

PET – Reading part 3

Visiting London

I'm Marcus, and I live in Australia with my family. However, recently I flew to London with my parents for a holiday - the first time I'd been on a plane! We visited all the sights, especially my mum's favourites, as she'd lived in London with my grandparents, before they all moved to Australia.

For me, though, the most interesting was Tower Bridge, which I'd seen in photos of London. It had been my ambition to walk across it since I was young, so my parents were keen to take me, and Dad suddenly decided he wanted to see the new walkways between the two towers, 42 metres above the river. Some of the floor is made of thick glass so visitors can look down onto the bridge and the pavements for walkers either side, and then the river below.

The website says that, just as on a similar bridge in China, the glass is impossible to break, but I still imagined the walkways to be scary and I started wondering about walking across. What would happen if I didn't manage it? Even a friend who loves heights admitted he'd found it slightly worrying! Despite that, I didn't pay attention to what he said and decided to go anyway. Once we arrived, my parents decided to stay at ground level, so I went over the walkways by myself. It was amazing! I'd read that the planners had aimed to make these areas look like big holes in the floor, and they certainly achieved that. In fact, the effect was so convincing that many visitors seemed nervous and avoided stepping on the glass sections, which was very amusing. After I returned to the ground, we saw the exhibition about the bridge's engineers, and how they keep it all working. The bridge opens over 800 times a year, to allow large boats to pass underneath. By pure luck, we were standing by the bridge when a cruise ship passed through amazing! In fact, it was so enormous. I was much less interested in the bridge for a moment! Then I realised that for a great view of it, you probably need to be on board a ship. Somehow, I don't think our next holiday will be a cruise to London, though!

1 Marcus was keen to visit Tower Bridge in London because he

- A had heard the changes made to it were amazing.
- B wanted to take his own photos of it.
- C had dreamed of going there for a long time.
- D knew his parents had always wanted to see it.

2 How did Marcus feel before he visited the walkways?

- A unsure whether he was brave enough to go on them
- B confident after what he had read about them online
- C frightened by what his friend had said about them
- D curious to see something he wouldn't find anywhere else

3 How did Marcus feel the first time he crossed the glass sections of the walkways?

- A disappointed with the effect they created
- B entertained by how other people reacted to them
- C worried about walking on the glass
- D annoyed that they were so crowded

4 When the cruise ship passed below the bridge, Marcus was

- A sure he would only see it properly from the bridge.
- B pleased they had planned to stand by the bridge.
- C grateful to see something that rarely happened at the bridge.
- D even more impressed by the ship than the bridge.

5 What would Marcus write on a postcard of Tower Bridge to his grandparents?

A

We all loved walking over the bridge – even Mum, who usually hates going to the top of tall buildings.

B

I hadn't realised that pedestrians aren't allowed to cross the bridge – it's only for cars and lorries.

C

It's amazing that the old bridge can still operate in such an efficient way. I've no idea who looks after it.

D

I hope this reminds you both of where you used to live. Did you use to come here a lot?