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# THE EMPIRE STATE BUILDING

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EDUCATION  
MATERIALS  
ACTIVITIES





# PRE-VISIT ACTIVITIES:

## K/W/L Chart

### OVERVIEW OF LESSON PLAN

Before class, create a K/W/L chart on the board. A K/W/L chart is a structure that students use before, during, and after engaging with a topic. In the “K” column, they fill in what they already KNOW or think they know about a topic. In the “W” column, they fill in what they WANT TO KNOW, often by making a list of questions they have about the topic. Finally, in the “L” column, they take notes as they go about what they are LEARNING. This activity provides a flexible way to help structure inquiry into a larger topic. The K and W columns will be completed in the first two steps of the activity. The L column should be filled out after the completion of research, during one of the available lessons, or during your visit to the Empire State Building.

After your visit to the Empire State Building, you may wish to revisit these charts and add a final column (Q) of QUESTIONS you still have.

Note: You may choose to make K/W/L charts on poster board, or have students make them in their notebooks.

### CLASS SKYLINE

Have each student create a skyscraper for a class skyline. As the inspiration for the Empire State Building was a simple pencil, have students find an everyday object to use as their inspiration. Teachers should set requirements for skyscraper models (materials allowed, scale, etc.) according to age and ability of students. Once completed, place models side by side to view your class skyline!

# DURING-VISIT ACTIVITIES:



## INTERVIEWS

Note: This activity can be started in-class prior to your trip. Have students break up into pairs and come up with five to ten questions they would ask a visitor to the Empire State Building. Questions can cover a wide range of topics (use the pre-created ones below as a guide), but should be respectful of people's privacy.

- Where are you from?
- Why did you choose to visit the Empire State Building?
- What other sites have you visited or will you have visited on your trip to New York City?
- Can you summarize in one word your thoughts on the view or on being this high?

Tell students to find someone on the observation deck (not from their group) willing to participate in a quick interview. Tell them to reassure potential interviewees that their answers will be used only for your class work and will take only two to three minutes.

Lastly, tell students to remember to thank the interviewee for her/his/their time.



## PHOTOJOURNALISM

Students need cameras for the following exercise. If everyone does not have a camera, students should partner or work in small groups (according to the number of cameras available).

The following quotations are about the Empire State Building. Ask each student to choose one and use the camera to take pictures that illustrate his or her understanding of the chosen quotation (advise students that they may wish to think about possible shots to illustrate their captions prior to arriving at the building):

- The Empire State Building is “a symbol of hope in the darkest of times.” - *Sky Boys*, page 5.
- “...concrete canyons of Manhattan.” - *Sky Boys*, page 7.
- “The Statue of Liberty symbolizes the dream of New York as a safe haven. The Empire State Building symbolizes the power and style of the town.” - *Thirteen Months to Go*, page 7.
- “Especially today, the Empire State Building is a symbol of the American spirit, of a steadfast determination to achieve the impossible.” - *Thirteen Months to Go*, page 19.
- “Architecture is said to be frozen music.” - *Thirteen Months to Go*, page 35.
- “...up there, among the clouds, the drumbeat of New York is stilled, the nervous staccato of the city’s life is left behind. In the superb heights of the Empire State Building, the mind is free.” - *Thirteen Months to Go*, page 42.
- “Stare up at such a building and it fairly dominates one’s mind and body.” - *Thirteen Months to Go*, page 2.
- “None of this has diminished the affection people feel for the building. It still swells the breasts of New Yorkers and makes hearts beat faster, and it still attracts more than 2 million visitors a year. The building’s splendor and lift, its very being remains a magical presence, a cynosure for the city’s residents, a mecca for visitors. Language barriers and social inhibitions evaporate as tourists ask complete strangers to take their pictures in the Empire State’s lobby. Their joy is manifest, their obvious eagerness to record their visit for posterity breaking down all hesitations. The stranger smilingly obliges.” - *The Empire State Building: The Making of a Landmark*, page 17.

Upon returning from the building, students should print their photos and write a one-paragraph explanation of what they saw in their shots. Display these on the walls of the classroom for an Empire State Building exhibit.



# POST-VISIT ACTIVITIES:

## TRIVIA GAME

Using the facts and information gathered together from your research and during your visit to the Empire State Building, create questions for a class trivia game. Each student should create three to five questions, using the statistics (measurements, amounts of materials or workers and other data, such as steps or heights), facts of the period (key people, economics of the country), and any other information, such as dates. Gather all the students' questions together and eliminate duplicates. In a future class, play your game! (You may wish to try a board game or game show format.)

## MY EXPERIENCE

Ask students to write an article on their trip to the Empire State Building. Have them describe in detail their thoughts and feelings on looking over the Big Apple from nearly 1,000 feet above street level. Did having prior knowledge about the building's design and construction affect their experience? Explain. If they interviewed another visitor (not someone in their class), have them include their findings here. Suggest they submit their articles to the school paper, or to [esbnyc.com](http://esbnyc.com).