



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

edinburgh

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UNESCO City of
Literature

UNESCO City of Literature

Member of the Creative Cities Network since 2004

10 Things to know about

EDINBURGH

UNESCO City of Literature

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Capital City

Edinburgh is the vibrant capital city of Scotland, a country with a population of over 5 million (e. 450,000 in Edinburgh) and which is part of the United Kingdom.

Literary Heritage

It is the capital of a nation renowned throughout the world for its writers, past and present and including world-famous authors with direct links to the city: Robert Louis Stevenson (Treasure Island), JM Barrie (Peter Pan), Kenneth Grahame (Wind in the Willows), Sir Arthur Conan Doyle (Sherlock Holmes series), Muriel Spark (The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie) and Sir Walter Scott (Waverley series), creator of the historical novel and one of the world's early 'bestsellers'.

Vibrant Writing Community

As well as book illustrators and designers, many authors and poets live and work in the city including world-famous Alexander McCall Smith (No.1 Ladies' Detective Agency series), Ian Rankin (Rebus series) and JK Rowling (Harry Potter series).

City Built on Books

Leading publishers and publications originated here. The first book printed in Scotland was printed in Edinburgh in 1508. The majority of Scotland's 80 or so publishers are based in the city - award-winning independent publishers include: Canongate Books, Mainstream, Polygon and Birlinn.

Home of the World's Biggest Book Festival

The Edinburgh International Book Festival runs for 17 days each August. In 2008 it celebrated its 25th anniversary with 700 events – adult and children, 800 authors from 45 different countries and more than 200,000 visitors.

Numerous Libraries and Prestigious Collections

Edinburgh is home to the National Library of Scotland – 12th largest in world, and one of three legal deposit libraries in the UK. Edinburgh has 140 libraries and information centres with its first public lending library dating from 1725.

Bookshops

There are more than 45 bookshops in the heart of the city, ranging from chains to independents, antiquarian to second-hand.

Noted Centre of Education

The University of Edinburgh is one of the UK's oldest universities, established in 1580, and it has shared its learning throughout the world. The Encyclopaedia Britannica was first published in Anchor Close, and numerous creative writing and literature courses run in the city. The city now houses four Universities and was the home of the Enlightenment giants David Hume and Adam Smith.

Literary Tours

There are a range of literary tours on offer throughout the year as well as self-guided trails.

Literature Quarter

The 'Literature Quarter' area of the city contains the Scottish Poetry Library, Scottish Storytelling Centre, Scottish Book Trust (national agency for readership development), Canongate Books, the Writers' Museum, Makars' Court (commemorating writers and poets) and the National Library of Scotland.