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Heavy heart ... locks on Rome's bridge Eric Vandeville/Gamma

Article: Rome bans lovers' locks to protect bridge

- 1 Thousands of "love padlocks" fixed to an ancient bridge in Rome, the Italian capital, have been cut off to save the structure from damage.
- 2 For years teenage lovers have written their initials on padlocks and locked them to the bridge. They have then sworn eternal love for each other and thrown the key into the Tiber river below. The habit has also become popular at other bridges around the world, particularly in Paris.
- 3 The padlock idea was first inspired by characters in the 2006 Italian teenage novel *I Want You* by Federico Moccia. In the book, a young couple place a bicycle lock around a lamppost on the Milvian bridge and throw the key into the Tiber.
- 4 The famous bridge was first built in 206BC and is one of the oldest in Rome. It was the scene of an important Roman battle in AD312.
- 5 In 2007 a lamppost on the ancient bridge nearly collapsed under the weight of the "love padlocks" and special posts were put up for the locks.
- 6 But last month officials said enough was enough. "We decided to remove the padlocks to restore decorum to the bridge," said the local area president, Gianni Giacomini.
- 7 Since the habit started, the residential neighbourhood has become a busy centre for late-night bars and city officials said that 86% of local people wanted the locks to go. They promised to give the padlocks a place in a Rome museum and said they would create a spot near the bridge where locks could be left in future.
- 8 "The bridge will be guarded day and night to stop more locks being attached," said local public official Stefano Erbaggi.
- 9 However, Federico Moccia is unhappy about the move. "The removal of the locks is inconsiderate," he told the newspaper *La Repubblica*. "Rome is giving Paris the 'bridge of love' tradition, which was born here and should stay here."

Original article by Tom Kington,
rewritten by Janet Hardy-Gould

Student tasks

1 Match the words that are hyponyms. Use a dictionary to check the meanings.

- | | |
|--|-------------|
| a <input type="checkbox"/> novel | 1 area |
| b <input type="checkbox"/> padlock | 2 city |
| c <input type="checkbox"/> capital | 3 book |
| d <input type="checkbox"/> bridge | 4 lock |
| e <input type="checkbox"/> neighbourhood | 5 structure |

2 Read the article then choose the correct words in these sentences. Underline where you found the information in the article.

- a People put a large/small number of padlocks on the bridge.
- b The padlocks are/aren't on the bridge now.
- c The Milvian Bridge is/isn't the only bridge with padlocks.
- d The idea of the padlocks came from a modern/an ancient story.
- e Most local people were for/against the locks on the bridge.
- f In future, lovers can put the padlocks under/close to the bridge.
- g Moccia is pleased/annoyed about the removal of the padlocks.