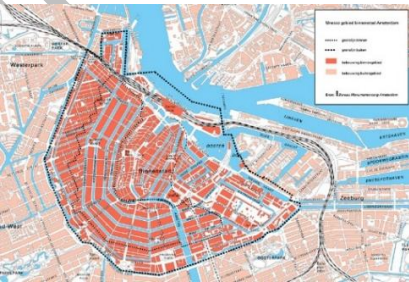


Activity C

Sewerage system	canal
windmill	city layout
defence wall	dam
barge	moat
bridge	urban expansion
island	museum



A.

If anyone mentions **canals**, the city that immediately comes to mind is Venice, Italy. However, there is another European city that has even more canals than Venice does. That city is Amsterdam, the capital of Netherlands. Amsterdam has over 100 kilometres of canals and as many as 90 **islands**, which are connected by about 1,500 **bridges**. And this despite the fact that almost half of the original waterways have been filled in. Fortunately, the canals are cleaner than they used to be because clean water is pumped in from a local lake and dirty water is pumped out. On the surface all the house boats are connected to the **sewerage system**.

B.

How did Amsterdam become a city of canals with a **layout** unlike any other in the world? Originally, the canals were built as **moats**, for defence. However, as the city expanded, **dams** that had originally been part of the city's defences were no longer on the outskirts of the city. Although they lost their **defence** function, they became the means for transporting, on **barges**, merchandise from all over the world. Due to this trade, Amsterdam became very wealthy. The late 16th and 17th centuries were known as the "Golden Age" of the city, when commercial success resulted in rapid but well-planned **urban expansion**. Amsterdam first developed as a fishing village after a dam in the Amstel River was built in about 1250. The name *Amsterdam* comes from *Aeme Stelle Redamme* (Medieval Dutch for "Dam in a Watery Area"). Few of its medieval buildings have survived, however, because they were made of wood.

The most important historical buildings in Amsterdam today date back to the "Golden Age", when economic success drew people to the city. This immigration gave Amsterdam its cosmopolitan character, while freedom of trade, thought and religion attracted famous scholars and philosophers including Descartes, who is famous for saying: "I think, therefore I am". These people enjoyed greater liberty in Amsterdam than was available anywhere else in Europe at the time.

C.

Today Amsterdam is a popular holiday destination, especially in summer, when the canals are busy with pleasure boats. Companies offer a variety of cruises, from inexpensive tours to luxury cruises with dinner and entertainment. Alternatively, tourists can walk along the four main canals and see some of the most beautiful parts of the city, including the area where Amsterdam's most famous houseboats are. Visitors to Amsterdam will find lots to see apart from the canals, like the trademark **windmills** on the outskirts of the city. Two of the city's most famous attractions are the Van Gogh Museum and the Anne Frank house.

