

Lesson 19: Sightseeing in the City

Frank is going sightseeing in New York City. The first thing he does is to stop at a tourist information center.

Conversation #1 - Getting information

Frank: Hi. I'm looking for information about art museums in the city. Do you have any brochures?

Attendant: Yes, here are brochures for the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Guggenheim... and this booklet has a list of all the art museums in the city.

Frank: Thanks. And where can I get tickets for the Statue of Liberty?

Attendant: You know, you might wanna consider getting a CityPass - it gives you admission to six of the city's best attractions, including 3 museums and the Statue of Liberty, for 46% off.

Frank: Oh - that sounds like a good deal. Do I have to see everything in one day?
(*a good deal = a lot of value for the price*)

Attendant: No, the passes are valid for nine consecutive days. They're \$89 for adults and \$64 for kids 17 and under.

Frank: I'll take two adult passes - and how much is this map?

Attendant: It's free - you can take it.

Conversation Phrases & Vocabulary

Frank asks if the tourist information center has any **brochures** – that means small books or papers with promotional information and photos. Inside a museum brochure, for example, you'll find the museum's **address** (location) and **hours** (the days and times it is open).

To enter museums, shows, and some parks, you need to buy a **ticket**. The price of entry to an attraction is often called **admission**. Some places have special prices for **children/kids** and for **senior citizens** (people over 65 years old).

Here are some other questions you can ask at the tourist information center:

- **Do you have a list of...**
 - museums?
 - theaters?
 - parks?
 - restaurants?
 - tourist attractions?
- **Do you have any...**
 - brochures?
 - maps?
 - information in Spanish/French/Chinese/German?
- **Are there any...**
 - ...weekly/daily passes for public transportation?
 - ...special events going on at the moment?
 - ...guided tours / day trips?
- **Where can I...**
 - ...rent a car?
 - ...get tickets for... (a basketball game)?

Vocabulary Builder: Tourist Attractions

Here are a few more places you might see while sightseeing:

Beach / Boardwalk

The **beach** is the place where the ocean meets the land, and some beaches have a **boardwalk** - that's a wooden walkway next to the water.



Castle



Tower / Skyscraper

The word **tower** can refer to an ancient building or a modern building. The word **skyscraper** is only used for modern buildings.



Ruins

The word **ruins** refers to ancient buildings that are so old that they are mostly destroyed.



Bridge



Theater

A **theater** is a place where you can see a concert, a dance performance, or a play.



Fountain



Street fair



Conversation #2 - Booking a Tour

During your trip, you might consider taking a **tour** - an organized visit to a place or multiple places, with a **tour guide** - a person who explains everything and tells you the history and interesting facts about the attractions. Here's a conversation you might have with a travel agent in order to **book** a tour (reserve a place on the tour).

Frank: Hi, I'd like some information about your bus tours.

Travel agent: Well, we have a very comprehensive 9-hour tour of the city's main attractions, leaving every weekday morning at 8:30.

Frank: Where does it go?

Travel agent: The tour stops at both historical and modern attractions like Saint Patrick's Cathedral, Grand Central Station, the Empire State Building, Central Park, and the Museum of Natural History.

Frank: Do we stay in the bus the whole time?

Travel agent: Oh, there are a number of places where you can get out and walk around - you can either stay with the tour guide or venture out on your own, as long as you get back to the bus by the designated time.

Frank: Where does the tour start?

Travel agent: It leaves from Times Square, on the corner of Broadway and 51st Street.

Frank: And it drops us off at the same point in Times Square?

Travel agent: That's right.

Frank: OK. Is there a discount for senior citizens?

Travel agent: No, only for kids 12 and under.

Frank: All right, I'd like three adult tickets and two children's tickets for the tour on Thursday.

Travel agent: Great. Are you interested in any of our night tours, or a cruise around the harbor?

Frank: Let me grab a couple of brochures and I'll talk it over with my family.

