

Petra — The lost city hidden in stone

ESL Worksheet | listening & storytelling A2+ |
time: around 60 min



Warm-up

1. What do you already know about Petra?
2. Why do you think people built a city in such a dry area?
3. Why could Petra be an interesting place to visit?
4. Would you prefer to visit an ancient city or a modern city? Why?

A bit of grammar

Storytelling

When we tell stories about history, discoveries and past adventures, we often use Past Simple and Past Continuous.

- The travellers **arrived** in Petra. They **entered** the city and **saw** huge buildings **carved** into the rocks.
- The archaeologist **was looking** at the rocks.

Past Continuous = action in progress

Past Simple = completed event / action that interrupts it

They **were walking** through the desert when they **discovered** an old building.

Decide whether it is Present/Base or Past. What is the missing form?

- | | |
|---------|----------|
| • begin | • teach |
| • wrote | • heard |
| • have | • become |
| • found | • went |
| • make | • chose |
| • gave | • throw |
| • see | • paid |
| • built | • came |
| • think | • take |
| • left | • knew |

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Grammar 2

Complete the sentences. Put the verbs in brackets into the Past Simple or Past Continuous.

1. The travellers _____ through the desert when they _____ an ancient building. (walk / see)
2. While the archaeologist _____ the area, he _____ some old coins. (explore / find)
3. The merchants _____ Petra many times because it _____ an important trading centre. (visit / be)
4. I _____ through the museum when I suddenly _____ a very interesting photograph. (walk / see)
5. The tourists _____ pictures when the guide _____ them an interesting story about the city. (take / tell)
6. The explorer _____ through the mountains when he _____ a small cave. (travel / discover)
7. We _____ an ancient castle when it suddenly _____ to rain. (visit / start)
8. The students _____ about ancient Egypt when their teacher _____ them a question. (learn / ask)
9. People _____ the city for many years, but eventually they _____ to leave. (live in / begin)

Grammar 3

Complete the sentences with your own ideas.

1. Last year, I was travelling when _____.
2. While I was visiting a historical place, _____.
3. I was walking through a city when _____.
4. When I arrived at a new place, _____.
5. While I was taking a photo, _____.

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Vocabulary 1

Are these definitions correct?

- | | |
|-------------------|---|
| 1. DESERT | 1. A desert is a very dry area where there is usually very little rain. |
| 2. STONE | 2. A soft natural material that is used to make clothes. |
| 3. HIDDEN | 3. Something is hidden when people cannot easily see or find it. |
| 4. DISCOVER | 4. To lose it or forget where something is. |
| 5. ANCIENT | 5. Something ancient comes from a very long time ago. |
| 6. MYSTERY | 6. A mystery is a comment people make about others. |
| 7. TRADER | 7. A trader is a person who buys and sells goods. |
| 8. RUINS | 8. Ruins are plans for new buildings. |
| 9. ARCHAEOLOGICAL | 9. Connected with the beauty industry. |
| 10. CARVED | 10. A shape cut or designed into a material such as stone or wood. |

Vocabulary 2

Practise the new words!

1. Would you like to travel across a **desert**? Why / why not?
2. What can people make from **stone**?
3. Can you think of a place that is **hidden** from tourists?
4. What is the most interesting thing you have ever **discovered**?
5. What is the most interesting **ancient** place you know?
6. What is a famous historical **mystery** you know about?
7. What products do people **trade** in your country?
8. Have you ever visited a place with impressive **ruins**?
9. Would you like to work as an archaeologist? What could be interesting or difficult about the job?

Vocabulary 3

Imagine you are an archaeologist exploring an ancient city. Tell a story starting with these words:

"Yesterday, I discovered..."

Try to use at least five of these words:

ancient · ruins · stone · hidden · mystery · discover · desert · trader

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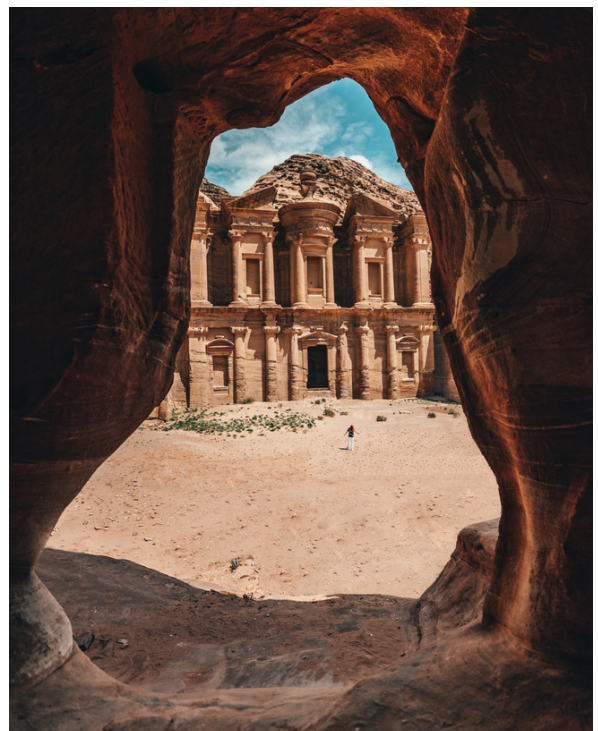
Before we listen

Topic	What do you expect to hear?
The Nabataeans	Who were they? Where did they live? What did they do?
Trade	What did people buy and sell in Petra?
The desert	Why was Petra important in the desert?
The city	What was Petra like?
Disappearing cities	Why might people leave an ancient city?
Rediscovery	Who found Petra again?
Tourism	Why do people visit Petra today?

Listening

Listen and take notes about the key information.

- The Nabataeans
- Petra as a trading centre
- What happened to Petra?
- Rediscovery
- Petra today



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Comprehension

Read the statements and decide whether they are **True** or **False**.

1. The Nabataeans lived in the deserts of the Middle East. T / F
2. The Nabataeans were famous for farming large areas of land. T / F
3. Petra became an important centre for trade. T / F
4. Traders brought goods such as spices and perfumes to Petra. T / F
5. Petra became less important partly because trade routes changed. T / F
6. Johann Ludwig Burckhardt visited Petra in the 1600s. T / F
7. Petra is an important tourist and archaeological site today. T / F

Back to grammar!

1

Adventure 1 — A strange discovery

Complete the story - put the verbs in brackets into the Past Simple or Past Continuous.

Last summer, I _____ (travel) around Jordan with my friend. One morning, we _____ (drive) through the desert when we _____ (see) something unusual near the road. We _____ (stop) the car and _____ (walk) towards it. While we _____ (look) around, my friend _____ (find) some very old pieces of stone. We _____ (not know) what they were, so we _____ (take) some photos and _____ (show) them to our guide later.

2

Adventure 2 — Lost in an ancient city

Complete the story - put the verbs in brackets into the Past Simple or Past Continuous.

When I _____ (visit) an ancient city in Italy, I _____ (walk) around without a guide. I _____ (look) at the old buildings when I suddenly _____ (realise) that I was lost. While I _____ (try) to find the main entrance, I _____ (meet) an old man who _____ (work) near the ruins. He _____ (smile) and _____ (show) me the way. While we _____ (walk), he _____ (tell) me an interesting story about the city.

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Speaking/Travel blog

Talk about your last adventure

Imagine you're talking to a friend who asks about your last trip. Tell them about your visit for 1–2 minutes.

Try to answer:

Where? → When? → Who with? → Weather? → What did you see? → What did you do? → What happened? → How did you feel? → Would you go again?

Let's talk!

1. Would you like to visit Petra? Why or why not?
2. What makes an ancient place interesting to tourists?
3. Why do some cities and civilizations become famous while others are almost forgotten?
4. Petra is visited by many tourists. What problems can large numbers of tourists cause for an ancient place?
5. Should tourists be allowed everywhere?



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Transcript

Petra: A City in the Desert

More than 2,000 years ago, a people called the Nabataeans lived in the deserts of the Middle East. They built Petra in a valley surrounded by mountains and cliffs. They were excellent traders and knew how to find and save water in the dry desert.

Petra became an important trading centre. Travellers and merchants stopped there on their journeys between Arabia, Egypt and the Mediterranean. They brought spices, perfumes, textiles and other valuable goods. Petra became a rich and busy city.

But cities can change. Over time, trade routes moved, and Petra became less important. Earthquakes also damaged some of its buildings. Slowly, many people left the city. Petra was not completely forgotten, but it was no longer a busy centre.

In the 1800s, European travellers became interested in Petra. In 1812, a Swiss traveller called Johann Ludwig Burckhardt visited the city and wrote about it. Later, more people came to study and explore its ancient buildings.

Today, Petra is one of the world's most famous archaeological sites. Thousands of tourists visit it every year. But the city is also fragile, so protecting its stone buildings is very important.