



## Background information on topics

### Module 4 unit 11 Get ready

Norwich was a very important city in the Middle Ages and was the second or third city in England (after London and perhaps York). Its wealth came from the textile industry. Because of that, Norwich has possibly the largest collection of medieval buildings in the north of Europe. Norwich suffered badly in the Black Death (1349) but soon recovered. This was helped by an influx of Flemish weavers from Belgium who brought new weaving techniques. In the eighteenth century, weaving and textiles declined but Norwich became a banking centre. Barclays Bank started off here. Today, Norwich is a dynamic provincial city with a good quality of life which has attracted businesses.

### Module 5 Unit 14 background

**The Okavango Delta** is very unusual because it is inland. The Okavango River flows from the highlands of Angola into Botswana and the Kalahari Desert. It is an area of waterways and islands and large areas become quite dry in parts of the year. It is rich in wildlife and there are several safari camps and a couple of national parks.

**Botswana** is a large, sparsely populated country (581,730 square km / population 1.5 million) It is surrounded by South Africa, Namibia and Zimbabwe. The capital, Gaborone, is in the south and the Okavango Delta is in the north. Large areas of the country are part of the Kalahari Desert. The earliest inhabitants were the San People (Kalahari Bushmen).

**Uganda** is in East Africa and along with Rwanda and Burundi is the home of mountain gorillas. Uganda has a population of 24 million in an area of 241,038 square kilometres.

### Module 5 Across Cultures, background

The culture of the **Sami** people was oppressed by the Swedes and Norwegians until the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. However, nowadays their language and customs are respected. Only a small proportion of them continue the nomadic lifestyle following their herds of reindeers.

The **Bedouin** people regard themselves as the purest of all the Arab people. Their lifestyle was extremely austere and they were organised in clans. Nowadays, only a few of them live a nomadic lifestyle, but Bedouin customs and culture still remain.

The **Moken** sea dwellers are believed by some experts to have been the first inhabitants of the Andaman coastal regions of Thailand, Myanmar and Malaysia. Today only several thousand of them remain here, with few still living the traditional life. The Moken are related to other 'sea gypsy' peoples inhabiting island archipelagos all the way to the Philippines. Their language appears unrelated to any other, and their real origin is unknown. Some experts believe it was the ancestors of the Moken who drew the paintings found in caves in Phang Nga Bay and at other locations.

### Module 6 Unit 16 background

James Bond, 007, a British secret agent, was created by Ian Fleming in 1950ties. Twenty one Bond films have been made so far. Sean Connery was the first Bond on screen, from *Dr No*, made in 1962, to *Diamonds Are Forever*, made in 1971. Roger Moore starred in 7 films between 1973 and 1985. The last big star was Pierce Brosnan, who played in *Golden Eye* in 1995 and then in four more films, *Die Another Day* (2002) being the last one. Daniel Craig is the new Bond, who appeared in the 2006 *Casino Royale*. Over two billion people around the world will have seen at least one Bond film.

Teenage audiences are drawn to Bond through computer games featuring movie characters.

### **Module 7 across cultures background**

In more traditional societies there is often some kind of ordeal that the boy or girl have to go through before becoming an adult. For example, some teenage Native American girls are largely buried in sand for a long period of time. Masai boys have to wear masks and participate in rituals and ceremonies between the ages of 12 and 15.

- The Quinceañera ceremony is popular in all hispanic countries, from Mexico to Argentina. It is also popular among the large hispanic population in the USA.

- The Apache Sunrise Ceremony was banned by the US government until 1978 in an effort to weaken the Apaches traditional culture and religion.

- The Australian Citizenship Ceremony includes a pledge to the country:

From this time forward, under God,\*

I pledge my loyalty to Australia and its people, whose democratic beliefs I share, whose rights and liberties I respect, and whose laws I will uphold and obey.

### **Module 8 Get Ready background info**

**Joshua Bell** (1967) started taking violin lessons at the age of 4 and appeared as a soloist with the Philadelphia Orchestra at the age of 14! He won a Grammy in 1993 and got an Oscar for his solo in the film, *The Red Violin*.

He is a world-famous violinist and plays chamber music and performs with major world orchestras.

**Beyoncé Giselle Knowles** (1981) is an American pop singer, songwriter, record producer, actress and designer.

She has won 9 Grammy awards and has had a successful film career.

