

## Moulin Rouge (A)

In 1889, Paris hosted the Universal Exhibition. The centrepiece of the exhibition was a large tower named after its creator, Gustave Eiffel. Another structure made for the exhibition was a giant model of an elephant, which people could go inside. People from all over the world came to Paris as the city was beginning its Belle Époque (which means 'beautiful era'). Everybody was looking forward to the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the benefits of modernisation. There was an atmosphere of fun and optimism about the place.

After the exhibition ended, many of the structures were taken down. The Eiffel Tower stayed but the elephant was moved to a new place. On October 6<sup>th</sup>, 1889, a new dance hall opened called The Moulin Rouge, and the elephant's new home was in the garden at the back of the dance hall.



## Moulin Rouge (B)

The Moulin Rouge (which means 'red windmill') opened on October 6<sup>th</sup>, 1889, in Montmartre, Paris. It very quickly became the most fashionable venue in town. People of all ages and classes came to watch the dancers kicking their legs in the air in the new (and outrageous) dance called the can-can. In the garden at the back of the Moulin Rouge, men (women couldn't go in) paid one franc to enter the giant model elephant and watch a belly dancer, while others enjoyed sitting on the grass drinking absinth. Absinth was a strong green-coloured alcoholic drink popular at the time.

A regular visitor to the Moulin Rouge in the 1890s was an artist named Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec. He painted dancers Jane Avril and La Goulue and helped to make them, the can-can and the Moulin Rouge famous all over the world.



## Moulin Rouge (C)

In 1906 the Moulin Rouge was rebuilt. There were many changes. The elephant in the garden had gone. Jane Avril and La Goulue had left. Toulouse-Lautrec had died of alcoholism in 1901. Even so, the Moulin Rouge played to a full house every night until the beginning of the First World War in 1914. This was the end of the Belle Époque and the end of the Moulin Rouge's golden age. Nevertheless, the Moulin Rouge has continued to attract artists from all over the world, including singers Frank Sinatra and Elvis Presley, and since 1928, six movies have been made called *Moulin Rouge*. The latest was in 2001. These days, the audiences are mostly foreign tourists, and the dance shows are well-made but maybe lack the passion of the performances for the Parisian bohemian society of the late 1800s.

## Moulin Rouge

In groups of three, A, B and C, answer these questions about the Moulin Rouge.

1. When did Paris hold the Universal Exhibition?
2. Name two structures built for the exhibition.
3. How long did the Belle Époque last?
4. When did the Moulin Rouge open?
5. Which model from the Universal Exhibition moved to the garden of the Moulin Rouge?
6. How much did it cost to go inside it?
7. What was inside?
8. Which dance is the Moulin Rouge famous for?
9. Name a popular alcoholic drink of the time.
10. Name two dancers and two singers who have performed at the Moulin Rouge?
11. Which artist made the Moulin Rouge famous?
12. When did he die?
13. What did he die of?
14. How many movies called *Moulin Rouge* have been made?
15. Who are the audiences at Moulin Rouge today?