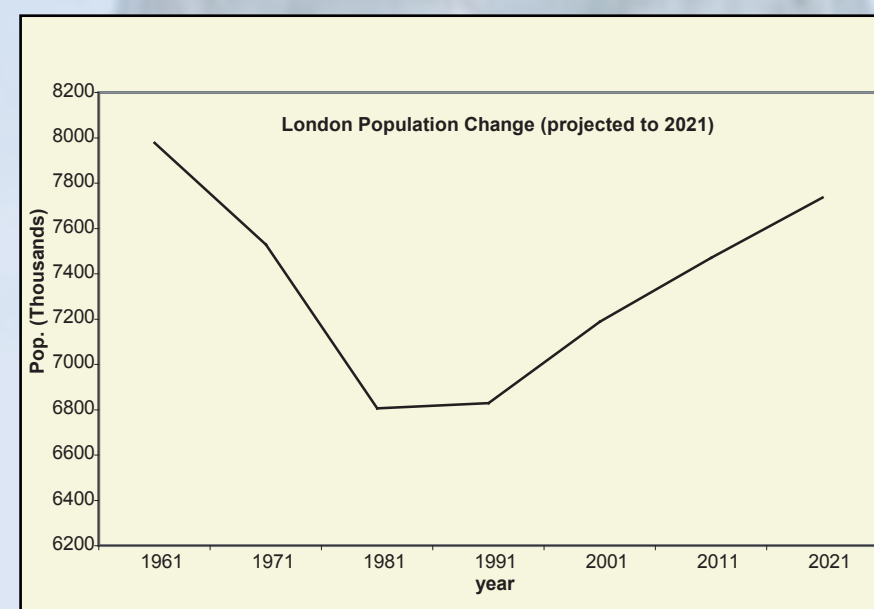




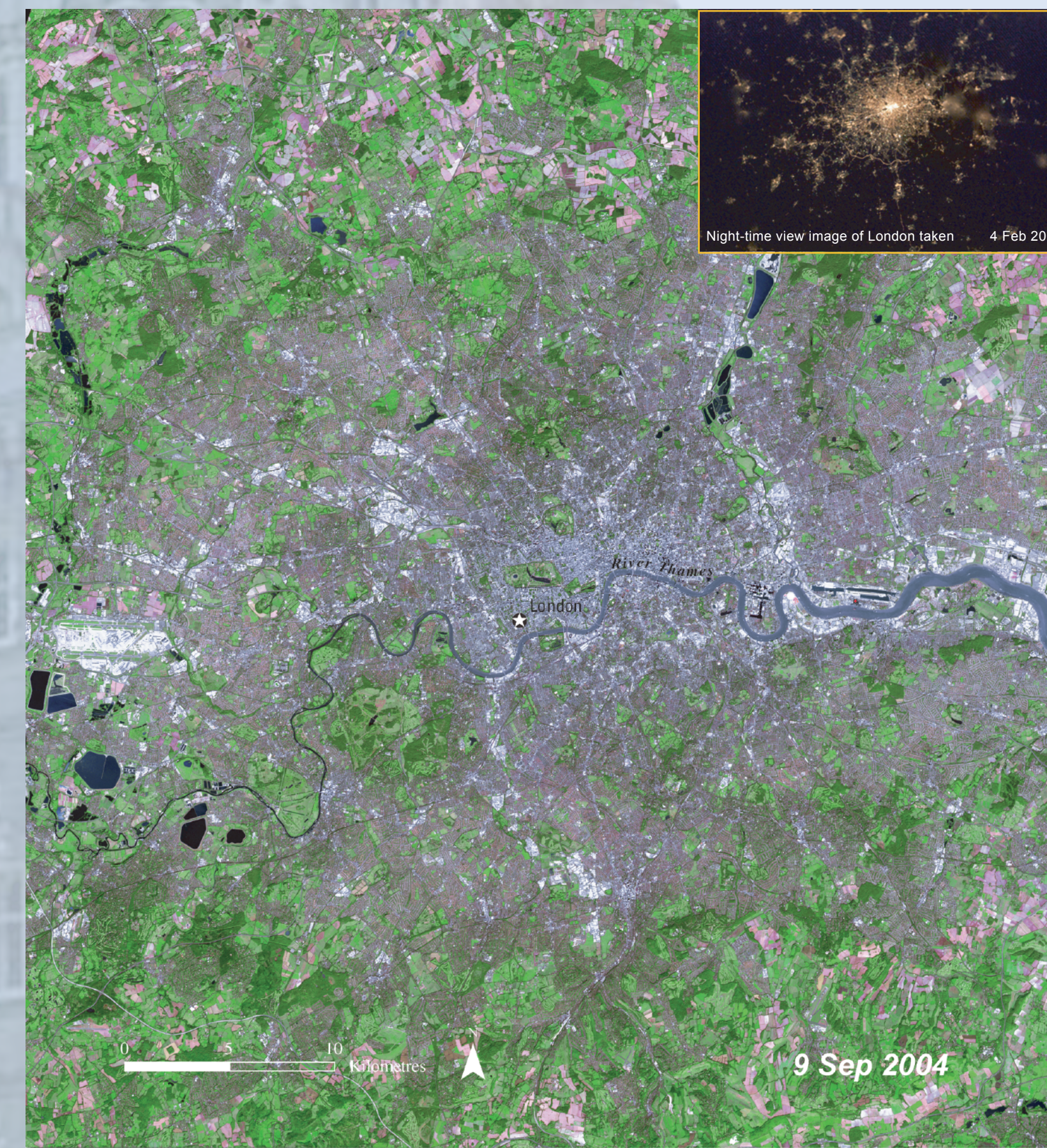
London, the capital and largest city of the United Kingdom, is situated in southeastern England on the River Thames. It is one of the few global centres for international business. With over 300 languages spoken, 29 per cent of its population belonging to a minority ethnic group, and one in five small businesses owned or managed by members of minority ethnic communities, London has an unrivalled cultural and artistic heritage, helping to confirm its place as a vibrant and dynamic city. Within an area of 659 sq. mi (1 706 sq. km) London has also become the political, industrial, cultural, and financial centre of the United Kingdom. It is one of the largest cities in the developed world in terms of its built-up area, and is the most populous city in the European Union, with over 7 million residents. London is also one of the European Union's most densely settled areas: only Copenhagen, Brussels and Paris are more densely populated.