Conversation Phrases & Vocabulary

In the conversation, Frank wants to know about the **itinerary** – that's the schedule for the tour. Here are some other questions you can ask before booking a tour:

- "Can I see the itinerary?"
- "Where / What time does it start/end?"
- "Is it a bus tour or a walking tour?"
- "Do you have a tour guide that speaks Japanese / Italian / etc.?"
- "Is there a discount for..."
 - children?
 - students?
 - senior citizens?

This tour stops at St. Patrick's **cathedral** - a cathedral is a **church** that is very beautifully decorated. The words "cathedral" and "church" are generally used only for Catholic or Christian buildings.



In other religions, such as Buddhism, the buildings may be called **temples** or **shrines**. Shrines are often dedicated to one specific god or deity, whereas churches, cathedrals, and temples are places of general worship. A Muslim religious building is called a **mosque**.



temple



shrine



mosque

At the end of the conversation, the travel agent mentions a **cruise** - this is a tour on a boat, which is called a **cruise ship**.



Today's exercise is a listening test – you'll go on a tour of New York City, listen to the tour guide, and answer questions to test your listening.



Listening Practice – Going on a Tour

Many students hate listening and have a lot of difficulty with it, and I'm going to teach you a strategy that helps you understand spoken English better, making listening less frustrating.

In this technique, you listen to the same audio 3 times, and you go from the **general** to the **specific**:

1. Listen for general topics
2. Listen for specific details
3. Listen to the individual words (while reading the transcript)

Follow this strategy as you listen and take the quizzes.

1. Listen for general topics

First, read the questions. Then, press "Play" on the audio and take the quiz **as you listen**. Don't listen first and then answer the questions; this makes it harder to remember. Instead, answer the questions at the same time as you are listening.

DO NOT try to understand every word at this stage – only try to understand the general idea, just enough to answer the questions! After you finish, check your answers, then continue to part 2.

General Quiz

Mark these statements true or false according to the tour guide.

1. The New York City area was uninhabited (no people) when Europeans first arrived there.
2. The area was economically interesting because it had a lot of beavers.
3. The original name of New York City was "New Amsterdam."
4. New York city was not involved in any wars before the year 1900.
5. New York City was the first U.S. capital.

6. People didn't want to immigrate to New York City because of the violence there.
7. In the early 20th century, New York City became known for its culture and architecture.
8. The city's economy changed from industries to services after World War II.
9. New York City's population is not very diverse.
10. New York City receives many more tourists than residents.

Answers are at the end of this lesson text

2. Listen for specific details

Listen to the tour guide's speech again, and take this new quiz with more specific details – again, try to answer the questions at the same time as you are listening. If necessary, you can listen to the audio two or three times. After you finish, check your answers, then continue to stage 3.

Specific Details Quiz

1) European explorers first arrived in the New York City area in ____.

- A 1524
- B 1609
- C 1624

2) The Lenape people were very skilled at ____.

- A making advanced weapons for hunting
- B making clothing from natural materials
- C using natural medicines to cure diseases

3) In exchange for beaver fur, the Dutch gave the Lenape ____.

- A tools for farming
- B seeds for agriculture
- C European clothes and jewelry

4) When the British conquered New York, _____ were 40% of the population.

- A Dutch colonists

- B enslaved Africans
- C descendants of the Lenape

5) Who won the French and Indian war?

- A the French
- B the Americans
- C the British

6) New York City was important in the war of independence because _____.

- A it was economically strategic
- B it was the closest point to England
- C it was the biggest city in North America

7) _____ were established in the mid-19th century as New York City's immigrant population grew.

- A Public schools and the police department
- B Cultural and sporting events
- C Subways and public transportation

8) The first Broadway musical opened in _____.

- A 1898
- B 1904
- C 1927

9) In the 1960s, New York became _____.

- A violent
- B diverse
- C rich

10) How many languages are spoken in New York City?

- A 50
- B 8
- C 800

Answers are at the end of this lesson text

3. Listen to the individual words (while reading the transcript)

Now you can listen one more time while reading along with the transcript. You can understand anything you missed in the previous two exercises, and look up any words you don't know in the dictionary.

