

# Istanbul

A Reading A-Z Level O Leveled Book  
Word Count: 625

## Connections

### Writing

Pretend you visited Istanbul. Write a postcard to send to your teacher. Include at least three facts from the book.

### Social Studies

The first section in the book is titled "One City, Two Worlds." Write a paragraph that explains what the author means by this.

LEVELED BOOK • O

# Istanbul

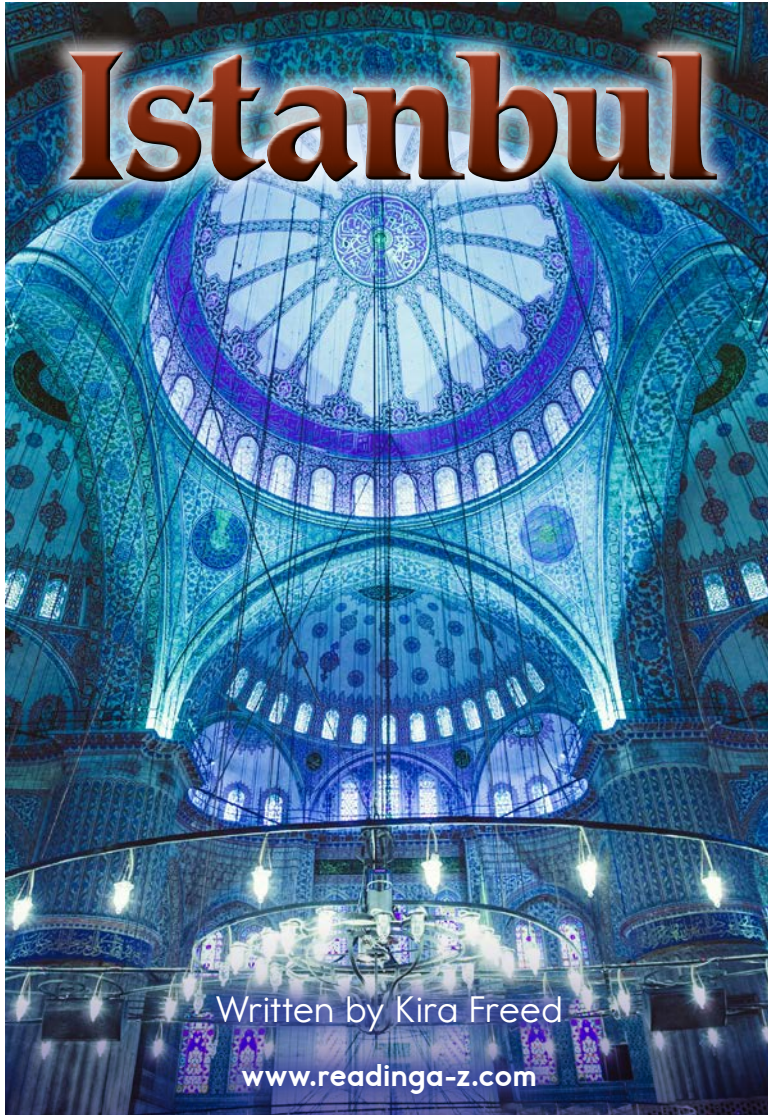
**Multi  
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# Istanbul

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## Focus Question

Where is Istanbul, and what can you see there?

## Words to Know

bazaar  
church  
cistern

landmarks  
mosque  
tower

Cover: Work on the New Mosque began in 1597. It took more than fifty years to build.

Title page: At night, the inside of the Blue Mosque is filled with blue light.

Page 3: Istanbul's skyline shows a mix of old and new styles.

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### Correlation

#### LEVEL O

Fountas & Pinnell	M
Reading Recovery	20
DRA	28



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Istanbul is a busy city with many bridges.

## One City, Two Worlds

A ship arrives at the port of a grand city, carrying goods from Europe to Asia. Parts of this amazing city are on each continent. This is Istanbul, Turkey. Over fifteen million people live here. Over the years, Istanbul has had other rulers and other names. Its story is told through its beautiful **landmarks**.

### Wowser!

Istanbul is one of only a few cities in the world on two continents.

## Where in the World?

Istanbul is in the northwest corner of Turkey. It lies on both sides of a natural waterway called the Strait of Bosphorus (BAHS-fuh-ruhs). This waterway connects two seas. Istanbul has the most people of any city in Europe.



## History

Istanbul has been an important port since long ago. It is on the only trade route between the Black Sea and the Mediterranean Sea. The location has also helped people spread ideas between the East and West.

People have lived in this part of the world since 7500 BCE. Byzas brought his settlers there around 660 BCE.



Byzas (BY-zuhss) was the leader of a group of people who came from the city of Megara (MEH-guh-ruh) in Greece. They settled in the area and named their city Byzantion (bih-ZAN-tee-uhn), later changing it to Byzantium (bih-ZAN-tee-uhm).



