
ENGLISH ON TOUR

This week's Teacher's Corner provides students with the opportunity to practice speaking and presentation skills through a tour guide activity.

LEVEL

Intermediate to Advanced

LANGUAGE FOCUS

Reading, speaking (primary focus); listening (secondary focus).

GOALS

During this activity students will:

- Practice reading, speaking, and listening skills through a fill-in-the-blank activity
- Develop presentation and speaking skills by conducting a tour

MATERIALS

- Teacher: whiteboard/chalkboard, markers or chalk, a timing device, large sheets of paper (optional), computer and projector
- Students: pencils or pens, notebooks or writing paper, computer with Internet access for homework

PREPARATION

1. Read through all the materials carefully.
2. Print out copies of the Empire State Building Reading A in Appendix 1 and the Empire State Building Reading B in Appendix 2.
 - a. Print enough copies of Appendix 1 for half the class and enough copies of Appendix 2 for the other half of the class.
3. Read the Empire State Building Reading Answer Key in Appendix 3.
4. This activity has a homework assignment and an in-class presentation. For more advanced classes, or if your classroom has computers with Internet, this activity could be completed during a single class period. Choose the approach that works best for your teaching and learning context.
5. An option for this activity is to have the students work locally, within your community. If possible, have the students pick historical locations or places of interest in your city or neighborhood. Then, when students conduct their tour, visit that location as a class.

ACTIVITY PART ONE: THE EMPIRE STATE BUILDING

1. Begin the class by having the students form pairs.
2. In each pair, give one student the Empire State Building Reading A and one student a copy of the Empire State Building Reading B.
3. Instruct the students to read through the story on their own for 2-3 minutes.

4. After the students have had a chance to read the story, have the pairs work together to fill in the blanks in the story.
 - a. Student A can ask questions to Student B to fill in the blanks in their story. Student B can ask Student A questions to fill in the blanks in their story.
5. After the pairs have filled in the blanks, review the answers as a class. Ask the students what they learned about the Empire State Building.
6. Next, on the board draw the following table:

| Topic | Sentence Numbers |
|-------------------|------------------|
| History | |
| Present Day | |
| Interesting Story | |

7. Ask the students to read the story again, this time paying attention to the structure of the story. In this part of the activity, students will engage in *active reading*. In active reading, students work to understand the purpose of an article and how the story is structured.
 - a. Instruct the students to underline the sentences in the story that discuss the Empire State Building’s history.
 - b. Then, instruct the students to draw a square around the section of the story that describes what currently happens at the Empire State Building during the present day.
 - c. Finally, have the students draw a circle around the part of the story that provides an interesting story about the Empire State Building.
8. As a class, review the answers to the active reading activity by filling in the chart that you wrote on the board.

Optional Activity Extension:

If time permits, have the students read the Empire State Building reading out loud in pairs. Encourage them to practice reading rate (speed), stress, and intonation. These speaking skills are critical for a professional tour guide.

ACTIVITY PART TWO: TOUR HOMEWORK

1. Begin this part of the activity by asking the students if they can think of other famous buildings like the Empire State Building. Have the students share their answers with the class.
2. Next, tell the students their homework assignment is to find a building, historical location, or famous place and create a tour of that place.
 - a. For the assignment students should:
 - i. Find 2-3 pictures of the building, historical location, or famous place.
 - ii. Provide a brief history of the site.
 - iii. Describe the present day use of the site.
 - iv. Research an interesting story of the site.

- v. Finally, put all of the information and pictures together into a computer-based presentation. If a computer is not available in the classroom, have the students put everything together on a poster.
3. Have the students research their building, historical location, or famous place as a homework assignment. Depending on the students' level and ability, allow them up to several days to do the research.

ACTIVITY PART THREE: TAKING A TOUR

1. After students have conducted their research, have them share their presentations with the rest of the class. This section of the activity can be done several ways:
 - a. Have 4-5 students come to the front of the class, and have each student announce the location they researched. Then have the rest of the class form groups around the 4-5 presenters. Students should listen to the presentation on the location they find most interesting.
 - b. Each student can come to the front of the class, one at a time, and present on the information they learned.
 - c. Divide the class in half. Half of the students will present their information a while the second half of the class moves around the room to listen to their presentations. Then, students switch roles and do the activity again.
2. Remind and encourage students to make their presentations interesting. Have them do more than present: take the class on a tour of their location. Being a tour guide can be a great career, but being a good tour guide involves more than sharing information. Tour guides need to be engaging and speak clearly with stress and intonation!

