

# Empire State Building

## US History

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The Empire State Building is one of the most famous skyscrapers in the world. It is located on Fifth Avenue in New York City.

*Empire State Building*  
Photo by Ducksters

When the building was completed in 1931 it was the tallest skyscraper in the world, a title it would hold for more than 40 years until it was surpassed by the World Trade Center in 1972.

### How tall is it?

The roof height of the Empire State Building is 1,250 feet. If you include the antenna on top, it is 1,454 feet tall. It has 102 stories with observation decks on the 86th and the 102nd floors.

### How long did it take to built it?

It took just over one year to build the Empire State Building. Construction began on March 17, 1930 and the building opened on April 11, 1931. The project was a model of efficiency and modern construction techniques.

### Who designed it?

The lead architect for the Empire State Building was William F. Lamb. He designed the building in just two weeks. The inspiration for the design was the Reynolds Building in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. The lead developer and financier on the building was John J. Raskob.

### The Construction

*Empire State Building Worker*  
by Lewis Hine

The Empire State Building was built at the start of the [Great Depression](#). It provided jobs for 3,400 workers. Many of the pieces of the building, like the steel beams and the outer limestone, were manufactured off-site to precise measurements. This way they could be easily and quickly put into place as they arrived. The building used around 200,000 cubic feet of limestone and granite from Indiana as well as 730 tons of steel and aluminum. Over 100,000 rivets were used in the building to fasten the steel beams together.

## **The Empire State Building Today**

Today the Empire State Building operates as an office building for many companies. It is owned by the Empire State Realty Trust. It was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1986 and has been renovated to be one of the most environmentally efficient skyscrapers in the world.

## **Visiting the Empire State Building**

The Empire State Building is also one of New York City's most popular tourist destinations. Around 3.5 million people visit the observation decks each year. Most people visit the larger observation deck on the 86 floor. You can pay extra to go to the 102nd floor.

## **Interesting Facts About the Empire State Building**

- There are 1,860 steps from the street level to the top floor. There is a race each year called the "Run-Up" where runners race up the 1,576 steps to the 86th floor.
- The style of the Empire State Building is called "Art Deco."
- The building struggled to get tenants during the Great Depression. One year after opening only 25 percent of the office space had been rented.
- It contains 2.7 million square feet of office space.
- The building makes over \$80 million a year off of tourism.
- The American Institute of Architects named the Empire State

Building as America's Favorite Building.

- It was named one of the Seven Wonders of the Modern World.
- Many famous movies have featured the Empire State Building including *King Kong*, *Elf*, *When Harry Met Sally*, and *The Amazing Spider-Man*.

## Activities

- Take a ten question [quiz](#) about this page.
- Listen to a recorded reading of this page:

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## [Works Cited](#)

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