
The Tube

WORKSHEET A

The London “tube,” possibly the most famous underground train network in the world, seems to have become a tourist attraction in itself. Many foreign visitors to London not only travel on the network, but also buy T-shirts and posters printed with the famous tube map, with one of the red, white, and blue station signs, or even with the words of one of the loudspeaker messages heard in the tube, “Mind the gap” (which means passengers getting on and off trains should be careful not to step in the gap between the edge of the train floor and the edge of the platform).

The tube’s fame probably has something to do both with its age and its size. It is the oldest underground train network in the world, the first line having been opened in 1863, and many of its 270 stations were built more than 100 years ago. It also has eleven different lines (each with a different color on the map, producing the famous multicolored design) and more kilometers of track (about 400) than any other network in the world.

The name “the tube” comes from the circular shape of many of the underground tunnels, although actually more than half of the network is above ground.

Londoners often grumble about the delays on the tube, the amount of time at weekends when lines are closed due to maintenance work, and the fact that the system doesn’t run 24 hours a day, but instead shuts down from shortly after midnight until about 6:00 a.m. It could be argued, however, that the tube runs pretty well, considering the age of some of its infrastructure, the number of people it has to carry (over a billion passenger journeys a year), and the fact that the lines have only two tracks (one in each direction), which means that when maintenance work needs to be done, there is no alternative track for trains to use.

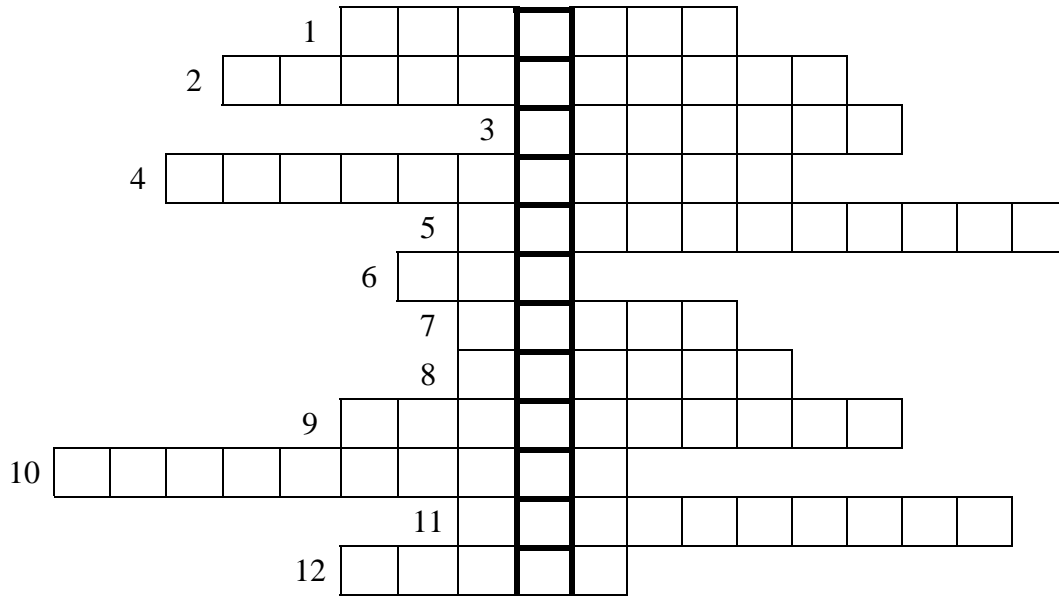
Though they often wish the tube worked better, it seems Londoners want the famous map to stay exactly as it is. There were complaints recently when Transport for London (TFL), the organization that runs the network, published a new, “simpler” design that did not include the light-blue stripe representing the River Thames. Many people, including the mayor of London, said it was ridiculous for the map not to show whether stations are on the north or the south side of the river. So many people complained that TFL quickly agreed the Thames would be put back on the map as soon as possible.

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WORKSHEET B

Exercise 1

Complete the crossword below. If all the words are correct, the name of the oldest line in the London tube network will read from top to bottom.



1. Many people in London _____ about the way the tube operates.
2. The age of some of the infrastructure, and the fact that the lines have only two tracks, are among the reasons why the tube shuts down so often for _____ work.
3. Many of the tube _____ are circular.
4. The tube is an _____ train network.
5. "Mind the gap" is a well known _____ message on the tube.
6. The tube _____ is multicolored.
7. The tube shuts down for about five or six _____ every night.
8. The tube has _____ lines.
9. The mayor of London thought it was _____ that the new tube map didn't show the River Thames.
10. There were lots of _____ when the new tube map was published.
11. _____ make over a billion journeys per year on the tube.

12. The station _____ are red, white, and blue.

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WORKSHEET C

Exercise 2

Decide if the following statements about the tube are true (*T*) or false (*F*), then bet a minimum of 10 points up to a maximum of 50 on your choice.

		T/F	Points bet	Points lost	Points won
1	British people often refer to the London underground train network as the “metro.”				
2	The longest tube line, from the western edge of London to the eastern edge, is more than 50 kilometers long.				
3	London tube trains have carpet on the floor.				
4	All tube stations on the same line are at least one kilometer apart.				
5	There are more than 100 escalators in the tube.				
6	The total number of tube staff is about one thousand.				
7	It is illegal to smoke anywhere in the London underground network.				
8	None of the 270 tube-station names start with a z.				
9	The newest of the tube’s eleven lines is less than 50 years old.				
10	A new tube line is due to open in east London in 2011 and is going to be called the “David Beckham Line.”				
		Total points lost and won			
		Final total (subtract total points lost from total points won)			