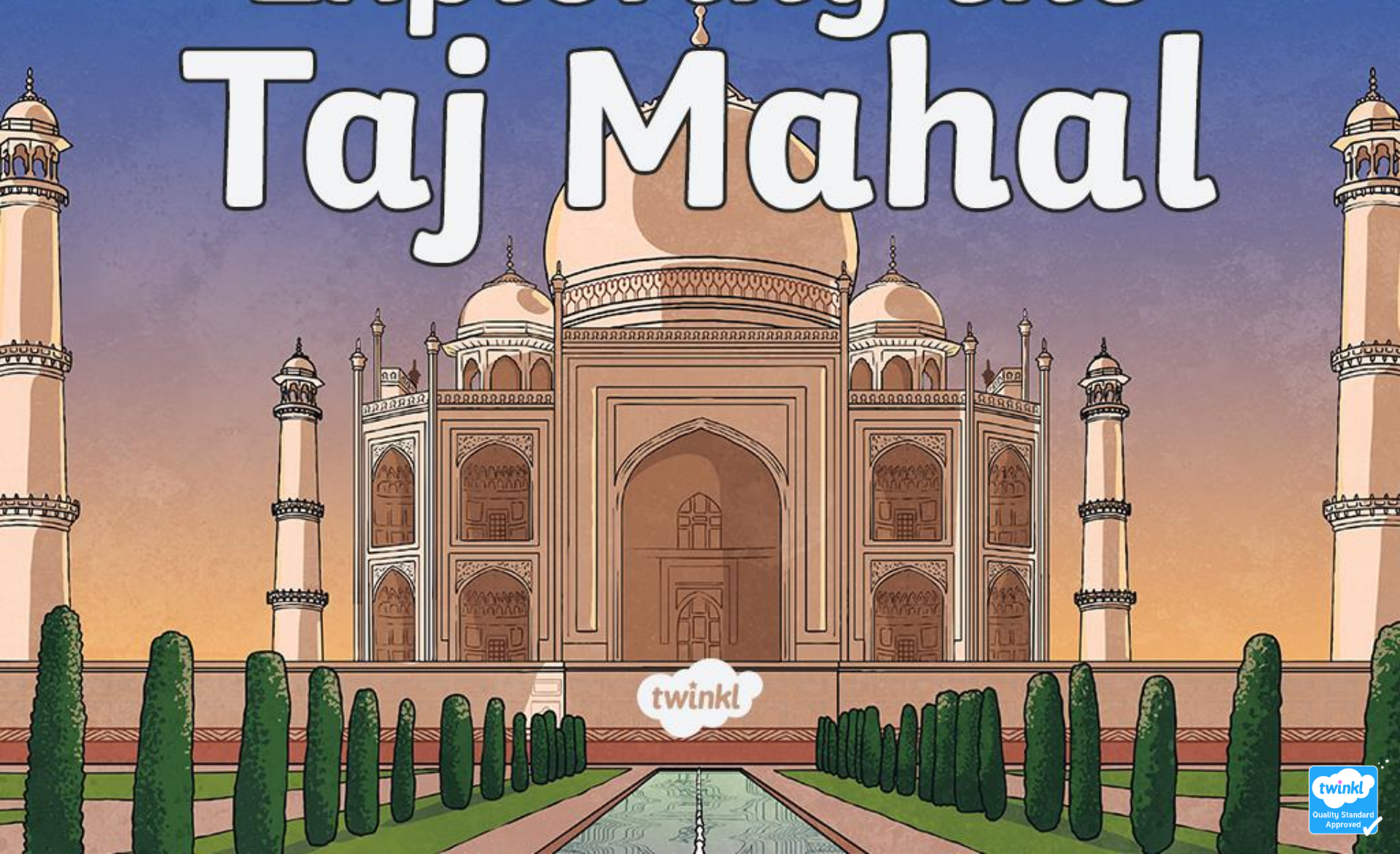


Exploring the Taj Mahal



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The Taj Mahal is an extravagant complex of ornate buildings and beautiful gardens built in 1632.

It is located on the south bank of the Yamuna River in the city of Agra, which is in the Uttar Pradesh region of northern India.

In 1983 the Taj Mahal was made a UNESCO world heritage site. Later in 2007, it was named one of the seven wonders of the modern world.