The chart above portrays London's population change over a period of four decades. A projection by the UK's Office for National Statistics, Government Actuary's Department predicts that by 2021, the population of London will approach 8 million.



25 JUNE 1976 Landsat MSS False Colour Composite RGB, bands (2,4,1)



9 SEPTEMBER 2004 ASTER False Colour Composite RGB, bands (2,3,1)

These two satellite images are false colour composites consisting of three bands, used to visualise the city of London and its surrounding areas. The colour green and its various shades represent areas with vegetation cover, blue/black represent water while tan, shades of gray and whitish gray represent built-up areas. London is one of 100 cities being studied using Advanced Spaceborne Thermal Emission and Reflection Radiometer (ASTER) data to map and monitor urban use patterns and growth.



Astronaut Photograph of London

Credit: NASA



View of the famous 'Tower Bridge', London

Credit: Bigfoto

For almost 2 000 years, the River Thames has served as the life force of London. Several bridges have been constructed over the river to link its opposite shores. The Tower Bridge, an obvious by-product of modern culture, is a popular tourist attraction.

Historical Timeline:

- AD 43-5th century**-Romans established the trading settlement of Londinium
- 6th century AD**-The city passed on to the Saxons
- 1348-49**-Struck by Black Death
- Mid-16th century**-Trade grew significantly, fueled by the establishment of Britain's overseas empire
- 1664-65**-The plague killed about 70,000 Londoners
- 1666**-The Great Fire of London, which burned for four days, consumed five-sixths of the City of London
- 18th century-1914**-London was the centre of world trade
- 1890**-Opened the world's 1st electric underground railway
- 1904**-The first motor bus service in London began
- 1906**-The first underground electric train began, as did a spate of new luxury hotels, department stores, and theatres
- 1926**-High unemployment and labour unrest led to a General Strike
- 1938**-Massive movement of people out of the city of London to the surrounding countryside
- 1940**-Bombs destroyed over one third of the city and largely demolished the London Docks, killing 32 000 and leaving over 50 000 badly injured
- 1946**-Heathrow Airport opened to commercial flights
- 1956**-The first double-decker red buses (dubbed the Routemaster) appeared on London roads
- 1972-82**-The Thames Barrier was built to control flooding along the river
- 2000**-The Millennium Dome, an exhibition centre in North Greenwich, opened to the public. This massive complex was built at a cost of over 750 million GBP. It houses, among other things, sponsored exhibits on the human experience of life, including faith, science, and biology.

Key Statistics

	London	United Kingdom
Population, 2002 (thousands)	7 355	59 229
Total business sites, 2002 (thousands)	241 080	145 320
Average dwelling price, 2002 (£) ²	384.9	2 538.1
Employment Rate ³ , spring 2003 (percentages)	70.3	74.7
Unemployment Rate ³ , spring 2003 (percentages)	7.1	5.1
Motor cars currently licensed ⁴ , 2002 (thousands)	2 473	25 782
Average gross weekly household income, 1999-2002 ⁵ (£)	676	510
Average weekly household expenditure, 1999-2002 ⁵ (£)	463.0	379.7

¹ Population figures for 2002 are mid-year population estimates and include provisional results from the Manchester matching exercise. Pension age is men aged 65 and over and women aged 60 and over.
² Figure labelled as the United Kingdom relate to Great Britain.
³ Seasonally adjusted data for people of working age, men aged 16 to 64 and women aged 16 to 59.
⁴ Totals for the United Kingdom include vehicles where the country of the registered vehicle is unknown, that are under disposal or from countries unknown within Great Britain.
⁵ Data combined for years, 1999/2000, 2000/01 and 2001/02.