

WARM UP

1 Decide if the statements below about San Francisco are true (T) or false (F).

- 1 It is in the state of California. _____
- 2 It is on the East Coast. _____
- 3 It was originally an English colony. _____
- 4 It's very flat. _____
- 5 It has a famous bridge. _____
- 6 It's cool in summer. _____

GLOSSARY

- winding:** *sinuose*
steep: *ripida*
hairpin bends: *curve a gomito*
crooked: *tortuosa*
switchbacks: *tornanti*
pedestrians: *pedoni*

MORE ABOUT...

This famous street has appeared in several famous films such as Alfred Hitchcock's *Vertigo* and Bogdanovich's *What's up Doc?* as well as in the cartoon *The Simpsons*. The street is also featured in various video games such as *Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas* where it is referred to as 'Windy Windy Windy Windy Street'.

The streets of San Francisco: Lombard Street



Lombard Street is one of the most winding one-way streets in San Francisco and certainly the most famous. It is on an extremely steep hill and its hairpin bends take you past beautiful Victorian mansions. It is one of the most expensive areas for property in San Francisco and is also a regular tourist attraction.

People often ask why this street is so crooked. Well, the answer surprisingly enough, is for safety reasons. It is so steep that without all its twists and bends it would be impossible to walk down, which is why in the 1920's a property owner in the area suggested putting in the switchbacks not only to enhance the street, but to make it safer for pedestrians. Tourists get a real kick out of taking photos from the bottom of the most windy part of Lombard Street as you get a great view of the cars curving round the bends. On the other hand, at the top of the hill, you get a fantastic view of the city looking down eastward and a glimpse of the Bay with its famous Golden Gate Bridge.

There are also steps on either side of the street if you're feeling particularly energetic and fancy walking up to the top, but it's a good idea to stop now and then to catch your breath. Even if the walk is very steep, it doesn't take that long, which is handy because it means you can then go on to visit other famous attractions of the city which are all within easy reach, such as North Beach, Chinatown and Fisherman's Wharf.

READING COMPREHENSION

2 Read the text and answer the following questions.

- 1 What is Lombard Street like, and what kind of area is it in?
- 2 Why was Lombard Street designed in this way?
- 3 What is available for people who prefer to walk up Lombard Street and what are they advised to do?
- 4 Apart from being a tourist attraction itself, why is Lombard Street a good starting point for tourists visiting San Francisco?

VOCABULARY

3 Find the synonyms in the text for the following words or expressions.

- 1 get pleasure from _____
- 2 improve _____
- 3 add _____
- 4 brief look _____
- 5 like the idea of _____
- 6 convenient _____
- 7 proceed _____

LISTENING

4  9 Listen to a tourist guide talking about famous homes in Lombard Street and fill in the missing information.

If you decide to take an energetic (1) _____ up Lombard Street, then you will enjoy getting a glimpse at some of the famous homes along the way even if you can't actually go in and walk around them. (2) _____ socialite, Pat Montandon, who was famous for her (3) _____ lifestyle and extravagant parties, once lived in this street, but eventually moved out because, after her (4) _____ friend died mysteriously in the house, she (5) _____ it to be haunted. On the same side of the street there is another spooky house at (6) _____ Lombard Street. This was Scottie's flat, the (7) _____ in Alfred Hitchcock's psychological thriller *Vertigo*.

SPEAKING

5  Talk to your partner about San Francisco. Ask and answer the following questions.

- Have you ever been to San Francisco? If yes, Did you see Lombard Street? If no, would you like to visit it? Why/Why not?
- What famous roads or streets are there in Italy?
- What famous roads or streets do you know about in the rest of the world?