Hello! How's everybody today? Today's topic is called 'The Big Easy'. Do you know which American city this refers to?

Well, it's New Orleans. First of all let's check you know where New Orleans is situated. Is it in the North or South?

OK and East or West?

Do you know which state it is in?

And do you know the name of the river it is built on?

Good. That's the geography dealt with so now let's look at the history of the city.

Begin by describing the photo.

Have you any idea who this is?

Well it's the Duke of Orleans and of course New Orleans was a French colony and was named after him. Can you guess which century we are talking about?

The eighteenth century, by the look of the wig...

That's right. Now say as much as you can about the history of New Orleans. Here's some information to help you.
Can you explain why it played a major role in the Atlantic slave trade?

Well it is situated on the Atlantic coast of America which was convenient for boats arriving from Africa and the Mississippi made it easy to transport slaves further inland.

(Click to next slide)

The city today

First of all describe the photo using the words to help you.

OK and can you remind me which river we can see in the picture?

Right and of course the tricky part with that word is remembering how to spell it. Try and spell it out.

Now check and see if you were right.

(Good. Here’s some more information about New Orleans today. Read the list out loud.

OK and now using this information and what you already know can you guess the three main economic activities in New Orleans? Think carefully about where the city is situated and activities in the region.

Did you get all three?

(Click to next slide)
As we just said the city attracts many tourists. Here is Bourbon Street, which is one of the most well-known streets for its many bars and entertainment venues. It’s in the main tourist centre. Describe the photo.

Does the city appeal to you from this photo? Explain why or why not.

Have you ever visited New Orleans? If so can you tell us what you thought of the city?

New Orleans architecture is unique as you can see in the photos. Use the word boxes to describe the photos to begin with. Start with photo 1.

Now do the same for photo 2.

Does the architecture remind you of other countries? If so which ones?

Explain how the architecture is adapted to a hot, wet climate.
Food in New Orleans, like everything else, is extremely varied. The two main influences are Cajun and Creole. Here is a quick definition.

Now here is a list of the three most common dishes found in New Orleans.

Look at the first dish. Recognise the word? So which country brought boudin to New Orleans? Now explain what it is in your own words.

The next photo is of Gumbo or okra. Gumbo is soup made of stock, celery, peppers and onion. Look at the picture. What is Gumbo served with?

OK, and okra is used to thicken the soup. Here’s a photo. Describe okra.

Would you like to try this dish? Why/not?

A lot of Cajun and Creole food is spicy. Do you like spicy food?

What sort of spicy food have you already tasted? From which country?
Music in New Orleans is extremely eclectic too. To begin with Louisiana is known around the world as the birthplace of jazz music, a combination of African and European music traditions. Do you like listening to jazz music? Why/not?

Have you heard of Dixieland Jazz? Dixieland originally meant a place where slaves were not yet free. Dixieland is often considered as traditional jazz, mixing many different styles.

Now look at this photo of a band in New Orleans. Can you use the word box to name the instruments they are holding? Which instruments are not shown in the photo?

There are many different bands in New Orleans. Can you explain what a brass band is? Use the word box to help.

Marching bands are typical of New Orleans. They often play at funerals which are lavish occasions in New Orleans. The band plays sad music on the way to the cemetery and happy music on the way back. What do you think of this idea?

Do you recognise this famous trumpet player and singer?

If so, what do you know about him and can you name a famous song he sang which became a big hit?

Do you know in which year it was a hit record? Or maybe which decade at least?

OK, in fact the year was 1968 and of course many cover versions have been released since.

What’s a cover version?
Describe the photo using the word box and explain why New Orleans is so prone to flooding.

New Orleans is situated on the Atlantic Coast. The city is exposed to extreme weather coming in off the Atlantic (ok, this is extremely over-ambitious but you never know…) which also causes the Mississippi to rise. The city is also on average only 50cm above sea level. The river is prone to overflow and cause flooding.

The phenomenon became increasingly worrying at the beginning of the 20th century. An engineer called Wood devised a drainage plan. Look at the word box and explain what was achieved.

Well, Wood proposed using pumps to drain water and land was reclaimed by doing this.

The drainage system intended to solve the problem has according to many actually made the problem worse, the system means natural silt deposits in the Mississippi are not able to build up and this in turn has washed away many areas of coastal wetlands which helped to protect the city before.

Use the information in the word boxes to talk about the three major hurricanes which have hit New Orleans in recent years.

Well, Wood proposed using pumps to drain water and land was reclaimed by doing this.

What do you know about the Hurricane Katrina disaster?

Describe the photo. When was the photo taken?
Residents who had been unable to evacuate found shelter in the Louisiana Superbowl Stadium which you can see in the photo. However, it was not adapted to receive them and medical and sanitation facilities were inadequate. Also part of the roof blew off as you can see from the photo.

New Orleans is known for its diversity as we have seen and has many nicknames. Let’s look at a few of them to get a better picture of the city.

Nicknames

Here’s the first nickname: ‘the northernmost Caribbean city’. Now you say it.

Can you explain why this name describes New Orleans well?

Why would it be a good term to use in a travel guide?

Here’s another term used, ‘Hollywood South’. Why do you think this name has been used to describe the city?

In 2002, New Orleans began to offer tax incentives for film making in the region. ‘The Curious Case of Benjamin Button’ was filmed in and around New Orleans.

This is probably the most well-known nickname for New Orleans but it is probably more difficult to guess why it is used. Practise saying the title ‘The Big Easy’
Musicians probably coined the term in the early 20th century to describe how easy it was to find work in New Orleans at the time. It could also refer to the period of prohibition when the federal government was unable to enforce laws prohibiting the sale of alcohol. More recently it has been used to refer to the city as one of the cheapest places to live in America and to describe the differences between the laid-back lifestyle there compared to New York City.

(Click to show the title ‘Crescent City’)

What about this nickname ‘The Crescent City’? Where do you think this comes from? Think of the geography of the city.

It comes from the shape of the Mississippi River as it flows around the city.

Right.

(Click to show ‘America’s Most Interesting City’)

If you visit the city here is the title you will read on the welcome signs as you enter the city: ‘America’s Most Interesting City’.

Practise saying the title. Listen again to how I pronounce it. ‘America’s Most Interesting City’.

That’s it. Well now you know more about the city, can you justify this title?

Which nickname from the list do you think is most appropriate? Explain why.

OK, well our visit is over as we are running out of time so let’s just sum up quickly.

(Click to next slide)
Here is a quick quiz about the city.

(Click again to show the first question)
First of all, Who was the city named after?

S answer(s)

(Click to show the next question)
Question 2. Which river is the city built on?

S answer(s)

Question 3. Explain why New Orleans is surrounded by water on three sides.

(Click to show the next question)
S answer(s)

Question 4. How have civil engineers tried to solve the problem of flooding in New Orleans?

S answer(s)

(Click to show the next question)
Question 5. When was the biggest hurricane disaster in New Orleans and what was its name?

S answer(s)

(Click to show the next question)
Question 6. What two adjectives would you use to describe the city?

S answer(s)

(Click to show the next question)
Question 7. What do you remember about food in New Orleans?

S answer(s)

(Click to show the next question)
Question 8. What is the name of traditional jazz which originated in the city?

S answer(s)

(Click to show the next question)
Did you manage to answer all the questions?

S answer(s)

OK, well there’s lots to talk about on this subject and we have run out of time so that’s it for today, but I hope you found this useful and ... speak to you again soon. Goodbye.