

Alcatraz



1 **SPEAKING** Look at the photo of the island of Alcatraz. Choose the correct answers.

- 1 Which country is it in?
a the USA b Britain c Australia
- 2 What was it used for in the past?
a a holiday resort b a prison c a private house
- 3 What is it today?
a a government building b a water sports centre
c a tourist attraction

2 Read the text and check your answers to exercise 1.

3.26

Alcatraz is a small, rocky island in San Francisco Bay in the USA. It is 2.4 km from the shore and the sea around the island is very dangerous. The water is very cold and there are fast, strong currents. In the 19th century, the American government realised it was the ideal place to put dangerous prisoners, because it is very difficult to reach and even more difficult to escape from. So they built a prison on the island and from the 1930s to the 1960s it was the toughest prison in the USA. Over 1,500 prisoners stayed on the island, including America's most violent bank robbers and murderers. The most famous prisoner was the gangster Al Capone. But the prison was never full and it was very expensive to run, so the government finally decided to close it. Alcatraz became a museum and is now one of San Francisco's most popular tourist attractions, with more than one and a half million visitors a year.

4 Read the text again and answer the questions.

- 1 How far is Alcatraz from the coast?
- 2 Why is it dangerous to try to swim to or from the island?
- 3 For about how long was the island a prison?

- 4 Who was Alcatraz's most famous prisoner?
- 5 Why did the government decide to close it?
- 6 How many people visit Alcatraz every year?

5 **3.27** Listen to an interview. Are the sentences true or false? Write T or F.

- 1 Danny works at Alcatraz. ____
- 2 It was impossible to escape from Alcatraz but life was not too bad for the prisoners. ____
- 3 No prisoners ever tried to escape. ____

6 **3.27** Listen again and choose the correct answers.

- 1 The presenter is surprised that
a black prisoners were separated from white prisoners.
b the cell isn't very big.
c there was so little furniture in the cells.
- 2 If the prisoners weren't well-behaved,
a they had to stay in their cells during the day.
b they had to work very hard.
c they had to tidy all the cells.
- 3 The prisoners could
a go outside for an hour a day.
b play sports only on Saturdays and Sundays.
c play instruments in their cell.
- 4 How many prisoners certainly died while trying to escape from Alcatraz?
a 2 b 6 c 8
- 5 Danny thinks that the other five prisoners
a successfully escaped.
b were found by the FBI.
c probably died while trying to escape.