

Twin towns

1 Work with a partner. Look at the words and where they are from. What do you think they all refer to?

ville jumelée

France

stedenband

Netherlands

partnerstadt

Germany

friendship city (友好城市)

China

gemellaggio

Italy

2a Read the web page. Find out which places have been twinned for fun.



CITY TO CITY



Sister cities



Twin towns and sister cities

Is your town or city twinned with another place somewhere in the world? It's very likely because twinning arrangements with towns and cities across the globe have been popular since the end of the Second World War. Twinning began as a way

of rebuilding relationships between countries following a difficult period in Europe's history. In 1944, Coventry in the UK was the first city in the world to be twinned, linking with Volgograd in Russia as one damaged city supporting another. This started a trend that soon spread across the world.

Nowadays, there are thousands of places worldwide that proudly declare their international partnerships – there's usually a roadside sign when you enter a community announcing their twin town or sister city. Some may have just one twin, others can have many. St Petersburg in Russia holds the record for the most with 52, including Paris, Bangkok and Istanbul.

What started out as an act of peace and understanding between places continues to bring communities together to build close ties of friendship. Today some of the main reasons for twinning include:

- cultural and educational purposes
- international business development
- tourism
- a shared history
- similarities, e.g. size, population, interests, name-sharing.

Culture

- Bristol (UK) was recently twinned with New Orleans (US) because of their shared musical heritage. Both cities have a strong interest in jazz.
- Annecy (France) has been twinned with Nerima (Japan) for several years based on their animation industries. Annecy holds an International Animated Film Festival every year and the Japanese Anime headquarters is in Nerima.
- Washington DC (US) hosts a National Cherry Blossom Festival each year to celebrate their partnership with Tokyo (Japan).
- Bologna (Italy) is partnered with Portland (US) because of their appreciation of food and the arts.

Education

- Oxford (UK) counts Grenoble (France) and Bonn (Germany) among its twin towns because of strong university links.
- In a schools twinning project, Jack Hunt School in Peterborough (UK) is partnered with Kerewan Secondary School (Gambia). They raise money through charity events to help provide equipment for the Gambian school, and have helped build a skills centre for Kerewan school-leavers to learn IT and carpentry skills.

History

- Chicago's (US) links with Warsaw (Poland) is due to Chicago's historic Polish community.

Sport

- Rio de Janeiro (Brazil) and Liverpool (UK) both have a rich football heritage which has resulted in their twinning.

Business

- Shenzhen (China) has grown from a small fishing village into a major financial city in the last 25 years thanks to foreign investment, including help from some of its sister cities such as Houston (US) and Brisbane (Australia).

Name sharing

- Toledo in Ohio (US) is twinned with Toledo (Spain), and St Petersburg (US) with St Petersburg (Russia).

Novelty

- The village of Dull in Scotland (UK) has a twinning agreement with Boring in Oregon (US) to promote tourism based on their similarly uninteresting names!

Twinning between towns and cities can bring many benefits to a community, providing the opportunity to learn about the lives of citizens in other countries and create friendships. We're interested in hearing about your town twinning. Send us an email today!



2b Read the web page again. Are these sentences True (T) or False (F)?

- | | |
|--|-------|
| 1 Town and city twinning started as a way to link places with similar cultural interests. | T / F |
| 2 St Petersburg in Russia is twinned with cities all over the world, including Thailand, Turkey and the USA. | T / F |
| 3 There is more than one Toledo in the world. | T / F |
| 4 The villages of Dull and Boring have a shared history, which is why they are twinned. | T / F |
| 5 The city of Brisbane has helped Houston in the US to become a major financial city. | T / F |
| 6 A school in Africa is being helped by one in the UK thanks to their partnership. | T / F |
| 7 The jazz city of New Orleans has a sister city in Japan with similar musical interests. | T / F |
| 8 The very first twinning agreement was between a British city and a Russian city. | T / F |

2c Read and match the cities in the box to the sentences. Not all answers are twinned with each other.

Annecy • Bonn • Brisbane • Bristol • Chicago • Liverpool • Peterborough • Rio de Janeiro • Shenzhen • Warsaw

- | | | |
|---|-------|-------|
| 1 There are educational reasons for the partnership. | ..... | ..... |
| 2 Shared cultural interests are the connection. | ..... | ..... |
| 3 Business plays a part in the twinning. | ..... | ..... |
| 4 Sporting ties are the main link. | ..... | ..... |
| 5 Historical reasons have resulted in the relationship. | ..... | ..... |

Speaking**3a Work with a partner and discuss the questions.**

- Is your town or city twinned with another place in the world? Which place or places?
- What is the reason for the twinning?
- Have you ever visited your twin town or sister city, e.g. on a school exchange, or would you like to go there one day?
- Find out about the sister cities that your country's capital is twinned with. What are the reasons for the twinning?

PROJECT**3b You are going to work on a project about the twinning of cities around the world. Read the questions and prepare your project research.**

- In pairs, do some research on the Internet to find out about three capital or major cities in the world that are twinned. Gather the following information:
 - how many cities they are twinned with and which ones
 - the reason(s) for the twinings.
- Link with another pair to put together some statistics based on your overall findings for the six cities. Discuss how you would like to show these statistics.
- As a group, create three different infographics to show the statistics for the following information:
 - how many cities your six chosen cities are twinned with
 - whether some of the cities share the same sister cities
 - the reason(s) for the twinings.

3c Display your statistics around the classroom. Discuss the information the class has gathered and find out which main cities share the most sister cities, and the main reasons for the twinning between big cities.