Exploring the Taj Mahal

The Taj Mahal was commissioned by Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan in memory of his queen. It was started in 1632 and, although the main building was finished in 1648, it wasn't until 1653 that the whole complex was completed.



The Central Building

The central building is made of white marble mined from Northern India and inlaid with over 30 types of precious and semi precious jewels, such as jade from China, lapis lazuli from Afghanistan and sapphire from Sri Lanka. These glimmer when you shine a torch against them.



Surrounding the Taj Mahal

Either side of the main building are other buildings, including a mosque, made from red sandstone. There are gates and fences that border three sides of the complex. The main gate stands majestically in the southern wall and frames the main building as you walk through it.

The site covers a total area of 42 acres.



The Garden and Reflective Pool

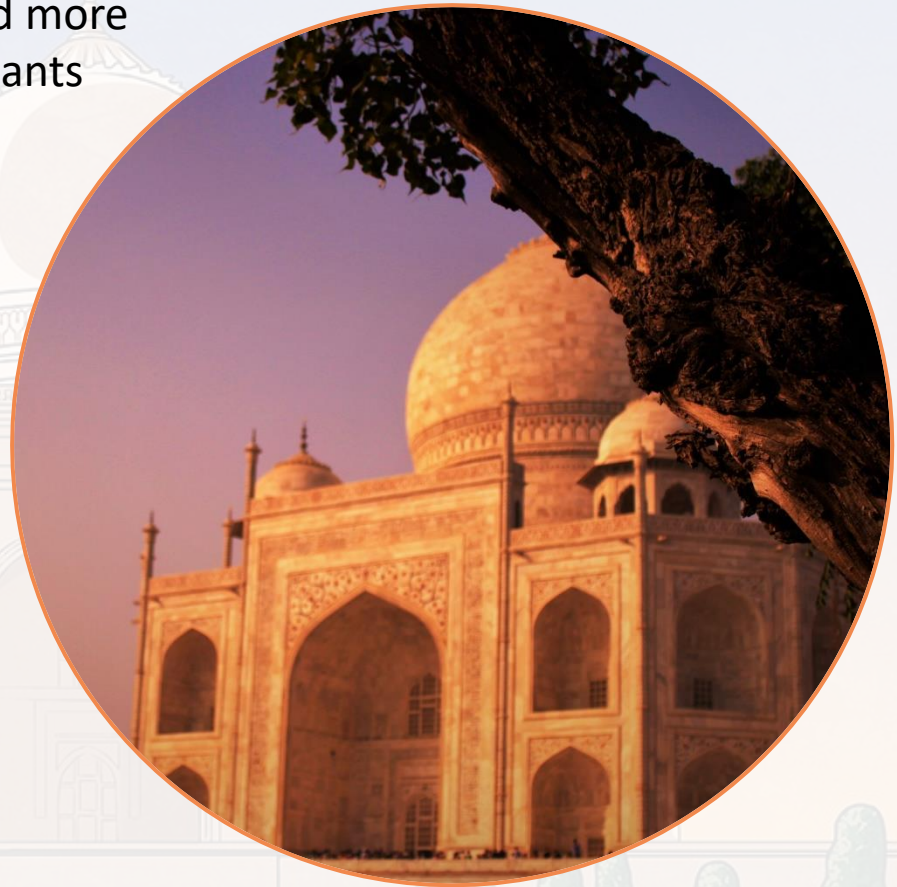
The Taj Mahal's design was influenced by Persian, Indian and Islamic cultures. The focus was on geometric patterns and symmetry, which the gardens (300m²) and reflective pool demonstrate beautifully.



The Cost of the Taj Mahal

The Taj Mahal took over 20 years and more than 20,000 workers and 1000 elephants working night and day to build.

The estimated cost at the time it was built was 32 million rupees. Converted into today's currency that equates to approximately 750 million pounds.



Taj Mahal Facts

The total height of the Taj Mahal is 171m. The main central dome, known as an onion dome because of its shape, measures 35m tall. It is surrounded by four smaller domes. The building is totally symmetrical. Last year (2019) an estimated 7 million people visited the Taj Mahal.



Changing Light

The white marble used to build the Taj Mahal appears to change colour depending on the time of day and the colour of the light it is reflecting.

In the early morning light it can appear to be a beautiful pink shade, which changes to brilliant white in the midday sun. Finally, in the evening, it reflects the setting sun and takes on a warm golden colour.