**Alex Turner** is the singer and lead guitarist of **Arctic Monkeys**, a rock group from Sheffield in northern England. They were the first band to become popular through the Internet in 2005 and 2006. They gave out free demo copies of their songs and some of their fans put them on the Net. They were world-famous *before* producing their first records, the singles 'I bet you look good on the dance floor' and 'When the sun goes down.'

### **Module 9 Get Ready background – books**

As well as published reference works, there are now a number of free encyclopedias on the Net. The most popular is Wikipedia (see reference below). Wikipedia is a free and 'open' encyclopedia, created by large numbers of amateur enthusiasts. Some experts have criticised the reliability of such 'open' encyclopedias, but others have compared Wikipedia to published encyclopedias like Encyclopaedia Britannica.

Ebooks are books that are digitalised and which can be accessed either by a desktop or laptop computer or by a special ebook device. The availability of novels and comics in this format is growing (especially amongst young people) but is still relatively new in Europe and North America. Japan is the country where digitalised stories and comics are becoming more popular than their paper equivalent amongst young people. One new trend in Japan is the downloading of stories and comics to mobile phones.

Another feature of the Net is the 'blog', an online diary/discussion forum where people can interact with the writer(s).

For more information, see the entry in Wikipedia for 'ebook':

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/EBook>

For information on blogs see this Wikipedia entry:

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blog>

## Module 9 Unit 25 background

Mark Twain's *Huckleberry Finn*. The book was not meant for children but for adults and deals with serious social problems of the US in 1830ties. Because of its very harsh criticism of the American society, the book was banned from libraries in many places. The controversy continues even now, as some people consider the book racist

(which is a completely unjustified idea, as the 'nigger' Jim is the only truly honest and honourable character in the story.)

*The Catcher in the Rye* covers themes such as adolescence and loss of innocence. Many American authorities wanted it banned for its bad language and references to alcohol and prostitution.

## Module 10 Get Ready background

The 'tenth' planet has not been given full 'planetary status' yet and its name is still not decided. However, it is bigger and brighter than Pluto. 'Xena' is the furthest object to orbit around the Earth and it has a moon. It was discovered in 2005 by a team of American scientists.

The animal in the photo was discovered in 2005 in the dense forest of Borneo by a World Wildlife Fund team. The photo was taken by a 'camera trap'. This carnivorous mammal, bigger than a domestic cat, looks like a lemur but is probably from the mongoose family. It lives in an area of dense forest which is under threat from logging companies.

The city of Ubar was mentioned in the Koran and was a rich trading city in ancient times. It was discovered in the sand desert of Oman in 1992 using satellite technology. Since then the city has been excavated.

This photo is of a cell being manipulated in gene therapy. After the appearance of a model of DNA in 1953, biologists started major research into cells responsible for passing on hereditary disease. The first successful gene therapy experiment happened in 1990. The human genome (our full genetic code) was finally mapped out in 2003 and will have a major impact on the field.

## Module 10 Unit 28 background inventions

The **telephone** was invented by Alexander Graham Bell in 1876.

The **credit card** was the successor of various merchant credit schemes. It was first used in the 1920s, in the United States, specifically to sell fuel to automobile owners.

The concept of paying merchants using a card was invented in 1950 by Ralph Schneider and Frank X. McNamara in order to consolidate multiple cards. The Diners Club produced the first charge card. It was followed shortly thereafter by American Express.

The **light bulb** was simultaneously invented by Thomas Edison in the US and Joseph Swan in Britain in the 1870s.

The first **friction match** was invented by English chemist [John Walker](#) in [1827](#). The invention was improved in [1836](#) by a [Hungarian](#) a student of chemistry [János Irinyi](#).

[Whitcomb L. Judson](#) patented a device similar to a **zipper**, for fastening [shoes](#) and [boots](#), in [1891](#). The true zipper, based on interlocking teeth, was invented by an employee of Judson's, a Swedish born scientist, [Gideon Sundback](#), in [1913](#). The [B. F. Goodrich Company](#) coined the name 'Zipper' in [1923](#). The zip became popular for children's clothing and men's trousers in the [1920s](#) and [1930s](#). At this stage, the zip was permanently joined at one end, so could not be used to fasten jackets.

The invention of a practical **microphone** was crucial to the development of the telephone system. [Emile Berliner](#) invented the first microphone on [March 4, 1877](#), but the first useful microphone was invented by [Alexander Graham Bell](#). Many early developments in microphone design took place in [Bell Laboratories](#).

Information based on en.wikipedia.org