

WORDS

- **although** = while
- **billion** = one thousand million
- **bore** = cut through
- **chalk** = soft grey rock formed a long time ago from the shells of sea animals
- **connect** = link
- **consist of** = is made up of
- **construction** = the building of
- **dig** = cut through rock
- **electricity** = power
- **emergency vehicle** = cars or trucks that are used when an accident or another disaster happens
- **employ** = to work for someone
- **escape** = to get away from a dangerous place
- **explode** = here: to get much to big
- **fail** = to stop working
- **force** = to make something happen
- **freight** = goods, products, not people
- **high-speed** = very, very fast
- **illegal** = against the law
- **immigrant** = a person who leaves their home country and goes to another country to live or work their
- **low** = deep
- **occur** = happen
- **officially** = formally, in public
- **operate** = control
- **overall** = in general, for everything
- **priority** = the thing that you think about and care for most
- **progress** = to go on
- **project** = plan
- **realize** = to find out
- **repair** = to fix something
- **safety** = security, to be protected form
- **scene of an accident** = place where an accident happens
- **service** = here: checks and repairs
- **shuttle** = a train that makes short trips between two places
- **supply** = provide, give
- **task** = job
- **trap** = to be in a place so that you cannot get out

The Channel Tunnel, also known as the *Chunnel*, is a 50 km long undersea rail tunnel that **connects** south-eastern England with northern France. At its **lowest** point it lies 75 metres under the ocean floor. The tunnel is **operated** by the Eurotunnel Group, a British – French company.

Three types of trains travel through the tunnel.

- **Shuttle** trains travel from Folkestone to Calais in about half an hour. Cars, trucks and buses can be loaded onto them.
- The Eurostar **high-speed** passenger trains bring people from Paris to London in 2 hours and 15 minutes and passengers from Brussels to London in 1 hour and 50 minutes.
- **freight** trains

Although the first plans to **dig** an undersea tunnel between Britain and the Continent came up at the beginning of the 19th century **construction** didn't begin until 1988. The tunnel was finished and **officially** opened in 1994. Since its opening there have been some problems. Fires broke out and **illegal immigrants** have used the tunnel to get to Great Britain.

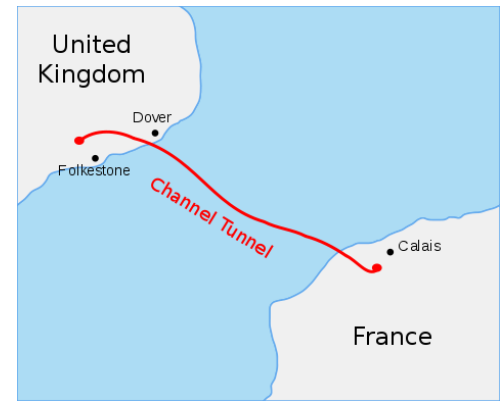
The tunnel **consists of** two rail tunnels and a smaller **service** tunnel that lies between them. It is used an **escape** route and for **repairs**. It also **supplies** the two train tunnels with fresh air. **Emergency vehicles** can get to the **scene of an accident** quickly.

Building the tunnel was a difficult engineering **task**. During the construction period teams from both sides used special machines to **bore** through the mostly **chalky** rock. Some were as long as football fields and could cut through 80 metres of rock a day. At times, almost 15,000 workers were **employed** by Eurotunnel. As **construction progressed** Eurotunnel **realized** that **overall** costs would **explode**. The project, which was financed with private money, cost almost 15 **billion** Euros, more than twice as much as **projected**.

Since its **official** opening in 1994, about 15 million people have travelled through the tunnel every year. Even though it is a real alternative to air travel, Channel Tunnel trains have not carried as many passengers as its **operator**, Eurotunnel, expected. The company lost millions of Euros over the years.

Although safety is a top **priority** for Eurotunnel there have been three big fires that **forced** the tunnel to close down. The last one **occurred** in 2008 and lasted for 16 hours. Nobody was killed but many people had to be taken to hospitals.

In December 2009 over 2000 passengers were **trapped** in the tunnel because **electricity failed** in the cold weather.



High-speed Eurostar train

1. Answer the questions

How deep does the Channel Tunnel lie under the sea floor? _____

Who operates the tunnel? _____

Which two towns does the tunnel connect? _____

How was the project financed? _____

Which types of trains pass through the Channel Tunnel? _____

How long does it take passengers to get from Paris to London? _____

What is the high-speed train called? _____

When did construction start on the tunnel? _____

What kind of rock did workers have to bore through? _____

Why is there a service tunnel? _____

What happened to the overall costs of building the tunnel? _____

About how many people travel through the tunnel every year? _____

When did the last fire break out in the tunnel? What happened? _____

What happened in December 2009? _____

2. Match the words with the definitions

A	bore		soft rock that was formed from sea shells millions of years ago
B	illegal		car or truck that is used when there is an accident
C	chalk		to get away from a dangerous place
D	escape		goods and products
E	immigrant		if you cannot get out of a dangerous place
F	freight		to cut through hard material
G	operate		train that makes short trips between two places
H	emergency vehicle		a person who leaves their home country and goes somewhere else to live or find work
I	shuttle		control
J	trap		against the law

3. True or False

	T	F
The first plans to dig a tunnel below the English Channel came up in the 19 th century		
The British and French governments spent a lot of money building the tunnel.		
The Channel tunnel is only for trains.		
The Eurostar is the shuttle that travels from Folkestone to Calais.		
Many people have been killed in Channel Tunnel accidents.		
The chalky rock in the tunnel area is very hard.		
Eurotunnel is a private company that operates the tunnel.		
Up to today more passengers than expected have used the Channel Tunnel.		
Britain wants to shut down the tunnel because too many immigrants are coming to the island.		

Key

4. Match the words with the definitions

A	bore	C	soft rock that was formed from sea shells millions of years ago
B	illegal	H	car or truck that is used when there is an accident
C	chalk	D	to get away from a dangerous place
D	escape	F	goods and products
E	immigrant	J	if you cannot get out of a dangerous place
F	freight	A	to cut through hard material
G	operate	I	train that makes short trips between two places
H	emergency vehicle	E	a person who leaves their home country and goes somewhere else to live or find work there
I	shuttle	G	control
J	trap	B	against the law

5. True or False

	T	F
The first plans to dig a tunnel below the English Channel came up in the 19 th century	✓	
The British and French governments spent a lot of money building the tunnel.		✓
The Channel tunnel is only for trains.	✓	
The Eurostar is the shuttle that travels from Folkestone to Calais.		✓
Many people have been killed in Channel Tunnel accidents.		✓
The chalky rock in the tunnel area is very hard.		✓
Eurotunnel is a private company that operates the tunnel.	✓	
Up to today more passengers than expected have used the Channel Tunnel.		✓
Britain wants to shut down the tunnel because too many immigrants are coming to the island.		✓