

LEVELED BOOK • M

Empire State Building



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Empire State Building



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Focus Question

What makes the Empire State Building special?

Words to Know

beams

construct

elevator

rivets

skyscraper

steel

Front and back cover: From the top of the Empire State building, you can see all the way to New York Harbor.

Title page: The Fifth Avenue entrance to the Empire State Building

Page 3: You can see the East River from the top of the Empire State Building.

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World Landmarks
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The builders chose the middle of New York City for their building.



Two Friends Think Big

Two friends, John Raskob and Al Smith, wanted to build the tallest **skyscraper** in the world. As children, they were poor. Both had to quit school and go to work. Years later, Raskob was rich and Smith was famous.

Together, the two friends made a good team and built the Empire State Building. Their building was the tallest in the world for forty-one years.

Stars and States

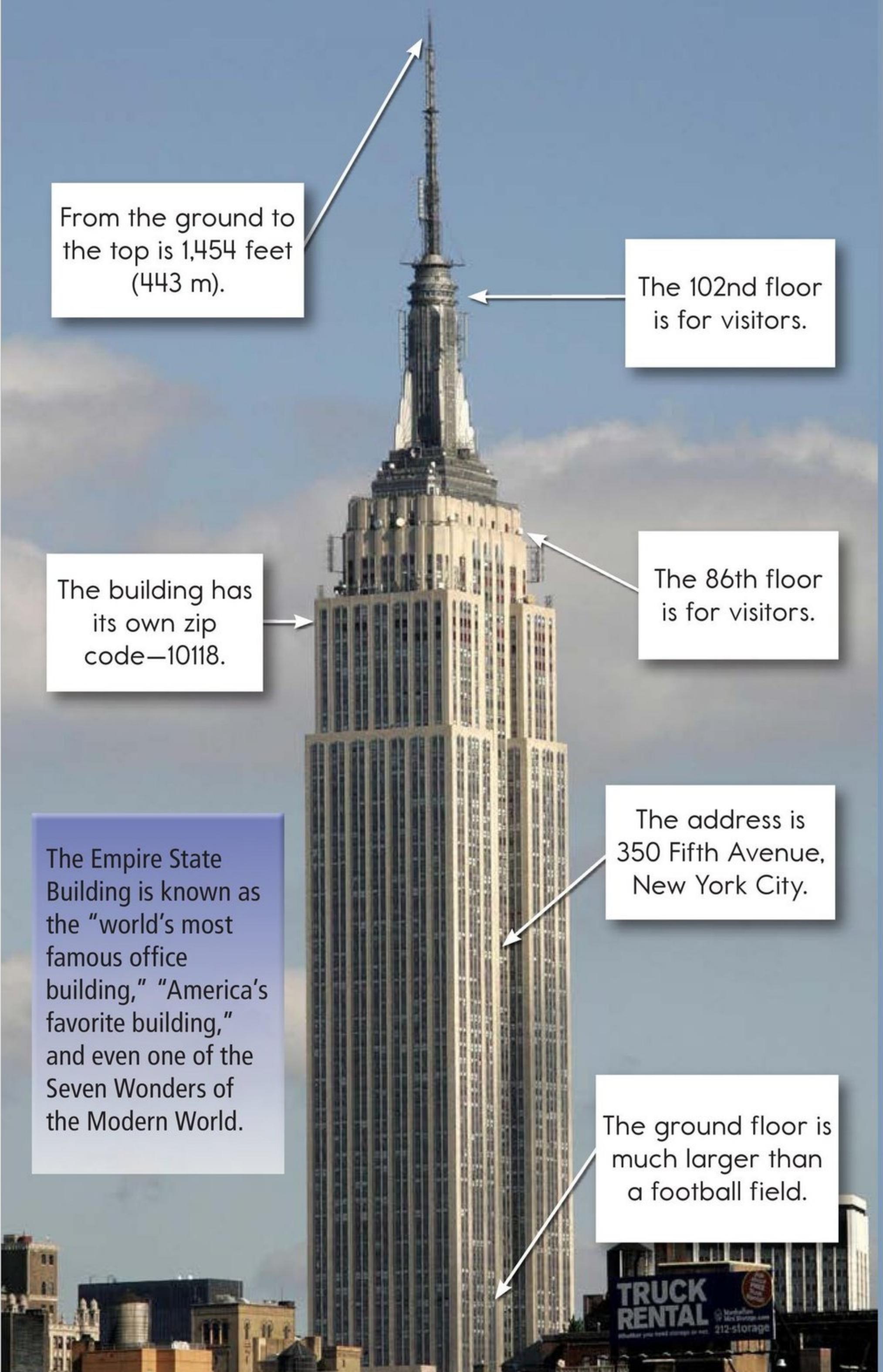
Take an **elevator** to the top of this building and you can see parts of five states. Look around and you might see stars, even in the daytime. Famous movie stars visit to see the view, too.

