

## ВСЕ ПРО ЛОНДОНСКИЙ ГЛАЗ

Комендантов И.Н.

г. Балашиха, МАОУ «СОШ № 31», 6 «Б» класс

Руководитель: Куминова Е.А., г. Балашиха, МАОУ «СОШ № 31», учитель английского языка

*The Eye has done for London  
what the Eiffel Tower did for Paris,  
which is to give it a symbol and to  
let people climb above the city and  
look back down on it.*

Sir Richard Rogers

### Introduction

What do you know about this Ferris wheel? Where is situated? How many awards did it win? I suppose, we know nothing about The Eye. In this thesis, I shall investigate the history of the London Eye.

It is timely subject, because in my student's book, we can find only some facts about London streets and museums, but nothing about The Wheel. This is one of the points, that strongly motivate my work dedicated to the London Eye.

The aim of research is to find interesting and unique facts about this Wheel and convey this information to my classmates.

The goal is to find several magazines and newspapers with article about the London Eye and to search facts through the internet.

It is a well-known fact, that the London Eye is a 135-metre (443 ft) tall giant Ferris wheel situated on the banks of the River Thames, in London, England.

### About the wheel

It is the tallest Ferris wheel in Europe, and the most popular paid tourist attraction in the United Kingdom, visited by over 3.5 million people annually. When erected in 1999, it was the tallest Ferris wheel in the world, until surpassed first by the 160 m (520 ft) Star of Nanchang in 2006, and then the 165 m (541 ft) Singapore Flyer in 2008. It is still described by its operators as «the world's tallest cantilevered observation wheel» (as the wheel is supported by an A-frame on one side only, unlike the Nanchang and Singapore wheels).

Commonly known as the London Eye, or Millennium Wheel, formerly the Merlin Entertainments London Eye and before that, the British Airways London Eye. Since 20 January 2011, it has been officially known as the EDF Energy London Eye following a three-year sponsorship deal.



The London Eye is located at the western end of Jubilee Gardens, on the South Bank of the River Thames in the London Borough of Lambeth, between Westminster Bridge and Hungerford Bridge. The site is adjacent to that of the former Dome of Discovery, which was built for the Festival of Britain in 1951. Near is London underground station Waterloo, Jubilee Line, Northern Line and Bakerloo Line, Zone 1.

At 394 feet in diameter, you can see twenty-five miles in any direction from the Eye's capsules. Many famous landmarks are clearly visible, including Buckingham Palace, St. Paul's Cathedral and the Houses of Parliament. On a clear day you can see as far as 40 km (25 miles).

### Technical facts

Construction of the observation wheel took more than a year and a half to complete. In the process over 1700 tonnes of steel were used for the structure and more than 3000 tonnes of concrete were used for the foundations.



The wheel was constructed in sections which were floated up the river Thames on barges and assembled lying flat on pontoons. Once the wheel was complete it was raised into its upright position by cranes, initially being lifted at a rate of about 2 degrees per hour until it reached 65 degrees.

The futuristic looking capsules, were transported all the way from France by train through the tunnel. Each egg-shaped capsule is eight meters long and weighs five hundred kilograms. The twenty-five meter (82 ft) long spindle was built in the Czech Republic. The rim has a diameter of 122m (400ft), about two hundred times the size of a bicycle wheel. Eighty spokes connect the rim with the spindle.

#### About capsules

There are thirty-two capsules on the London Eye, which is one for each London borough. For superstitious reasons, they're actually numbered 1–33 (since they skip number 13). Each capsule weighs as much as 1,052,631 pound coins.

The wheel's air-conditioned ovoidal passenger capsules, designed and supplied by Leitner-Poma, are attached to the external circumference of the wheel and rotated by electric motors. Each capsule represents one of the London Boroughs. Each weighs 10 tonnes and each capsule holds approximately 25 people, who are free to walk around inside the capsule, though seating is also provided. It rotates at 26 cm (10 in) per second (about 0.9 km/h (0.5mph) so that one revolution takes about 30 minutes.

It does not usually stop to take on passengers; the rotation rate is slow enough to allow passengers to walk on and off the moving capsules at ground level. It is, however, stopped to allow disabled or elderly passengers time to embark and disembark safely.



A photograph of passengers in the capsule is taken automatically as they approach the end of the flight.

As a very special treat for couples, the London Eye is kept open on the night of Valentine's Day so that couples can take advantage of its romantic views.



You can host a group of your friends or colleagues on the London Eye in your own private capsule overlooking the entirety of London.

