

WARM UP

1 How much can you remember about Westminster Abbey? Read the following sentences and tick (✓) the ones you think are correct, then check your answers in the text on page 186 of your coursebook.

- 1 Nowadays the Abbey is no longer used for religious ceremonies, but it is just a museum. _____
- 2 Kings have been crowned there since 1066. _____
- 3 Many kings and queens are buried there. _____
- 4 It was originally called the 'east minster'. _____
- 5 It was rebuilt in the Gothic style in the 13th century. _____
- 6 King Henry VIII added the beautiful Lady Chapel. _____
- 7 The West Tower was completed in 1745. _____

GLOSSARY

buried: *sepolto*
flight of stairs: *rampa di scale*
wrought bronze: *bronzo battuto*
chivalry: *cavalleria*
hinged: *incernierato*

Lady Chapel and Poets' Corner

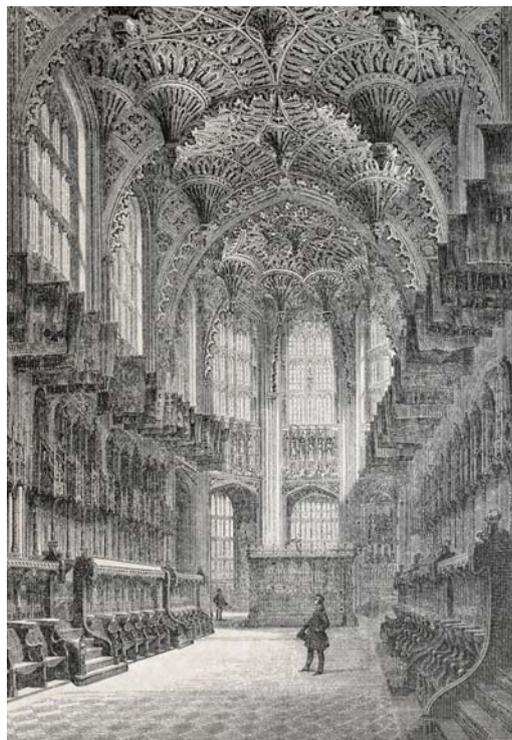
The Lady Chapel

A Lady Chapel is the name for a chapel inside a cathedral or large church which is dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary. Most large medieval churches had one, and it was Henry VII who financed the construction of the large Lady Chapel at the far eastern end of Westminster Abbey.

Building began in 1503, and it is considered the last great masterpiece of English medieval architecture even if the architects are unknown. The chapel is built in a very late Perpendicular Gothic style, characterised by an emphasis on vertical lines. It contains the tombs of several monarchs including Elizabeth I, buried in the north aisle of the chapel, while in the south aisle there are monuments to Mary Queen of Scots and Henry VII's mother Lady Margaret Beaufort.

A flight of stairs leads to the entrance of the Chapel with its delicate wrought bronze gates adorned with royal Tudor emblems which separate it from the rest of the abbey. Once inside, you are immediately struck by the beauty of the fan-vaulted roof with its carved pendants. Ninety-five statues of saints line the walls, while the renaissance tomb of Henry VII and his Queen Elizabeth of York, surrounded by a bronze screen, is situated behind the altar. The painting of the Virgin and Child on the altar dates back to about 1480 and is the work of the artist Bartolomeo Vivarini.

In 1725 George I founded The Most Honourable Order of the Bath, a British order of chivalry, and the chapel was used for the medieval ceremony to confer knighthood to this order which involved bathing as a sign of purification. This indeed is where the order gets its name from, and the knights were then known as the Knights of the Bath. This order still exists today, and above the oak stalls, there are heraldic banners of living knights who are mostly senior military officers or senior civil servants. Beautifully carved misericords can be found under the hinged seats of the stalls, which since they were normally out of sight, depict non-religious subjects like everyday scenes and animals. The Royal Air Force chapel is situated at the east end, and its stained glass window depicts the badges of the fighter squadrons that fought in the Battle of Britain in 1940.



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READING COMPREHENSION

2 **PET** Read the text and decide if the statements below are true (T) or false (F).

- 1 Henry VII was given money to build the Lady Chapel in Westminster Abbey.
- 2 To enter the Chapel, you have to go out of the Abbey, up some steps and through a gate.
- 3 One of the most striking features of the chapel is its ceiling.
- 4 The walls are covered with paintings.
- 5 The ceremony to become a Knight of Bath was carried out in the chapel.
- 6 The misericords are not immediately visible and do not depict saints.

T	F
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

LISTENING

3 **12** Listen to a tourist guide talking about Poets' Corner and complete the text with the correct information.

Poets' Corner is probably one of the most famous parts of Westminster Abbey and is situated in the (1) _____. It is the (2) _____ of writers, playwrights and poets. This tradition began with the (3) modest _____ even if at that time he was buried there not because he was the author of the *Canterbury Tales*, but because he had worked for the palace of Westminster. Much later, in the (4) _____, a much more impressive tomb was erected in his memory and from then on, many prominent literary figures have been buried or (5) _____ there. This part of the abbey is lit by (6) _____ with glass dating from 1902 and under this window there are two magnificent (7) _____. Apart from numerous monuments, there are also two late thirteenth-century (8) _____ which were uncovered in 1936.



WRITING

4 **PET** A group of foreign students studying architecture would like to visit your area, and your teacher has asked you to write a review of places of interest including buildings and monuments. In your review describe an interesting building, specifying why you think the students would enjoy visiting it (about 100 words).