

Topic Page: [Sunderland](#)

Definition: **Sunderland** from *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate(R) Dictionary*

 [pronunciation](#)

seaport N England in Tyne and Wear on North Sea pop 286,800

Summary Article: **Sunderland**

From *The Hutchinson Unabridged Encyclopedia with Atlas and Weather Guide*

City and port in Tyne and Wear, northeast England, at the mouth of the River Wear; population (2001) 177,700. A former coalmining and shipbuilding centre, Sunderland now has electronics, engineering, and brewing industries, and manufactures glass, pottery, chemicals, paper, furniture, and cars. It also has some tourism.

Sunderland was granted city status by Royal Charter in 1992. Features include the Sunderland Empire Theatre (1907), and the University of Sunderland (established in 1992), formerly Sunderland Polytechnic.

History The town of Sunderland developed around the villages of Monkwearmouth, Bishopwearmouth, and Sunderland. Churches were first built at Monkwearmouth on the north bank of the Wear in 674 and at Sunderland on the south bank later in the 7th century. Sunderland developed as a port during the Middle Ages, with a charter dating from 1154. During the Civil War Sunderland was held by the Parliamentarians. Records of shipbuilding in Sunderland go back to 1346. The first shipyard was established in 1775 and the wet dock was built in 1840. During the 19th century several shipyards were built on the river frontage, and Sunderland became the world's largest shipbuilding town in the 19th century. The shipbuilding industry was hit by the depression of the 1930s, went further into decline after World War II, and ceased completely in the 1990s. Coal was mined in Sunderland from the 14th century onwards. It was hit by the depression of the 1930s, although less severely than shipbuilding was. Mining gradually declined since, ceasing altogether by 1990.

Famous people Joseph Swan, inventor of the incandescent-filament electric lamp, was born here in 1828.

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