Another thing that most people don't know is 4-D film, which is an add-on when you buy London Eye tickets. This film shows 3-D movies with some real effects and you feel an actual part of them.

#### History

The structure of The London Eye was designed by the architectural team of David Marks and Julia Barfield, husband and wife. They submitted their idea for a large observation wheel as part of a competition to design a landmark for the new millennium.

None of the entrants won the competition, but the couple pressed on and eventually got the backing of British Airways, who sponsored the project.

The London Eye was formally opened by the then Prime Minister, Tony Blair, on 31 December 1999, although it was not opened to the public until 9 March 2000 because of technical problems. Since its opening, the Eye has become a major landmark and tourist attraction. This wheel officially became known as the EDF Energy London Eye as a result of the three-year sponsorship in January 2011.

Since 1 January 2005, the Eye has been the focal point of London's New Year celebrations, with 10-minute displays taking place involving fireworks fired from the wheel itself.

In 2006 the Tussauds Group bought out the other two joint owners, British Airways and the Marks Barfield family (the lead architects). Following Merlin Entertainments' purchase of the Tussauds Group in 2007, it now owns 100% of the Eye. British Airways continued its brand association, but from the beginning of 2008 the name 'British Airways' was dropped from the logo.

For twelve years, from 2000–2012, the London Eye won thirty awards in such categories as best ride, best attraction, design, experience, and so on.

On 12 August 2009 the London Eye saw another re-brand, this time calling it «The Merlin Entertainments London Eye» to show Merlin Entertainments' ownership. A new logo was designed for the attraction – this time taking the actual form of an eye made out of London's famous landmarks. This also came at the time when the new Merlin Entertainments London Eye 4D Experience pre-flight show was launched underneath the ticket centre in County Hall.

### Local Icon

Since 1 January 2005, the Eye has been the focal point of London's New Year celebrations, with 10-minute fireworks displays taking place involving fireworks fired from the wheel itself.

The Eye has certainly made itself culturally identifiable with London. It is a focal point for the city's New Year's fireworks display. It was lit up red, white, and blue for the marriage of Prince William and Kate Middleton. In 2005, it was lit pink to celebrate the first civil partnership performed on the attraction. It also features prominently in many TV programmes and films, including having a major role in the first episode of Doctor Who's modern era.

By July 2002, roughly 8.5 million people had ridden the Eye.



During the bidding process of the 2012 Olympic Games, the London bid organisers announced the Olympic emblem would be attached to the Eye for the duration of the 2012 Summer Olympics.

On 5 June 2008 it was announced that 30 million had ridden the London Eye since its opening in March 2000.

Every year, around three and a half million people, including tourists and London residents, go on the London Eye. It means the London Eye receives more visitors than the Great Pyramids of Giza or the Taj Mahal in India.

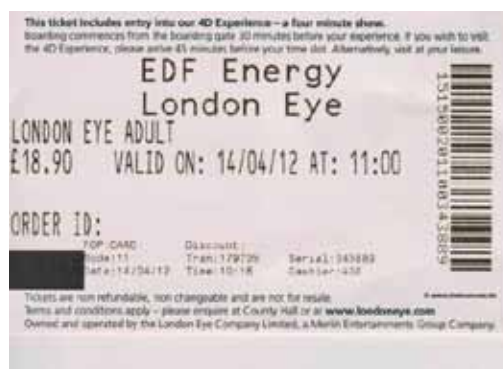
### General information

#### Opening hours

London eye is open in Winters (October to May) from 10 AM to 8 PM every day, including weekends. While in Summers (June to September), it is open for visitors from 10 AM to 9 PM every day.

#### Tickets

London Eye offers a range of tickets including fast track, flexi fast track, standard ticket, flexi standard ticket and day and night experience. The prices of these tickets vary. So it is suggested to visit London Eye's website, or you can call their helpline for further ticket information.



#### Conclusion

This Ferris wheel is a famous attraction around the world. In fact, many people will ask tourists whether or not they went on the Eye. The Eye gives tourists views of London that they would not get elsewhere.



In my research I found a lot of information about this landmark. First of all I reported to my classmates about the Eye. My report has gained interest among pupils. I think, the aim of my research had been achieved.

Drawing visitors from all over the world, the wheel has transformed London's landscape and stands today as a national symbol. People write an enthusiastic reviews about the Eye.

In conclusion, I can say that although I have never been in London, but I hope to visit the London Eye.

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