FACT SHEET · AGES 11–14

All about Marrakech

Acorn & Ink

Marrakech (also spelled Marrakesh) was founded around 1070 by the Almoravids and is one of Morocco's four imperial cities. Its walled medina, a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1985, gives it the nickname "the Red City".

At its heart is the square of Jemaa el-Fnaa. Today about a million people live in the city, which sits on a plain north of the Atlas Mountains.

Quick facts

Country	Morocco
Nickname	The Red City
Founded	about 1070
People	about 1 million (2024)
Languages	Arabic, Amazigh, French
City walls	about 19 km
July high	about 38 °C
UNESCO	medina listed 1985

Key words

medina: the old walled part of a North African city

madrasa: a school or college, especially an old Islamic one

khettara: an underground channel that carries water

protectorate: a country controlled and protected by a stronger one

imperial city: a city that was once a royal capital

ramparts: strong defensive walls

Fun facts

Tins into lanterns
Metalworkers make candle holders from old sardine tins.

200 towers
The red city walls have 200 towers and 20 gates.

Head of the shop
That is what the spice mix ras el hanout means.

Bargain!
Haggling over the price is still a big part of shopping in the souks.

Going deeper

- Craftsmen from Córdoba and Seville helped build its monuments, mixing Andalusian, Saharan and West African styles.
- Until 1867, European Christians needed the sultan's permission to enter the city.
- In 2009 Fatima-Zahra Mansouri became the city's first female mayor.
- Groundwater under the city has fallen by about 0.9 m a year since 2002.

> **Think about it:** Many names for Morocco come from the word Marrakech. Why do you think a whole country might be named after one city?

Facts: Wikipedia "Marrakesh" (CC BY-SA 4.0), National Geographic and others · our own words

Sheet MRK-TEEN-FACT-94859

TOPIC SHEET · AGES 11–14

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Marrakech: the Red City

Use the words in the box to fill the gaps. Each word is used once.

Name _____ Date _____ Score _____ / 10

Word bank

1985 **1994** **Almoravids** **falling** **khettaras** **mayor** **Mellah** **permission** **Saadian** **semi-arid**

1. The medina became a UNESCO World Heritage Site in _____.
2. Underground channels called _____ carried water to the gardens.
3. The old Jewish quarter of the city is called the _____.
4. The agreement that created the World Trade Organization was signed here in _____.
5. In the 1500s the _____ sultans built lavish palaces such as El Badi.
6. Since 2002 groundwater under the city has been _____.
7. The city's climate is classed as hot _____.
8. Marrakech was founded around 1070 as the capital of the _____.
9. In 2009 Fatima-Zahra Mansouri became the city's first female _____.
10. Until 1867, European Christians needed the sultan's _____ to enter.

TOPIC SHEET · AGES 11–14

Marrakech: the Red City

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Read each sentence. Circle True or False.

Name _____ Date _____ Score _____ / 7

1. In 1984 about half the city's people lived in the medina. True False
2. France made Morocco a protectorate in 1912. True False
3. Marrakech is classed as a desert city. True False
4. The WTO agreement was signed in Paris. True False
5. Marrakech has been Morocco's capital without a break since 1070. True False
6. The Almoravids ruled land from Senegal to the middle of Spain. True False
7. Groundwater under the city is rising. True False

TOPIC SHEET · AGES 11–14

Marrakech word match

Acorn & Ink

Write the letter of the right meaning in each box.

Name _____ Date _____ Score _____ / 7

☐	**madrasa**	**A**	dry, with little rain, but not a desert
☐	**khettara**	**B**	a place protected because it matters to the whole world
☐	**UNESCO World Heritage Site**	**C**	a country controlled and protected by a stronger one
☐	**protectorate**	**D**	a school or college, especially an old Islamic one
☐	**semi-arid**	**E**	a city that was once a royal capital
☐	**medina**	**F**	the old walled part of a North African city
☐	**imperial city**	**G**	an underground channel that carries water

TOPIC SHEET · AGES 11–14

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Marrakech: think and discuss

Read the facts, then write your answers. There are no wrong answers if you give reasons.

Name _____ Date _____

Tins into lanterns
Metalworkers make candle holders from old sardine tins.

Bargain!
Haggling over the price is still a big part of shopping in the souks.

Hidden rivers
Underground channels carried water from the mountains to the gardens.

A country named after a city
Many names for Morocco, like Maroc and Marruecos, come from the name Marrakech.

Tourism brings money to Marrakech, but some researchers say it has changed the old town. Who do you think benefits most from tourism? Give reasons.

Many names for Morocco come from the word Marrakech. Why do you think a whole country might be named after one city?

WORD SEARCH · LARGE · HARD

Marrakech

Acorn & Ink

Find each word and tick it off. The words can go in any direction, even backwards.

