

Haunted Places around the World



Pre-reading Questions

- What makes a city or place seem 'haunted' to you?
- Have you ever visited or heard about a place that is said to be haunted?

Vocabulary Box

mournful	Feeling or expressing deep sadness.
linger	To stay in a place longer than necessary or expected.
restless	Not able to stay still or calm, often because of worry or excitement.
hotspot	A place that is popular or frequently visited, often for a specific reason.
winding	Twisting or curving in shape or direction.
paranormal	That cannot be explained by science or reason and that seems to involve mysterious forces.

There is no denying that many people are drawn to the eerie tales of haunted places, particularly as we head into the autumn months. Across the globe, certain places have gained reputations for being especially haunted and their stories of ghosts and spirits attract visitors worldwide. Here are some of the most famous haunted places.

1. Edinburgh, Scotland

Edinburgh is often considered one of the most haunted cities in the world. With its narrow, winding streets and dark alleys, it's easy to see why. The city's most famous haunted location is Edinburgh Castle, where visitors have reported seeing ghostly figures, including the phantom piper. Centuries ago, this young musician was sent into underground tunnels beneath the Royal Mile, playing his pipes as he walked so people above could track his path. Suddenly, the music stopped, and he was never seen again. His mournful tune is said to still be heard.

Disclaimer: This resource has been made for the purpose of teaching English language learners. We know that students can be learning English in many different places, in many different ways and at any age, so we try to keep these resources as general as possible.

There are many acronyms associated with English language teaching. These include (but are not limited to) ELT, TEFL, EFL, ELL, EAL and ESOL. While the term ESL may not fully represent the linguistic backgrounds of all students, it is the most widely recognised term for English language teaching globally. Therefore, we use the term 'ESL' in the names of our resources to make them easy to find but they are suitable for any student learning to speak English.

Another eerie location is the Real Mary King's Close, a network of underground streets where some say the restless spirits of the people who lived there still haunt the area. One such spirit is believed to be that of 10-year-old Annie who died from the plague. Visitors often report seeing her or feeling her presence, especially near the area where she's believed to have lost her favourite doll. Many leave toys or gifts for Annie in hopes of comforting her restless spirit.

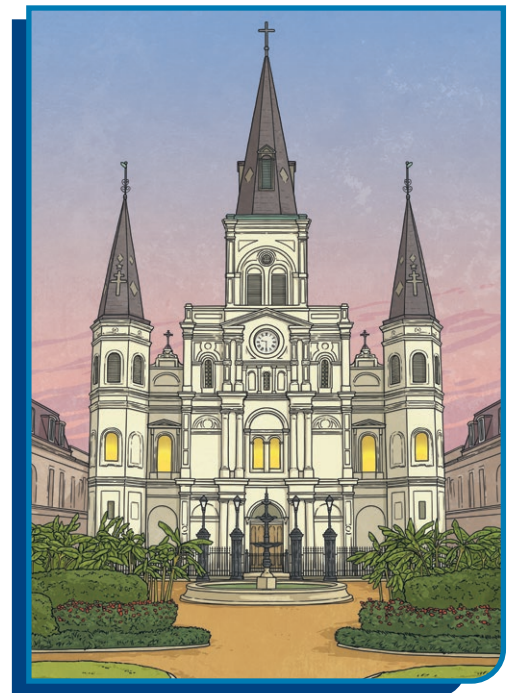


2. Prague, Czech Republic

Prague, with its medieval architecture and cobblestone streets, is another city brimming with ghostly legends. One of the most famous is the legend of the Golem, a creature supposedly created from clay and brought to life by a rabbi to protect the Jewish Quarter in the 16th century. According to the story, the Golem eventually became uncontrollable and had to be deactivated, but its spirit is said to still linger in the city. The Charles Bridge is another hotspot for paranormal activity, where the ghost of John of Nepomuk, a priest who was thrown from the bridge in 1393, is said to haunt the area.

