

S 5.1 Old Cities



S5.1.1

To locate where the old cities of Mdina, Birgu and Ċittadella are, and to find evidence of the strategic importance that these old cities had in the past.

A. Answer by using the map of the Maltese Islands.



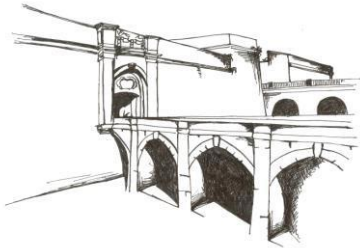
1. On the map, Mdina is number _____.
2. Which number indicates Birgu? _____.
3. The old Gozitan city is referred to as _____ and on the map it is number _____.

4. Which of the three cities is near the sea?

B. Discussion

We will have a brief discussion about the strategic position of the three cities to better understand its importance in the past and over time. Students are required to know that:

- ❖ Mdina was in a good location as it was surrounded by walls and built on a high place in the centre of Malta and so was distant from the shore.



- ❖ In Birgu there is Fort Saint Angelo which was the main fortification around the Grand Harbour in medieval times.

- ❖ The Citadel was a fortification in Gozo as it was built on a high place in the middle of the island.



Answer these questions by referring to the map A.

1. Which two cities are built on a hill:

a) _____

b) _____

2. Mention two common characteristics which the three cities mentioned have in common:

a) _____

b) _____

3. Near which number is Fort of St Angelo located?

C. Answer by underlining the correct answers.

1. The Citadel is located (in the middle of Malta, in the middle of Gozo, close to Gnejna bay).
2. Mdina was built (close to the sea, on a hill, in a valley).
3. In the old cities of Ċittadella, Mdina and Birgu, one finds (the sea nearby, Cathedral, narrow roads).
4. The old cities of Ċittadella, Mdina and Birgu are (close to the sea, built on a hill, surrounded by walls).
5. In the past, the capital city of Malta was (Ċittadella, Mdina, Mellieħa).
6. The first time they came to Malta, the Knights of St John, claimed (Mdina, Ċittadella, Birgu) as their capital city.
7. One of the reasons why the Knights went to live in Birgu was the protection offered by (the hospital, the chain, Fort St Angelo).
8. The importance of Mdina (decreased, increased, was not affected) by the building of Valletta after the Great Siege.

D. Think, than answer.

1. Why was the Citadel built on a hill and away from the sea?

2. In the past why was Birgu very important for business?

3. In the past, why was Mdina very important for villages such as Siggiewi and Ħaż-Żebbuġ?

E. Fill in the blanks with the given words.

people	the sea	main city	fortifications
pirates	auberges	For Mdina	Knights of St John

For many years, both in Malta and Gozo, no one used to go and live close to _____ . This is because sometimes at night the _____ , used to go on land and steal everything that they found. They used to also take _____. These people that were caught by the pirates were then sold as slaves. Many of these people never came back to Malta. So people used to prefer to live as far away as possible from the sea. For example, for many years, if there used to be a signal that there are pirates close by, the Maltese people used to go to _____ and the Gozitans used to take shelter in the Citadel.





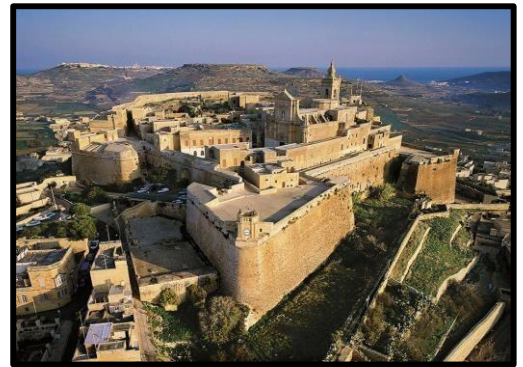
Both Imdina and the Citadel were surrounded with very high walls known as _____.

During the night, the walls of the city used to be closed. Though in 1530, the Maltese Islands were given to the _____.

These had a small fleet of about five galleys which were of extreme importance for them.

So they did not really want Mdina as it was quite far away from the sea. The Knights of St John, made Birgu instead of Mdina their _____. This is because Birgu is close to the sea.

Here they built a hospital and palaces which are known as _____. They built an auberge for every Nationality they had. In total they built eight.



F. Think, then write.

Imagine that you are the Grandmaster of the Knights of St John and you just arrived in Malta. Try to present a good argument to persuade the other Knights that it is better to go to Birgu rather than Mdina.

G. Answer on the map and then colour the Mediterranean Sea in blue.



1. Write number 1 to indicate the location of the Citadel.
2. Write number 2 to indicate the location of Mdina.
3. Write number 3 to indicate the location of Birgu.
4. Which of the three cities is located closest to the Grand Harbour? _____
5. Write the letter M twice on the map to indicate the Mediterranean Sea.

H. Discussion

Nowadays the greatest importance remains tied to tourism. G5.11 relates about the importance of tourism to our country. To further emphasize this point find pictures of tourists in Mdina, Birgu and the Citadel.