View From the Empire State Building



From the top of the Empire State Building, you can see five states.

The Empire State Building



Making Room for Greatness

The place Raskob and Smith chose for their building was a busy one. A grand hotel was already standing there. The hotel had to go.



The hotel was large and hard to tear down.

Men worked day and night to tear down the hotel quickly. The two friends needed to **construct** their building fast.



Huge cranes were used to move giant beams into place.

A skyscraper as big and heavy as the one they planned needed to sit on solid rock. Workers dug down 40 feet (12.2 m) to reach solid rock. Huge trucks carried tons of dirt and rock away. It took five months to tear down the hotel and make the hole.

Then, on April 7, 1930, construction of the Empire State Building began.

Sky Boys

Strong metal **beams** rose. Beams support the skyscraper much as your bones support your body.

As the **steel** beams went higher and higher, crowds gathered on the streets below. They looked up in wonder as men walked the narrow beams high above. People called the men “sky boys.”



The sky boys were the best show in town.



Riveters worked far above the ground floor.
They often worked without a safety line.

Sky boys worked in teams of four to join the beams together with red-hot rivets. Every team member was brave and fast. The steel beams zoomed up an amazing four floors a week.

Some of the best teams were Mohawk Indians from New York State. Some of them could set a rivet every minute.



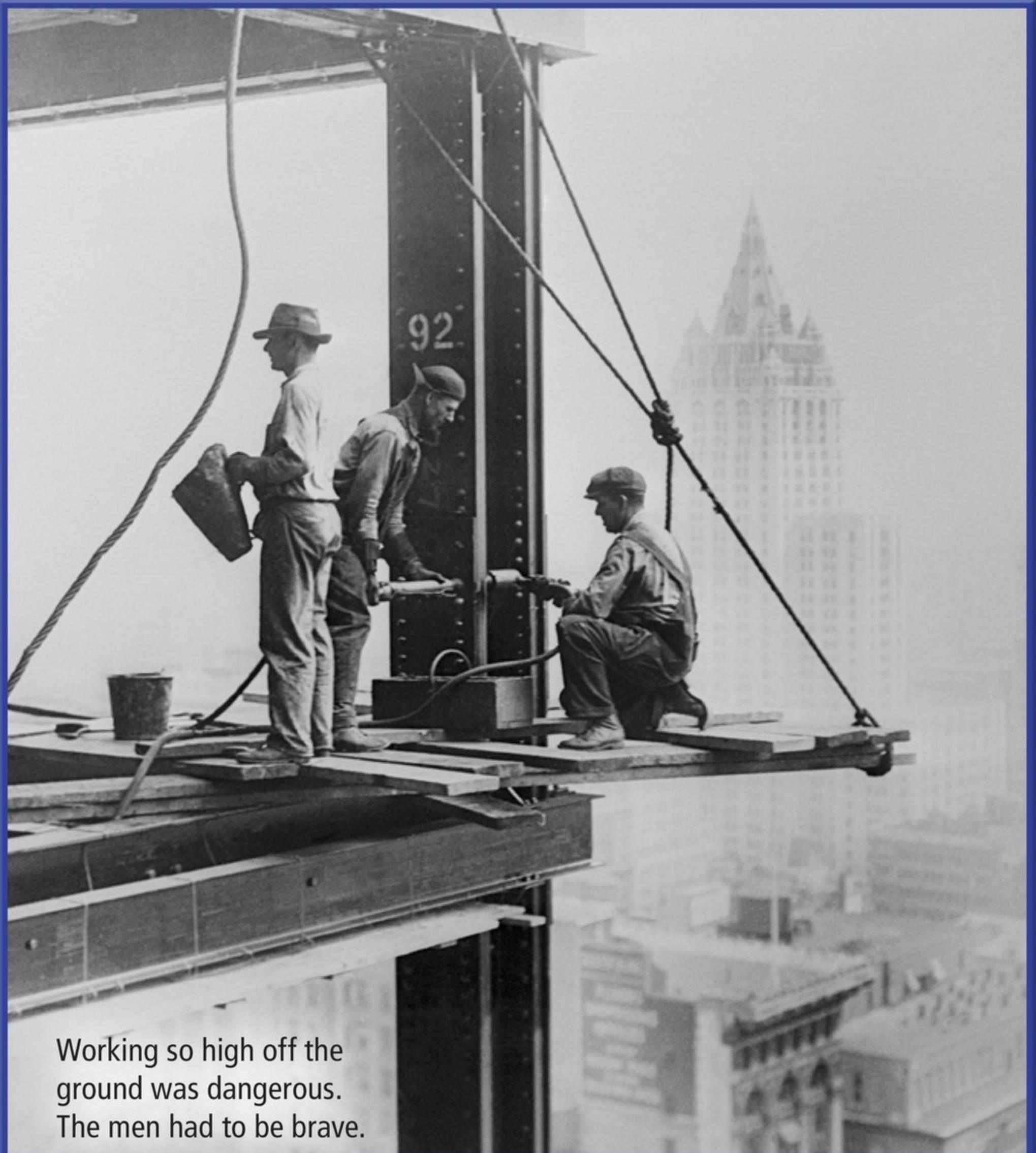
Zoom to the Top

By June, the steel reached the twenty-fifth floor. Behind the sky boys came other workers. They built the outside wall of the building. These workers were so fast that they started to catch up to the sky boys.

August was the busiest month. The sky boys were almost to the top. The outside wall made of stone, windows, and metal was going up a floor a day. Inside, thousands of workers were busy.



In August, there were 3,500 workers doing 60 different kinds of jobs.