Name _____ Date _____ Found _____ / 13

y	q	m	b	v	b	z	b	l	a	r	d	a	k
j	x	o	k	v	s	l	l	a	w	s	c	a	v
l	q	r	y	x	c	x	c	p	b	y	a	p	l
z	s	o	s	n	e	d	r	a	g	y	i	s	u
p	f	c	k	l	z	g	g	w	n	d	b	c	s
a	z	c	o	s	e	c	i	p	s	j	u	y	m
l	q	o	j	n	a	t	l	a	s	d	o	m	n
a	m	a	j	o	r	e	l	l	e	v	t	b	a
c	r	q	j	b	y	c	t	l	j	a	u	j	n
e	h	y	n	b	i	g	c	s	w	r	o	a	i
g	s	k	r	o	t	s	f	m	o	x	k	e	d
u	i	a	s	h	y	x	g	h	i	u	z	t	e
p	j	m	p	c	m	d	p	j	a	n	k	n	m
d	f	a	e	a	v	x	h	f	h	a	t	h	o

- [ ] Atlas
- [ ] gardens
- [ ] Koutoubia
- [ ] Majorelle
- [ ] medina
- [ ] mint
- [ ] Morocco
- [ ] palace
- [ ] souk
- [ ] spices
- [ ] storks
- [ ] tea
- [ ] walls

ANSWERS · TOPIC SHEET · AGES 11–14

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Marrakech: the Red City

Answers are shown in red.

Name _____ Date _____ Score _____ / 10

Word bank

1985 **1994** **Almoravids** **falling** **khettaras** **mayor** **Mellah** **permission** **Saadian** **semi-arid**

1. The medina became a UNESCO World Heritage Site in **1985**.
2. Underground channels called **khettaras** carried water to the gardens.
3. The old Jewish quarter of the city is called the **Mellah**.
4. The agreement that created the World Trade Organization was signed here in **1994**.
5. In the 1500s the **Saadian** sultans built lavish palaces such as El Badi.
6. Since 2002 groundwater under the city has been **falling**.
7. The city's climate is classed as hot **semi-arid**.
8. Marrakech was founded around 1070 as the capital of the **Almoravids**.
9. In 2009 Fatima-Zahra Mansouri became the city's first female **mayor**.
10. Until 1867, European Christians needed the sultan's **permission** to enter.

ANSWERS · TOPIC SHEET · AGES 11–14

Acorn & Ink

Marrakech: the Red City

Answers are shown in red.

Name _____ Date _____ Score _____ / 7

1. In 1984 about half the city's people lived in the medina. **True** / False
2. France made Morocco a protectorate in 1912. **True** / False
3. Marrakech is classed as a desert city. True / **False**
4. The WTO agreement was signed in Paris. True / **False**
5. Marrakech has been Morocco's capital without a break since 1070. True / **False**
6. The Almoravids ruled land from Senegal to the middle of Spain. **True** / False
7. Groundwater under the city is rising. True / **False**

ANSWERS · TOPIC SHEET · AGES 11–14

Marrakech word match

Acorn & Ink

Answers are shown in red.

Name _____ Date _____ Score _____ / 7

D	**madrasa**	**A**	dry, with little rain, but not a desert
G	**khettara**	**B**	a place protected because it matters to the whole world
B	**UNESCO World Heritage Site**	**C**	a country controlled and protected by a stronger one
C	**protectorate**	**D**	a school or college, especially an old Islamic one
A	**semi-arid**	**E**	a city that was once a royal capital
F	**medina**	**F**	the old walled part of a North African city
E	**imperial city**	**G**	an underground channel that carries water

ANSWERS · WORD SEARCH · LARGE · HARD

Marrakech

Acorn & Ink

The hidden words are shaded in red.

y	q	m	b	v	b	z	b	l	a	r	d	a	k
j	x	o	k	v	s	l	l	a	w	s	c	a	v
l	q	r	y	x	c	x	c	p	b	y	a	p	l
z	s	o	s	n	e	d	r	a	g	y	i	s	u
p	f	c	k	l	z	g	g	w	n	d	b	c	s
a	z	c	o	s	e	c	i	p	s	j	u	y	m
l	q	o	j	n	a	t	l	a	s	d	o	m	n
a	m	a	j	o	r	e	l	l	e	v	t	b	a
c	r	q	j	b	y	c	t	l	j	a	u	j	n
e	h	y	n	b	i	g	c	s	w	r	o	a	i
g	s	k	r	o	t	s	f	m	o	x	k	e	d
u	i	a	s	h	y	x	g	h	i	u	z	t	e
p	j	m	p	c	m	d	p	j	a	n	k	n	m
d	f	a	e	a	v	x	h	f	h	a	t	h	o

☐ Atlas ☐ gardens ☐ Koutoubia ☐ Majorelle ☐ medina ☐ mint

☐ Morocco ☐ palace ☐ souk ☐ spices ☐ storks ☐ tea

☐ walls