

Here is a picture of the famous iron bridge in Shropshire, a small town in Central England.



Some 200 years ago, there was no bridge there. The river could be dangerous to cross by boat. So local businessmen decided to build a bridge. In the nearby village of Coalbrookdale, Abraham Darby had his ironworks. Darby's workmen designed and built the bridge, which was opened to traffic in 1781. The bridge, the first of its kind, attracted visitors from all over the world. It brought Darby a lot of business and he built and sold more bridges, as well as other iron goods. Then new and bigger coalfields in Yorkshire and cheap iron brought to Britain from overseas caused the iron industry of Shropshire to decline.

The iron bridge lasted long, and all traffic passing over it had to pay a toll. In 1931 it was closed to vehicles, although people were (and are) still allowed to walk over. Repair work began. The famous iron bridge, now over 200 years old, was repaired and restored.

The bridge attracts thousands of visitors every year.

iron: metal
design: draw, plan
attract: interest

goods: merchandise
coal: black, solid fuel
cause: make

decline: go down
last: continue
toll: tax for passage

Questions:

1. What is the famous bridge made of?
2. Is Shropshire in South England?
3. When was the first iron bridge built?.....
4. Why do tourists go to Shropshire?.....
5. Why did the iron industry in Shropshire decline?.....
6. Is the iron bridge still open to the public?.....
7. Is it also open to cars and coaches?.....

Find one odd out in each line:

town	river	place	city	village
boat	ferry	ship	canoe	railway
iron	steel	nickel	rubber	copper
decline	smile	go down	lessen	fade
build	construct	make	create	listen
repair	close	fix	mend	restore
goods	things	merchandise	vehicle	stuff