

This article enables students to:

1. Understand important issues facing their own society, country and the world.
2. Assess qualities, phenomena, changes, trends and impacts in relation to various aspects of society and culture.



# City of the world

**The Shanghai World Expo hosts 192 countries and 52 multinationals showcasing their latest technologies and business opportunities. Is it just a big show or will it reap tangible rewards?**

**T**HE World Expo is not just an exhibition of the host country's features. It creates opportunities for the country. In the past, many nations were said to have experienced accelerated growth in urban development and external trade after hosting the World Expo. Though the cost of hosting the event is considerable, the intent is to help the host country promote its image. This year's host, China, is looking to benefit in several ways.

## 1. Rapid urban development

From the moment it was decided Shanghai would host the World Expo, the city has been in the throws of a construction frenzy to satisfy the needs of the expo's **anticipated** exhibitors and visitors. Since it successfully applied in 2002 to host the event, Shanghai has been developing its transportation network to deal with the over 70 million visitors expected during the six-month expo period. The 5.28 square mile Expo Park became one of the most bustling workplaces in the world. This and reconstruction work on various building façades and on the Shanghai Bund have created job opportunities and raised the living standards of Shanghai's residents.

## 2. Increased trade

Though the main purpose of the World Expo is arguably not trade **negotiations** or promoting business, there will be many high-tech products on display attracting people from around the world looking for business opportunities. It helps facilitate international trade, especially for the host country. Trade partnerships can be struck with other countries during the period. Secretary General of the Shanghai Municipal Government Sha Hailin predicted that the total trade in services in Shanghai alone will increase by 15 percent from the expo. Its effect is also expected to be felt in neighbouring areas and **spur** economic growth in China overall. One industry anticipating gains is the tourism industry. Related businesses such as hotels, retail, logistics and transportation businesses are expected to see a boost.

## 3. Broadening people's horizons

In addition to showcasing the high-tech products of different countries, the expo can also showcase a country's spirit and values through the venue design, display arrangements and various cultural activities. Exhibition halls from across the

world will bring a flavour of the foreign to China and it is hoped this will widen people's **horizons** and increase their awareness of the world, and provide inspiration for future development. London, Paris, New York and Osaka are all said to have benefited from hosting the World Expo.

## 4. Promoting the host country's image

Events such as the World Expo, the Olympics and World Cup are among the most celebrated in the world. Hosting any one of these events is usually seen as a boon to a country. After the Beijing Olympics, the Shanghai World Expo will be another world event in China to attract large-scale attention. Having only begun opening to the rest of the world 30 years ago, knowledge about China is limited in the international community. Hence China wants to make use of a major event like the Shanghai World Expo as an **interactive** platform to further understanding of the nation and the fruits of its reforms.

The Shanghai Municipal Government has been working to create a favourable image of the city, and has issued guidelines to help citizens leave a good impression with overseas visitors. Measures include organisation of 'Expo Family' homestay **reception** centres, publishing a Shanghai World Expo bilingual guide and not allowing Shanghai citizens to go into the streets in **pyjamas**, a common habit in the city! ☹

## Expo and the development of mankind

The World Expo is the largest exposition in the world. It started in London in 1851. It was then aimed at showing the achievements of Britain's industrial revolution to the world so as to make Great Britain a world centre of crafts, technology, the arts and commerce. Britain not only achieved its aim but won praise for its large number of innovative and **far-sighted** industrial exhibits.

In its 150-year history, the expo has showcased numerous epoch-marking products that led trends and improved quality of life. From the earliest steam engines, textile machines, telephones, refrigerators, vehicles and type writers to electronic calculators and wireless technology today.

Recent expos have laid emphasis on technological development and harmony between man and nature. Ecology, environmental conservation and the like have become the focus, and the Shanghai World Expo has many exhibits devoted to raising the standard of living of city dwellers, in health, public security, justice, poverty alleviation and sustainable development. The expo's slogan is 'Better City, Better Life'.

The World Expo in Shanghai is set to bring in tourists and hasten the city's and nation's development through enhanced trade and cultural exchange.



Key ideas

## Haibao

Haibao is the mascot for the Shanghai World Expo. His name means treasure of the sea. Some people have said that Haibao looks like Gumpy, an American cartoon character. Gumpy was a popular cartoon in the 1950s.



Did you know?

1. In what ways do you think Shanghai's expo is in line with its theme of 'Better City, Better Life'? Give your reasons.

2. What do you think is the significance of the World Expo to Shanghai and the whole of China? Give your reasons.

3. 'Successfully hosting the World Expo will greatly enhance the international image of China.' Do you agree?



Critical thinking