3. New Orleans, USA

New Orleans is home to many terrifying tales, making it one of the most haunted cities in the U.S. The city's St. Louis Cemetery No. 1 is a major spot for ghostly encounters. The cemetery is famous for its above-ground tombs, and is said to be haunted by Marie Laveau, the Voodoo Queen of New Orleans whose spirit is believed to still grant wishes to those who leave offerings at her tomb. Another eerie location is the Hotel Monteleone, where guests have reported strange occurrences like the ghost of a young boy searching for his parents or elevators stopping on the wrong floor. New Orleans' haunting atmosphere has made it a popular location for filming TV shows and movies about the supernatural, further adding to its spooky reputation.



5. York, England

York is often regarded as one of the most haunted cities in the UK. With its ancient city walls, medieval architecture and narrow cobbled streets, York gives off an atmosphere ready for ghostly tales. One of the most infamous haunted locations in the city is the Treasurer's House, where visitors have reported seeing the spectral figures of Roman soldiers marching through the basement. Another spot is the York Minster, where the ghost of a former Archbishop is said to appear. The Shambles, one of the best-preserved medieval streets in the world, also has its share of hauntings, with reports of voices and mysterious figures seen after dark. These legends, combined with the city's rich history, make York a must-visit city.



6. Poveglia Island, Venice, Italy

Poveglia Island in Venice is another location that has been labelled as one of the most haunted places in the world due to its dark and eerie past which dates back centuries. The island became a quarantine zone, where Venice sent thousands of infected people to isolate and die. Entire fleets of plague ships were directed to Poveglia, with victims dumped in mass burial graves. It has been said that over 100,000 people died on the island and their ashes are believed to still linger in the soil. The fear and suffering were so intense that the island is thought to be saturated with the tormented souls of those who died. The island's sinister history deepened in the 20th century when a mental asylum was established, where patients reportedly endured cruel treatment and horrific experiments. Legend has it that one of the asylum's doctors, driven mad by guilt or the island's oppressive energy, threw himself from the bell tower, and his ghost is said to still haunt the ruins along with countless others. Although abandoned for years, Poveglia's haunted reputation still looms, making it one of the most feared places in Italy.

In conclusion, these haunted cities and locations, each with their own unique histories and chilling tales, continue to captivate and terrify visitors from around the world. From the narrow, ghost-filled streets of Edinburgh to the eerie remnants of plague victims on Poveglia Island, all these places share a common thread: they are steeped in mystery, death and the supernatural.

Vocabulary Questions

Below are some words used throughout the text. Try to work out their meanings from the context

1. 'Another **eerie** location is the Real Mary King's Close...'

Meaning: _____

2. '...with its medieval architecture and **cobblestone** streets...'

Meaning: _____

3. '...reported seeing the **spectral** figures of Roman soldiers...'

Meaning: _____

4. '...in the town's foggy **alleyways**...'

Meaning: _____

4. '...grant wishes to those who leave **offerings** at her tomb.'

Meaning: _____

5. '...have seen shadowy figures **lurking**...'

Meaning: _____

Reading Comprehension Questions

1. What are the similarities in the stories of hauntings across all the places mentioned?

2. What role do the physical characteristics of each city or location play in its reputation as a haunted place, according to the text?

3. Why might the text include both well-known and lesser-known haunted locations? What purpose does this serve in understanding the overall appeal of haunted places?

4. Five of the six places mentioned are in Europe. Why do you think Europe has so many places that are viewed as haunted?

5. Summarise the text in 100 words or less.

Discussion Questions

1. In your opinion, why are ghost stories and haunted places still so popular today?

2. Why do you think some people are sceptical of ghost stories and haunted places while others are deeply fascinated by them?

3. Do you believe that historical events can leave an impact on places, making them feel haunted? Explain your answer.

4. In what ways do movies, TV shows, and other media contribute to the ongoing fascination with ghost stories and haunted places?