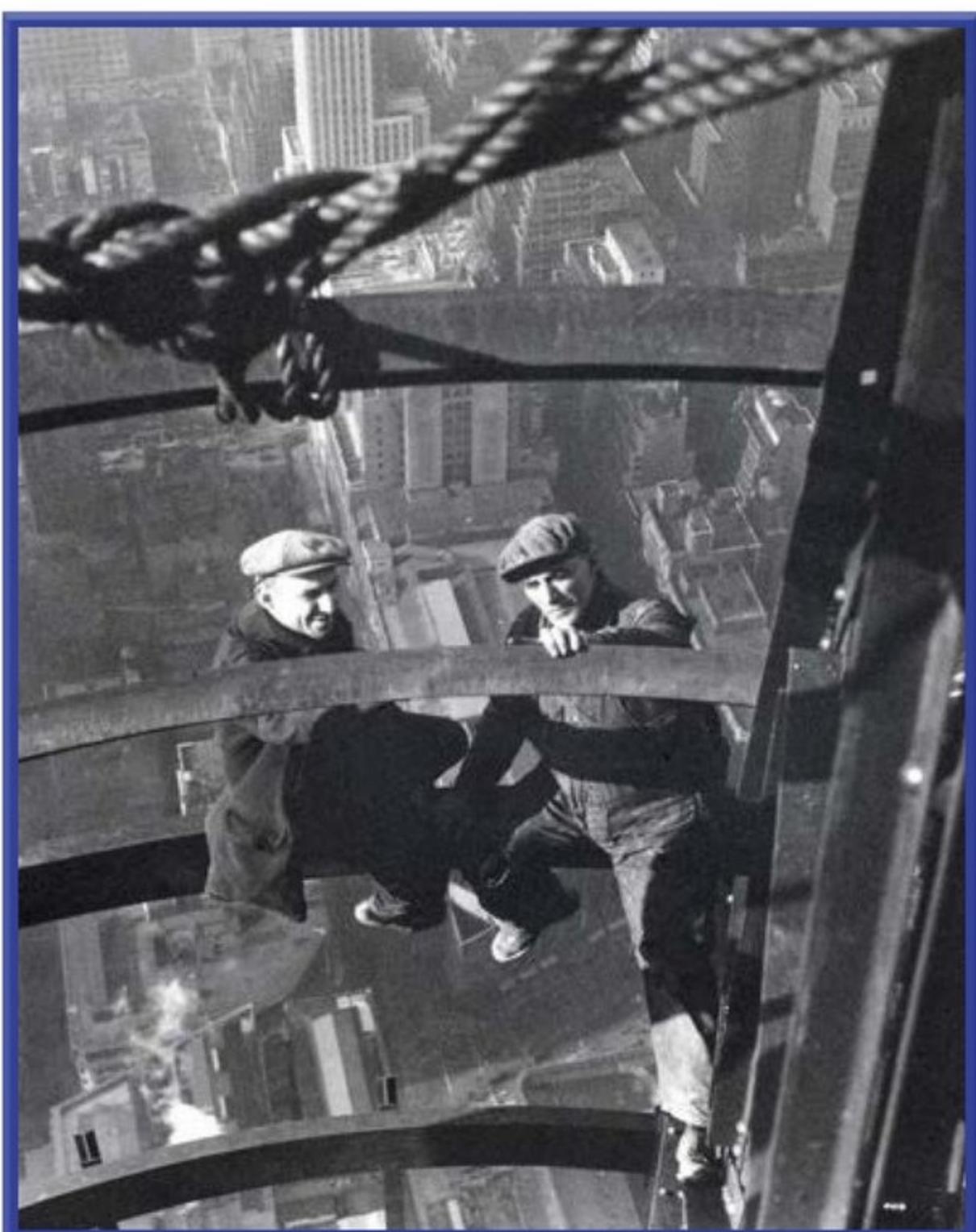


Working so high off the ground was dangerous. The men had to be brave.

Getting supplies to so many workers was taking too much time. Workers laid tracks around each floor to speed things up. Carts were loaded and pushed along the tracks right to the workers.

In November, Al Smith stood proud. He was on the 102nd floor. The steel beams had reached the very top. He was also scared standing that high up on a beam. The last rivet was placed. When he smashed it into the beam, the steel work was done!

That rivet made newspaper headlines. Not only was it the last one set, but it was also the only one made of gold.



These two steel workers are very close to the top. Their work is almost done.



On special holidays, the building uses colorful lights to put on shows.

Happy Birthday!

The building opened on May 1, 1931. Fifty years later, in 1981, the building was made a landmark. It is protected by law and cannot be torn down.

Al Smith said his building was made for the future, and he was right! It will be standing tall in New York for a long time to come.

Glossary

beams (<i>n.</i>)	long, sturdy pieces of wood or metal that are used in building (p. 9)
construct (<i>v.</i>)	to make or build something (p. 7)
elevator (<i>n.</i>)	a platform that carries people and things to different floors in a building (p. 5)
rivets (<i>n.</i>)	bits of metal that hold something together (p. 10)
skyscraper (<i>n.</i>)	a very tall building (p. 4)
steel (<i>n.</i>)	a kind of strong metal made of iron and carbon (p. 9)

Empire State Building

A Reading A-Z Level M Leveled Book

Word Count: 543

Connections

Writing

Write a newspaper article from May 1, 1931, highlighting the opening of the Empire State Building. Include facts from the book in your article.

Social Studies

Make a timeline of the construction of the Empire State Building. Include at least five dates on your timeline.



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