Optional Activity Approach:

If computers are available in the classroom, students can use Internet-based map tools such as [Google Maps](#), [Bing Maps](#), or [Open Street Maps](#) to show their building, historical location, or famous place.

For more on New York City, check out the [New York, New York](#) and [Exploring New York City lesson plan](#).

For more on using active reading in the classroom, check out the [February 2017 Teacher's Corner](#) and [Encouraging Critical Reading in the EFL Classroom](#).

Appendix 1: Empire State Building Reading A

Directions: Read the story below about the Empire State Building. Ask your partner questions and use your partner's answers to fill in the blanks of the story.

The _____ is one of the symbols of New York. The name comes from the nickname of the State of New York. Until 1954, the Empire State Building was _____, and it is currently the third tallest in New York City. Strangely, it was built during the Great Depression when such a large project should have been unthinkable. After it opened in 1931, it sat mostly empty for years; some people jokingly called it the “_____.” Now it houses numerous offices, shops, and restaurants and is one of the most visited sites in the city because of the stunning views from the observation deck on the _____ floor.



There is an interesting story in the race for the tallest building in the world. At the time the Empire State Building was being built, the Chrysler Building was under construction ten blocks away. The architects of the Chrysler Building had a secret, though. Hidden from view inside the building, they were constructing a spire to top the building. At the end of construction, the 125-foot spire was raised into place, taking the title of tallest building in the world from the Bank of Manhattan Building by just 60 feet. The honor wouldn't last, though. The Empire State Building would open less than a year later, and it exceeded the Chrysler Building in height by more than 200 feet.

* Reading adapted from [New York, New York](#) by Thomas W. Santos

Appendix 2: Empire State Building Reading B

Directions: Read the story below about the Empire State Building. Ask your partner questions and use your partner's answers to fill in the blanks of the story.

The Empire State Building is one of the symbols of New York. The name comes from the nickname of the State of New York. Until 1954, the Empire State Building was the tallest building in the world, and it is currently the third tallest in New York City. Strangely, it was built during the Great Depression when such a large project should have been unthinkable. After it opened in 1931, it sat mostly empty for years; some people jokingly called it the “Empty State Building.” Now it houses numerous offices, shops, and restaurants and is one of the most visited sites in the city because of the stunning views from the observation deck on the 102nd floor. There is an interesting story in the race for the tallest building in the world. At the time the Empire State Building was being built, the _____ was under construction ten blocks away. The architects of the Chrysler Building had a secret, though. Hidden from view inside the building, they were constructing a spire to top the building. At the end of construction, the _____ spire was raised into place, taking the title of tallest building in the world from the _____ Building by just 60 feet. The honor wouldn’t last, though. The Empire State Building would open less than a year later, and it exceeded the Chrysler Building in height by more than _____ feet.



* Reading adapted from [New York, New York](#) by Thomas W. Santos

Appendix 3: Empire State Building Answer Key

Each of the sections of the story are indicated below. The underlined section is the history, the bold face sentences are the present day, and the sentences in italics are an interesting story of the building.

The Empire State Building is one of the symbols of New York.

The name comes from the nickname of the State of New York. Until 1954, the Empire State Building was the tallest building in the world, and it is currently the third tallest in New York City. Strangely, it was built during the Great Depression when such a large project should have been unthinkable. After it opened in 1931, it sat mostly empty for years; some people jokingly called it the “Empty State Building.”

Now it houses numerous offices, shops, and restaurants and is one of the most visited sites in the city because of the stunning views from

the observation deck on the 102nd floor. *There is an interesting story in the race for the tallest building in the world. At the time the Empire State Building was being built, the Chrysler Building was under construction ten blocks away. The architects of the Chrysler Building had a secret, though. Hidden from view inside the building, they were constructing a spire to top the building. At the end of construction, the 125-foot spire was raised into place, taking the title of tallest building in the world from the Bank of Manhattan Building by just 60 feet. The honor wouldn’t last, though. The Empire State Building would open less than a year later, and it exceeded the Chrysler Building in height by more than 200 feet.*



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