

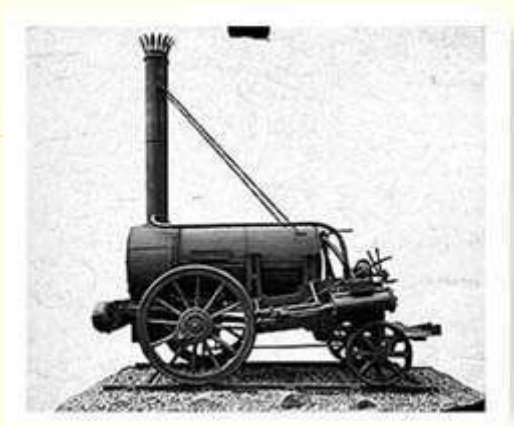


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Getting around



Stephenson's 'Rocket'

Did you know that railways were invented in Europe? It was in England that George Stephenson introduced the first passenger train in 1825. His most famous locomotive was called 'the Rocket' and it reached speeds of more than 40 kilometres per hour (km/h) – which was really fast for those days.

Today, Europe's high-speed electric trains are very different from those first steam engines. They are very comfortable and they travel at speeds of up to 330 km/h on specially built tracks. More tracks are being built all the time, to allow people to travel quickly between Europe's big cities.

Roads and railways sometimes have to cross mountain ranges, wide rivers or even the sea. So engineers have built some very long bridges and tunnels.

The longest road tunnel in Europe is the Laerdal tunnel in Norway, between Bergen and Oslo. It is more than 24 kilometres (km) long and was opened in November 2000.

The longest railway tunnel in Europe is the Channel Tunnel. It carries Eurostar high-speed trains under the sea between Calais in France and Folkestone in England, and it's more than 50 km long.



Eurostar trains at St Pancras station (London)



The highest bridge in the world (245 metres tall) is the Millau Viaduct in France, which was opened in December 2004.

Two of the longest bridges in Europe are the Oresund road and rail bridge (16 km long) between Denmark and Sweden and the Vasco da Gama road bridge (more than 17 km long) across the river Tagus in Portugal. The Vasco da Gama bridge is named after a famous explorer, and you can read about him in the chapter "A journey through time".

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Getting around

People also travel around Europe by plane, because air travel is quick. Some of the world's best planes are built in Europe – for example, the Airbus. Different European countries make different parts of an Airbus, and then a team of engineers puts the whole plane together.

The biggest passenger plane in the world is the Airbus A380, designed to carry up to 840 passengers. It first flew in April 2005.



The world's biggest passenger plane - the Airbus A380

The fastest ever passenger plane, the Concorde, was designed by a team of French and British engineers. Concorde could fly at 2160 km/h – twice the speed of sound – and could cross the Atlantic in less than 3 hours! (Most planes take about 8 hours).



The Ariane 5 rocket puts satellites into space

Faster than any plane are space rockets, such as Ariane – a joint project between several European countries. People don't travel in the Ariane rocket: it is used to launch satellites, which are needed for TV and mobile phone networks, for scientific research and so on. Most of the world's satellites are now launched using these European rockets.



The success of Concorde, Airbus and Ariane show what can be achieved when European countries work together.

**Test yourself
now!**



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