Hello! My name is Shayna, and I'll be your tour guide this morning. Let me give you an overview of New York City history.

The recorded history of the area begins in the year 1524, with expeditions by the Portuguese captain Estevao Gomes and the Italian explorer Giovanni da Verrazano, both of whom encountered a sizeable population of indigenous residents called the Lenape people. At the time of European contact, there was a population of about 5000 Lenape living in the New York City area. They practiced agriculture and hunted fish, birds, and deer. The Lenape people were also extremely skilled at making clothing from natural materials such as animal skins and feathers, accented with stones, shells, animal teeth and claws. Some of their designs were extremely elaborate, reminiscent of European lace.

In 1609 the English explorer Henry Hudson arrived in the New York harbor, looking for a passageway to Asia. Although he didn't find it, he did notice the large population of beavers. The fur of this animal was extremely fashionable in Europe at the time, and northeastern North America was thus seen as an economic opportunity. The Dutch established a trading post called New Amsterdam in the southern tip of Manhattan in 1624, where they traded with the Lenape people, giving them European-made goods such as tools for farming in exchange for beaver fur.

The Dutch soon constructed a fort to protect their trading post against attacks by the English and by the Lenape, and began importing enslaved Africans to build up the wall of the fort. The city was formally incorporated as "New Amsterdam" in 1653. Less than 10 years later, the British conquered the area and renamed it New York, after the city of York in England. At the time, 40% of New York City's population consisted of slaves, and as the population of European colonists grew, the population of Lenape shrank due to disease and displacement.

New York City was the base for British operations in the French and Indian war, a conflict over territory that was fought between the colonies of Britain and France in North America. This war eventually established Britain's dominance in eastern North America, and the French were pushed out. After the war ended, Britain imposed a tax on the colonies to help pay for the resources spent in the war – and revolutionary groups began to form in reaction to Britain's control.

New York City was a key point in the United States' war of independence, as a center of business with a strategic port and waterways. Five battles between the newly-formed United States and Great Britain were fought in the area, and the British took control of the city and stayed there until their expulsion in 1783. In 1788, New York City was made the first national capital of the U.S. – but only for two years, as the capital was later transferred to Philadelphia.

In the mid-19th century, New York City grew as an economic center. It received a large influx of Irish immigrants as a famine devastated Ireland, with 1 million people dying of starvation and another 1 million leaving the country. Around this time, public schools and the police department were established to support New York City's growing population. Immigration continued to grow as New York City became a destination for millions of people seeking a better life.

The modern city of New York was formed in 1898, and the transportation network grew with the first New York City subway in 1904. The city became known for its culture, with the first Broadway musical opening in 1927, and its architecture, with impressive skyscrapers dominating the skyline. However, there was a large divide between rich and poor, and crime and poverty rates rose. World War I, the Great Depression, and subsequent political and economic reforms later helped stabilize the city's middle class and working class. In the 1940s, New York City was a major destination for African Americans during the great migration out of the American south.

After World War II, there was another economic boom and the city's economy shifted from industries (which began to move outside the city) to services (such as finance, education, medicine, tourism, communications, and law). The city experienced a period of decline in the 1960s with race riots, gang wars, and a famous serial killer who targeted attractive young women in eight shootings throughout the city.

In the 1980s, New York City began to recover as new immigrants arrived – particularly from Asia and Latin America – and the police department developed increasingly effective crime-fighting techniques. Today, New York City has an extremely diverse population of 8.2 million people. Up to 800 different languages are spoken here, making this the most linguistically diverse city in the world. It is one of the most popular tourist destinations in the U.S., and receives 50 million visitors a year.

Lesson 19 General Quiz - Answers

1) False; 2) True; 3) True; 4) False; 5) True; 6) False; 7) True; 8) True; 9) False; 10) True

Lesson 19 Specific Quiz - Answers

1) A; 2) B; 3) A; 4) B; 5) C; 6) A; 7) A; 8) C; 9) A; 10) C