

## $\bigcirc$ **Architecture**

#### 21046

# Empire State Building

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#### An Icon of its Time

At 102 stories, the Empire State Building may no longer be the tallest skyscraper in New York, but it is undoubtedly one of the most significant. No visit to the city is complete without a trip to the building's observation deck to experience the unforgettable views of the city. Designed by Shreve, Lamb & Harmon and completed in 1931, a lot of the building's cultural significance lies within its great history. A sign of hope and optimism during the Great Depression, it was built in record time and became the tallest building in the world, a title it retained for almost 40 years.

The Empire State Building also embodies the refinement and evolution of steel construction and technological prowess, though its design and construction faced many technical problems at the time. But a spirit of innovation and determination prevailed, and the building has taken its place in architectural and cultural history as a symbol of power and grandeur.





#### The Creation of an Icon

Originally agricultural land, the prominent Astor family bought the area in 1827 and built the Waldorf-Astoria hotel on the site in the late 1890s. Eventually, businessman John Raskob and former governor Al Smith, who later became part of the Empire State Inc. group of investors, bought and demolished the outdated hotel, and contracted William Lamb to create the building design.

Before the designs were even finished, work started on the building's construction on March 17th, 1930. The pace of construction was phenomenal; with an average construction rate of four and a half stories a week. By September of the same year, 86 stories were built, and the mast was completed by November. The entire construction was finished, and the building officially opened by President Hoover on May 1st, 1931, 45 days ahead of schedule.

#### A Symbol of New York

After its construction, the Empire State Building became an instant tourist attraction, with visitors coming to see the spectacular views from the observation deck of the "World's Tallest Building." It became a National Historic Landmark in 1986 and was added to the National Register of Historic Places the year after. The American Society of Civil Engineers has also named it as one of the Seven Wonders of the Modern World, and in 2007 it was ranked at number one on the list of America's Favorite Architecture by the American Institute of Architects. Aside from its many accolades and titles, the Empire State Building is a cultural symbol of New York, with starring roles in many movies, from the original King Kong to Sleepless in Seattle.







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The Empire State Building has 68 modernized, high-speed elevators that transport passengers to their destinations up to 20-40% faster than conventional elevators in other modern commercial buildings. Using regenerated energy, as one elevator descends, the energy created powers the ascending elevators.









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There are eight high-speed escalators in the building's concourse and second floor areas.















































































































The Famous Art Deco lobby includes an aluminum relief of the building. On the wall above the front desk in the Fifth Avenue lobby is one of the most famous images in New York City, a depiction of the building itself with beams of lights radiating from the mast.













































































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A 222 ft. (68 m) radio antenna was erected on top of the tower in 1950, allowing the area's television stations to broadcast from the building. Atop the tower is the 203 ft. (61.9 m) pinnacle, much of which is covered by broadcast antennas and surmounted with a lightning rod.















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Adam Reed Tucker is the co-developer of the LEGO Architecture product line.











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