounded by four column-like domed chambers.
- To the front lie the formal walled gardens and to the rear is the Yamuna River. Mirrored in pools and set against a background of sky, the Taj Mahal appears to float above the ground, while its white marble reflects the constantly changing light.



The Great Wall of China

- The Great Wall of China stretches for 4163 miles. It is the

largest man-made structure ever built and is ostensibly visible from space.

- Constructed with the intention of keeping out Mongol invaders, work began between 600–500BC, although the wall did not become 'great' until various sections were joined together during the Qin Dynasty between 221–206BC.
- It was originally built from stone, wood and earth – bricks were added later.

The New 7 Wonders of the World

Essential facts (cont...)



Machu Picchu, Peru

- Located about 2350m above sea-level, this city was

built in the 15th century by the Incan Emperor Pachacútec. This 'city in the clouds' is situated on the Andes Plateau, deep in the Amazon Jungle and above the Urubamba River.

- Many of Machu Picchu's approximate 200 buildings were constructed from granite blocks that fitted together without mortar. Maize and potatoes would have grown on the terrace.
- By the middle of the 16th century, Machu Picchu lay abandoned – probably due to smallpox and the Spanish invasion. Forgotten by the outside world, it was only rediscovered by American archeologist, Hiram Bingham, in 1911.



Christ Redeemer, Brazil

- Plans to construct a large statue on the Corcovado

Mountain overlooking Rio de Janeiro were first conceived in the 1850s. It was not until 1921, however, that the idea took off.

- Designed by Brazilian engineer, Heitor da Silva Costa, and created by French sculptor, Paul Landowski, the sculpture

took five years to build and was finally finished in 1931. Standing 38m tall, it is made of reinforced concrete and soapstone – which helps make it resistant to severe weather.

- The building of escalators and elevators, mean that tourists no longer have to climb the 220 steps up to the feet of Christ Redeemer.



Chichén Itzá, Mexico

- The city of Chichén Itzá lay at the heart of the Mayan civilization.

At its centre is the impressive step pyramid constructed more than 1000 years ago. Staircases lead up each side of the square-based structure to the Temple of Kukulcan.

- During the spring and autumn equinoxes, as the Sun rises and sets, the corner of the pyramid appears to cast a shadow along the north staircase in the shape of a feathered serpent god – Quetzalcóatl, also known as Kukulcan.
- A large ball court in the city is thought to have been used to play 'Pok ta pok' – a game involving the beheading of the winning team's captain as a sacrifice to the gods. Mayan prophecy apparently predicts that Quetzalcóatl will rise from beneath the ball court to destroy the world for good.