

## Oxford and Cambridge

Oxford and Cambridge are two famous British cities. They are the homes of the UK's most famous universities.

The cities are very old but they were not big cities before the universities started.

The city of Oxford is northwest of London of London, about 90km by road. It takes about an hour by train. The city of Cambridge is northeast of London of London, about 100km by road. It takes about an hour by train.

Both cities have a river running through the centre of the city. You can take very small boats called 'punts' on the river. Both cities have very old buildings.

Both cities are good for tourists to visit. There are a lot of things to see and do. It is easy to walk around the cities, because they are quite small. You can visit a lot of colleges and museums in one day. Oxford and Cambridge both have a lot of tourists every year. About 7 million tourists come to Oxford every year, and about 5.5 million tourists come to Cambridge every year.

Both cities have very famous museums. Oxford has the Ashmolean Museum. It has pictures by Michelangelo and Picasso. It has old statues from ancient Greece and gold from ancient Rome.

Cambridge has the Fitzwilliam Museum. It has old things from ancient Egypt, and pictures from many artists, including Renoir and Cezanne, van Gogh and Monet.

Oxford University is very old. It started in 1167. Before then, English students went to study at the University of Paris. Then the English king told them to come home, and they started to study in Oxford. It is the second-oldest university in the world. The oldest is the University of Bologna, in Italy.

Oxford has 38 colleges and 23,000 students. Students live in the colleges, but they go to the University for their classes.

Many famous people were students in Oxford - including politicians like Margaret Thatcher and Seretse Khama of Botswana, scientists like Stephen Hawking and Tim-Berners Lee (who invented the world wide web), writers like Oscar Wilde and VS Naipaul, and actors like Hugh Grant and Rowan Atkinson.

Cambridge University is also very old. It started in

1209, so it is a little bit younger than Oxford. It started because some of the teachers and students at Oxford did not like the university and wanted to start a new one.

Cambridge has 31 colleges and 19,000 students. Students live in the colleges, but they go to the University for their classes.

Many famous people were students in Cambridge - including politicians like Oliver Cromwell and Lee Kuan Yew from Singapore, scientists like Isaac Newton and Charles Darwin, Francis Crick and James Watson (who discovered DNA), writers like Salman Rushdie and Lord Byron, and actors like Ian McKellen and Stephen Fry.

Both universities have many world experts. In the last 100 years, more than 118 Nobel Prizes went to Cambridge students and teachers and 69 Nobel Prizes went to Oxford students and teachers. There are only 904 people in the world who won the Nobel Prize in 100 years, so Oxford and Cambridge won 21% of all Nobel Prizes.

### New words for this article -

1	college	part of the university, in Oxford & Cambridge, where students live
2	ancient	very old
3	Nobel prize	prize given by the Swedish organisation for excellent work or study
4	scientist	person who studies science

### Comprehension questions

- 1 How far is Cambridge from London?
- 2 What do both cities have in the centre of the city?
- 3 How many tourists visit Oxford each year?
- 4 Where is the Ashmolean Museum?
- 5 Where did Charles Darwin study?

**Reading comprehension questions**

1 It is about 100km by road  
 2 Both cities have a river running through the centre of the city  
 3 About 7 million tourists come to Oxford every year  
 4 It's in Oxford  
 5 He studied in Cambridge

**Answers**