

London Underground Fact File Activity

Read about the London Underground and some interesting facts, then answer the questions. How much can you remember?

The **London Underground**, also known as the **Tube**, is a **rail network** and popular choice of transport for people to travel around London. People affectionately called it the Tube after how the shape of the tunnels looked quite tube-like.

The London Underground map was designed by artist and draughtsman, **Harry Beck**. Beck wanted to find an easier way for passengers to work out their routes than the typical style of map which at the time, was geographically detailed with small writing.

Beck's idea for a route map came from his experience of designing **electrical circuits**- a map which would be **quick** and **easy** to read without instruction. His focus was more on passenger needs than the underground itself. Beck drew all the lines on the map **vertically**, **horizontally** or **diagonally**. Spacing out the stations **evenly** and not **geographically** like the more typical maps of the time. This gave travellers a better idea of the **order** and **location** of stations, but not necessarily their **distance** away from each other.

Initially **rejected** by the Underground management, the map became popular with passengers and so was sent into production to be used. The map is now considered to be a design **classic**.

Facts about the London Underground

- There are 11 lines which are colour coded and named.
- The Victoria line was named after Queen Victoria.
- How much you pay for your journey will depend on the time of day you are travelling, how far you want to go and your payment method. For example if you intend on making a number of journeys in the same day, buying a day ticket may work out cheaper than if you bought individual tickets for each journey.
- London Underground maps and guides are free to help guide passengers around the network.
- When the Underground was first opened in 1863, it became the world's first underground railway.
- Starting with just six stations, the tube has grown to a network of 11 lines and 270 stations.
- The average speed of an Underground train is 20.5 mph. On the Metropolitan line, trains can reach speeds of over 60 mph.
- During the Second World War, many tube stations were used as air raid shelters for people in London.
- The Central line was converted into a factory for making aircrafts. The existence of this part of the line was kept a secret until the 1980s.
- The shortest journey between two stations next to each other is just 260m. It takes under 30 seconds to travel between Leicester Square and Covent Garden.
- The original Underground trains were powered by steam.

