

MARBURG, GERMANY: CITY FOR THE BLIND

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LIVEWORKSHEETS

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Marburg, Germany: City for the Blind

What can a city do to make life easier for people who are blind?



On a steep hill next to Germany's Lahn River sits the charming city of Marburg. Tourists enjoy the historic architecture of this fairy-tale town. And students come from around the world to go to its university. But most interesting about Marburg is the fact that it's a *Blindenstadt* ("blind city") – a city adapted to people who are blind or visually impaired.

Marburg is home to *Blindenstudienanstalt*, commonly called "Blista." Blista is a school for children and young people who are blind or visually impaired. After graduating from Blista, many students stay in Marburg to live, perhaps working or going to university. As a result, the blind population of Marburg is constantly growing, and the city has become a hub for them. Some blind residents call Marburg their "Capital City."

Marburg is helpful to blind people in all different ways. Traffic lights make beeping sounds to let them know when it's safe to cross the street. At "talking" bus stops, they can hear information about bus arrivals. Bus drivers are trained to help too, by stopping right in front of a waiting blind passenger, for example, and letting them know which seats are empty.

For blind people who use a cane to walk around the city, Marburg's streets and sidewalks have small bumps and ridges. As the person walks, they tap the sidewalk

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with their cane. The bumps and ridges let them know they're approaching an obstacle or dangerous area.

More than 30 local restaurants in the *Blindenstadt* offer menus in Braille, and buildings such as the *Ahrens* department store have raised maps and floor plans. There are special tours of Marburg for blind people, where they can feel their way around miniature models of major city attractions.

One of these attractions is the six-kilometer Marburg Planetary Trail, where visitors encounter tactile models of the planets, along with explanations in Braille. The city also has many sports activities adapted for blind people, such as horseback riding, soccer, and skiing.

And Marburg continues to make the city more accessible, creating an even better and stronger *Blindenstadt*. Living in such a supportive community is inspiring. As one former Blista student says, "It gives you courage; it makes you dare to try out new things."

QUESTIONS:

1. The article is mainly about...
a) why there are so many blind people in Germany.
b) German buildings designed by blind people.
c) why Marburg is a good city for blind people.
d) the best places for blind tourists to visit.

2. What is NOT true about Marburg?
a) It is also called Blista.
b) It has a school for blind children.
c) There is a university there.
d) It is a hub for blind people.

3. Which is an example of how Marburg is helpful to blind people?
a) The sidewalks have special bumps and ridges.
b) It has "talking" bus stops.
c) The traffic lights make noise.
d) All of the above

4. A Blindenstadt is a...
a) kind of bus.
b) city for blind people.
c) popular Marburg tour company.
d) school for blind students.

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5. What is true about the Marburg Planetary Trail?

a) It takes six hours to walk the whole trail.
b) You can ride a horse on the trail.
c) Blind people give tours about space.
d) You can touch models of the planets.

GLOSSARY

KEYWORD	MEANING	PICTURE
Town (n) taʊn	**a thickly populated area**	
Hub (n) hʌb	**a focus of activity or authority**	
Horseback (n) hɔrsˌbæk	**the back of a horse**	

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World (n) wɜ-ld	**the earth or globe, considered as a planet.**	
Resident (n) rɛzɪdənt	**a person who lives in a place**	
Building bɪldɪŋ	**a relatively permanent enclosed construction over a plot of land, having a roof and usually windows and often more than one level, used for any of a wide variety of activities, as living, entertaining, or manufacturing.**	
Attraction /əˈtrækʃən	**an entertainment offered to the public**	

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Braille breɪl	**Linguisticsa system of writing, devised by L. Braille for use by the blind, in which combinations of raised dots stand for letters, numbers, punctuation marks, etc., that are read by touch.**	

PRESENT SIMPLE - PAST SIMPLE

1. **PRESENT SIMPLE**

   (+) Students come from around the world to go to its university.

   (-) Students don't come from around the world to go to its university.

   (?) Do students come from around the world to go to its university?

   PAST SIMPLE

   (+) Students came from around the world to go to its university.

   (-) Students didn't come from around the world to go to its university.

   (?) Did students come from around the world to go to its university?

2. **PRESENT SIMPLE**

   (+) Tourists enjoy the historic architecture.

   (-) Tourists don't enjoy the historic architecture.

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(?) Do tourists enjoy the historic architecture?

PAST SIMPLE

(+) Tourists enjoyed the historic architecture.

(-) Tourists didn't enjoy the historic architecture.

(?) Did tourists enjoy the historic architecture?

3. **PRESENT SIMPLE**

(+) Traffic lights make beeping sounds to let them know when it's safe to cross the street.

(-) Traffic lights don´t make beeping sounds to let them know when it's safe to cross the street.

(?) Do traffic lights make beeping sounds to let them know when it's safe to cross the street?

PAST SIMPLE

(+) Traffic lights made beeping sounds to let them know when it's safe to cross the street.

(-) Traffic lights didn´t make beeping sounds to let them know when it's safe to cross the street.

(?) Did traffic lights make beeping sounds to let them know when it's safe to cross the street?

4. **PRESENT SIMPLE**

(+) Marburg helps blind people in many different ways.

(-) Marburg doesn´t help blind people in many different ways.

(?) Does Marburg help blind people in many different ways?

PAST SIMPLE

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(+) Marburg helped blind people in many different ways.

(-) Marburg didn´t help blind people in many different ways.

(?) Did Marburg help blind people in many different ways?

5. **PRESENT SIMPLE**

(+) Marburg's streets and sidewalks have small bumps and ridges.

(-) Marburg's streets and sidewalks don´t have small bumps and ridges.

(?) Do Marburg's streets and sidewalks have small bumps and ridges?

PAST SIMPLE

(+) Marburg's streets and sidewalks had small bumps and ridges.

(-) Marburg's streets and sidewalks didn´t have small bumps and ridges.

(?) Did Marburg's streets and sidewalks have small bumps and ridges?

6. **PRESENT SIMPLE**

(+) Many students stay in Marburg to live.

(-) Many students don´t stay in Marburg to live.

(?) Do many students stay in Marburg to live?

PAST SIMPLE

(+) Many students stayed in Marburg to live.

(-) Many students didn´t stay in Marburg to live.

(?) Did many students stay in Marburg to live?

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7. **PRESENT SIMPLE**

(+) Buildings such as the Ahrens department store have raised maps and floor plans.

(-) Buildings such as the Ahrens department store don´t have raised maps and floor plans.

(?) Do buildings such as the Ahrens department store have raised maps and floor plans?

PAST SIMPLE

(+) Buildings such as the Ahrens department store had raised maps and floor plans.

(-) Buildings such as the Ahrens department store didn´t have raised maps and floor plans.

(?) Did buildings such as the Ahrens department store have raised maps and floor plans?

8. **PRESENT SIMPLE**

(+) Some blind residents call Marburg their "Capital".

(-) Some blind residents don´t call Marburg their "Capital".

(?) Do some blind residents call Marburg their "Capital"?

PAST SIMPLE

(+) Some blind residents called Marburg their "Capital".

(-) Some blind residents didn´t call Marburg their "Capital".

(?) Did some blind residents call Marburg their "Capital"?

9. **PRESENT SIMPLE**

(+) The visitors find tactile models of the planets.

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(-) The visitors don't find tactile models of the planets.

(?) Do the visitors find tactile models of the planets.

PAST SIMPLE

(+) The visitors found tactile models of the planets.

(-) The visitors didn't find tactile models of the planets.

(?) Did the visitors find tactile models of the planets.

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