Constantine the Great (left) ruled the Roman Empire from Constantinople. Mehmed the Second (right) took over Constantinople in 1453.

Istanbul has been the capital of four empires. Its name was changed to Constantinople in the early 400s CE to honor the Roman ruler Constantine the Great. It became an Ottoman (AH-tuh-muhn) city called Konstantiniyye (KOHN-stahn-tin-yeh) in 1453. The city has been called Istanbul since 1930.

Many landmarks and parts of the city have been destroyed and rebuilt over the years. Let's visit some of Istanbul's most interesting landmarks.

### Do You Know?

Istanbul has been the capital of these empires:

- Roman Empire (330–395)
- Eastern Roman Empire (also known as the Byzantine Empire) (395–1204 and 1261–1453)
- Latin Empire (1204–1261)
- Ottoman Empire (1453–1922)

## Underground Cistern

The Underground Cistern is a huge water tank that is no longer used. Long ago, it was the most important water supply for the city. The cistern is made up of 336 stone posts with arches between them. Water for the tank came from a lake near the Black Sea.



Istanbul has several hundred very old cisterns. The Underground Cistern is the largest.



The Grand Bazaar is one of the oldest covered markets in the world.

## Grand Bazaar

The Grand **Bazaar** is a huge covered market made of stone. The first parts were built in 1461, and other parts were added over time. Today, it has sixty-one covered streets and more than four thousand shops. Shops sell everything from clothing to jewelry to rugs to leather goods.

### Wowser!

- More than 250,000 people shop at the Grand Bazaar every day.
- More than 20,000 people work there every day.
- In 2014, more travelers visited the Grand Bazaar than any other place in the world. That year, more than 91 million people came.



The Maiden's Tower has been destroyed and rebuilt many times.

## The Maiden's Tower

The Maiden's **Tower** is on a little island at the southern end of the Strait of Bosphorus. It was built about 2,400 years ago. Long ago, people in the tower kept watch over goods carried by passing ships. Later, the tower was a lighthouse. Today, it is a restaurant that has amazing nighttime views of Istanbul and the water.

### Do You Know?

The name of the Maiden's Tower comes from a story. It tells of a ruler who tried to keep his daughter safe in a tower with water around it.



Galata Tower (center) was first opened to visitors in the 1960s.

## Galata Tower

Galata (GAH-lah-tah) Tower was built in 1348. At the time, it was the tallest building in Istanbul. The tower was first used as a lighthouse. Later, it held war prisoners. Then, people used it to watch for fires. Visitors enjoy beautiful views of Istanbul from the tower.

### Wowser!

Hezarfen Ahmed Celebi (heh-ZAR-fen AH-med CHEH-leh-bee) (1609–1640) was a scientist and inventor who lived in Istanbul. He is thought to be the first person to ever fly without a powered machine. One day in the 1630s, he took off from Galata Tower. He landed on the other side of the Strait of Bosphorus. Scientists today think he probably invented some kind of glider.

## Topkapi Palace

Topkapi (TOHP-kah-pee) Palace was built in the late 1400s. It was the home of rulers for almost four hundred years. Different rulers added new parts over the years. As a result, the palace is a mix of styles. In 1924, it became a museum.

Topkapi Palace has three main gates and four open areas with buildings and gardens around them. High walls are all around the outside.



Topkapi Palace was home to many rulers long ago.



The Hagia Sophia has a large dome in the middle with smaller domes around it.

## Hagia Sophia

The Hagia Sophia (HAH-gee-uh soh-FEE-uh) was built as a **church** in the year 360. It was rebuilt two times over the years after fires. The building that now stands was built between 532 and 537. In 1453, a ruler changed the church to a **mosque**. Today, it is a museum where people learn about its history.

## Taksim Square

Taksim (TAHK-sim) Square was built in the 1700s. It was the place where all of Istanbul's water lines met. Today it has shops, hotels, and restaurants. Parades and New Year's celebrations take place on the square and street.



Republic Monument is at one end of Taksim Square. It honors the beginning of the Turkish Republic.





A high stone wall goes all the way around the oldest part of the city.

## A Walk Through Time

Istanbul is a colorful city with many people and a rich history. It brings two continents together and has many wonderful landmarks. Each corner of Istanbul has its own story. Visiting Istanbul is like taking a trip back in time.

## Glossary

- bazaar** (*n.*) a market with rows of small shops (p. 9)
- church** (*n.*) a building where people go to practice the Christian religion (p. 13)
- cistern** (*n.*) a tank or other container used to store liquids, usually water (p. 8)
- landmarks** (*n.*) important historical buildings or other places; objects on land that mark a place (p. 4)
- mosque** (*n.*) a building where people go to practice the Islamic religion (p. 13)
- tower** (*n.*) a tall, narrow building (p. 10)