

The Severn Bridge

Activity 1

Correct these statements:

1. The Severn Bridge is in South East England.
2. You can drive from London to Swansea in four hours.
3. The bridge took 6 years to build.
4. There are four towers that support this bridge.
5. You must pay to go over the bridge from Wales to England.

Activity 2

Answer these questions:

1. When did work start on the Severn Bridge?

2. On which date did it finish?

3. Who officially opened it?

4. How long is the bridge?

5. How tall are the towers?

6. How much does it cost for a car to go over from England to Wales?

7. How much does it cost for a lorry to go over from England to Wales?

8. How many vehicles travelled over the bridge BEFORE the second bridge was built?

Activity 3

Listen and complete the gaps

The Severn Bridge is a road crossing that _____ South West England to South East Wales. When it was built it meant that you could drive from London to Swansea in around only three hours instead of having to take a long detour north in order to enter Wales. This provided a great _____ boom for the South Wales region.

Work started on the bridge in 1961 and five years and £8 million later it was officially opened by _____ Majesty Queen Elizabeth 2, on the 8th September to be precise. The Severn Bridge, by the way, takes its name from the river it crosses, The Severn and is a suspension bridge of _____ design. The two central towers are 136 metres tall (445 feet) and the actual bridge is 1597 metres long (5240 feet). The entire crossing is a lot _____ than that as there is a viaduct at each end which carries the road to the bridge.

By the 1980s the number of vehicles using the crossing was _____ , and the structure needed repairing. Therefore the towers and the deck were made _____. However, this didn't solve the problem of traffic jams. There were around 50000 vehicles crossing the bridge every day, and a three-lane motorway became _____ lanes on the bridge. On top of that there were the toll booths. A toll is what you pay to cross a bridge and here there were always queues as everyone had to _____ and pay. Therefore the government decided to build a second crossing over the Severn to take traffic away from this one. This was a successful decision, as now only 15000 vehicles cross. All the rest use the new, larger crossing just a little further down the _____ .

By the way, do you want to know how much it costs to go over the Severn Bridge? Well, if you are in a car you _____ £5.10, around €7.50, for every time you cross. It seems quite expensive, but what about large lorries and containers? They pay £15.30, which is €22.00! At least you only pay the toll _____ for a trip into Wales and back. You pay on the English side but it's free on the Welsh side. Some people call this a _____ on entering Wales and say that it's unfair. Others say that Wales is so nice that you have to pay to see it, but that England is nothing _____ so you can enter for free!

Transcript

The Severn Bridge is a road crossing that connects South West England to South East Wales. When it was built it meant that you could drive from London to Swansea in around only three hours instead of having to take a long detour north in order to enter Wales. This provided a great economic boom for the south Wales region.

Work started on the bridge in 1961 and five years and £8 million later it was officially opened by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth 2, on the 8th September to be precise. The Severn Bridge, by the way, takes its name from the river it crosses, The Severn and is a suspension bridge of traditional design. The two central towers are 136 metres tall (445 feet) and the actual bridge is 1597 metres long (5240 feet). The entire crossing is a lot longer than that as there is a viaduct at each end which carries the road to the bridge.

By the 1980s the number of vehicles using the crossing was enormous, and the structure needed repairing. Therefore the towers and the deck were made stronger. However, this didn't solve the problem of traffic jams. There were around 50000 vehicles crossing the bridge every day, and a three-lane motorway became two lanes on the bridge. On top of that there were the toll booths. A toll is what you pay to cross a bridge and here there were always queues as everyone had to stop and pay. Therefore the government decided to build a second crossing over the Severn to take traffic away from this one. This was a successful decision, as now only 15000 vehicles cross. All the rest use the new, larger crossing just a little further down the river.

By the way, do you want to know how much it costs to go over the Severn Bridge? Well, if you are in a car you pay £5.10, around €7.50, for every time you cross. It seems quite expensive, but what about large lorries and containers? They pay £15.30, which is €22.00! At least you only pay the toll once for a trip into Wales and back. You pay on the English side but it's free on the Welsh side. Some people call this a tax on entering Wales and say that it's unfair. Others say that Wales is so nice that you have to pay to see it, but that England is nothing special so you can enter for free!