

## City Islands

There are almost 20,000 islands on Earth and, according to the United Nations Environment Programme, about 2,000 of these are of 'significant' size. Two of these are certainly significant as great centres of commerce and culture, and though statistically similar, they are on opposite sides of the world.



### Manhattan

The heart of New York City, this island has a population of 1.6 million in an area of 87 km<sup>2</sup>. It is famous for its residential areas in the Upper East and West Sides with luxury apartments in grandiose tower **blocks**, for its financial area around Wall Street and for its shopping streets like Fifth Avenue.

### Hong Kong Island

**Located** across the **bay** from Kowloon and the New Territories of China, this island has a population of 1.3

million in an area of 80 km<sup>2</sup>. It has a completely different capitalist



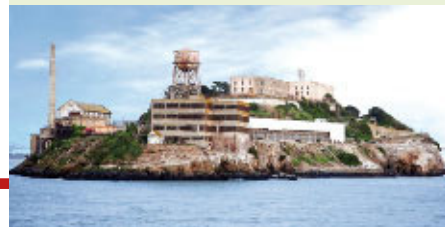
style of living to **mainland** China and is famous for its **booming** economy.

**blocks** = palazzi  
**located** = situata  
**bay** = baia  
**mainland** = continentale  
**booming** =  
 in rapido sviluppo  
**captive** = prigioniere  
**have held** =  
 hanno detenuto  
**rents** = affitta

glossary

## Island Prisons

Islands can be 'ideal' for keeping people **captive**. Alcatraz Island in the San Francisco Bay was a prison island until 1963. Other islands which **have held** political prisoners include Elba (Italy) which held Napoleon Bonaparte and Robben Island (South Africa) where Nelson Mandela was in prison for eighteen years.



## Island Refuges

Many rich and famous people use islands as a refuge from public life.

Sir Richard Branson, founder of the Virgin Empire paid a modest US\$ 180,000 to own Necker Island which is (appropriately!) in the Virgin Islands. He **rents** it to celebrity guests for around US\$ 40,000 per day. Good business!

1 Read the information in the texts above and answer the following questions.

- 1 What is Manhattan famous for?
- 2 Where is the Hong Kong Island located?
- 3 What do Alcatraz, Elba and Robben Island have in common?
- 4 Who is Sir Richard Branson? Why is he famous among celebrities?

2 Write the Italian equivalents for these English words from the text.

- |                         |                     |                      |
|-------------------------|---------------------|----------------------|
| 1 significant = .....   | 4 grandiose = ..... | 6 capitalist = ..... |
| 2 statistically = ..... | 5 financial = ..... | 7 refuge = .....     |
| 3 residential = .....   |                     |                      |

## The Island Life For Me!

Tom Hyndman, his wife Liz Musser and son Henry moved from Saratoga Springs in New York State to Fair Isle off the North East Coast of Scotland.

Fair Isle is Britain's most remote inhabited island covering an area of 768 hectares with a population of 64. It is a **rocky** island, 40 km south of Shetland and is too windy for trees to grow but has magnificent **scenery**. In addition to its fame for **knitwear**, Fair Isle has a world famous bird observatory.

Tom is an artist. He **runs** residential painting **courses** and designs and makes hats. Liz produces educational videos for TV and helps run their Bed and Breakfast.

Henry goes to school with seven other children on the island. There are no pubs or restaurants on the island, just one small shop which is open four days a week and no doctor or resident nurse. It takes 3 hours for the cargo boat to sail to Shetland which is **as long as it used to take** Tom and Liz to drive from Saratoga Springs to New York City!



rocky = rocciosa  
 scenery = paesaggio  
 knitwear = maglieria  
 runs = gestisce  
 courses = corsi  
 as long as =  
 tanto quanto  
 it used to take =  
 ci mettevano

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### 3 Read the information and complete the chart.

	Fair Isle
Population	.....
Size	.....
Restaurants & Bars	.....
Famous for	.....

### 4 Islands fascinate everyone. Describe your ideal island. Does it have a tropical or a temperate climate? Is it deserted, full of wildlife or commercial and busy? Why would you like to live there?

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