OVERVIEW OF LESSON PLAN
In this lesson, students will learn about the different types of workers needed for the construction of the Empire State Building. Through research and discussion, students will come to understand and appreciate not only what a colossal feat it was to build the world's tallest structure in record time, but also the extraordinary teamwork of the men who built it.

SUGGESTED TIME ALLOWANCE
1 hour

OBJECTIVES
Students will:
• Think about the risks involved in building a skyscraper.
• Learn about the many different types of workers needed for such an immense project.
• Research the rivet gangs and the role each member of a gang plays.
• Create diary-style entries from the perspective of the rivet gang members.
RESOURCES/MATERIALS:

- Student journals
- Pens/pencils
- Paper
- Classroom board
- Copies of early photographs of workers on the Empire State Building
- Copies of the “Rivet Gang Worksheet,” one per student
- Copies of the August 14, 1930 job list of employees present during construction of the Empire State Building (optional)
- Resources on the Empire State Building including history textbooks, encyclopedias, computers with Internet access, etc.
WARM-UP/DO-NOW:
Prior to class, print out and display these photographs of workers on the Empire State Building on the board. Ask students to choose one of the photographs to write about and allow them five minutes to respond to the following in their journals: “The four photographs in front of you show men working on what was to be the tallest building in the world, the Empire State Building. Create a caption that summarizes what you see in the photograph you have chosen. Then write what you think it must have been like to work under the conditions depicted here. Why would workers risk their lives to work under these conditions?”

After students have written responses in their journals, call on several of them to share what they have written with the class, and record their descriptive words on the board. Ask students to consider what living and working conditions must have been like during the Great Depression, when the Empire State Building was being constructed.
Ask students to discuss the following as a class, and record their responses on the board as they do so: “What types of workers are needed to build a skyscraper?” After a few minutes, read the August 14, 1930 job list (or distribute to class). Note ones the class suggests (including those which fit under different job titles), as well as those that are not suggested. Instruct the class that today’s lesson will focus on one group of ironworkers: The Rivet Gang.
Divide students into groups of three or four. Using the resources available to them, groups should search for answers to the questions on the “Rivet Gang Worksheet” provided. When the worksheets are complete, have groups share their answers with the class. Ask the class, “If you had to choose one of the jobs on a rivet gang, which would you like to do and why?”

WRAP-UP/HOMEWORK:
For homework, have each student write a series of journal entries (three or more) from the point of view of the worker in the picture he or she selected at the beginning of class. Each entry should be for a different day. Some of the kinds of questions they might want to ponder are: What do you think life was like for this worker? What type of work did he do? Do you think he enjoyed his work? Was he scared? The student should attempt to capture as closely as possible the feelings of an Empire State Building laborer during the Depression.
In a future class, have students share these journal entries with the class.

FURTHER QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:
What effect do you think the Great Depression had on the speed and cost of constructing the Empire State Building?
Would you want to live or work in a skyscraper? Why or why not?

EVALUATION/ASSESSMENT:
Students will be evaluated based on participation in the initial exercises, as well as thoughtful participation in group activity and journal entries from the worker’s point of view.
GLOSSARY

Architect n. a person skilled in the art of building; a building designer.

Beam n. one of the principal horizontal timbers of a building that supports or helps support a load, such as, for instance, the floor above it, or a roof.

Concrete n. a mixture (often of gravel, pebbles, or broken stone with cement or with tar, etc.) used to create sidewalks, roadways, building foundations, flooring, etc.

Derrick n. a machine used for raising and lowering heavy weights and, while holding them suspended, transporting them a limited distance to a designated location.

Erect v. to put up a building or other structure.

Hoist v. to raise or lift, usually by using some kind of machinery.

Immigrant n. a person who leaves one country to settle permanently in another.

Mason n. a person whose occupation is to build with stone or brick; also, someone who prepares stone to be used for building purposes.

Mullion n. a slender bar (pier) which divides the lights (or panes) of windows, screens, etc. On the Empire State Building, these are the vertical, chrome-nickel steel rails that divide each pair of windows and are capped with floral designs.

Rivet n. a metallic pin with a head, used for uniting two plates or pieces of material.

Skyscraper n. a very tall building.

Spandrel n. the triangular space between the curve of an arch and the inclosing right angle; or the space between the outer moldings of two adjoining arches and a horizontal line above them. On the Empire State Building, the spandrels used were aluminum--a rust-resistant material.

Story n. any of the different floors or levels in a building.
EXTENSION ACTIVITIES:
Using your knowledge of the amount and type of labor needed, hours worked, and working conditions, create a Help Wanted advertisement for workers on the Empire State Building. Write a one-page paper on methods used in constructing the Empire State Building that allowed the building to rise in record time (for example, utilizing elevators from the demolished Waldorf-Astoria, installing a railway system, etc.)

ACADEMIC CONTENT STANDARDS:
McREL This lesson plan may be used to address the academic standards listed below. These standards are drawn from Content Knowledge: A Compendium of Standards and Benchmarks for K-12 Education: 3rd and 4th Editions and have been provided courtesy of the Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning in Aurora, Colorado

BEHAVIORAL STUDIES: LEVEL II (GRADES 3-5)
Standard 1. Understands that group and cultural influences contribute to human development, identity, and behavior
Benchmark 1. Understands that people can learn about others in many different ways
Standard 2. Understands various meanings of social group, general implications of group membership, and different ways that groups function
Benchmark 8. Understands that “social group” has many meanings

AMERICAN HISTORY: LEVEL II (GRADE 5-6)
Benchmark 2. Understands the environmental and social impact of the Great Depression