

Level: Lower Intermediate
Lesson: 19
Title: "The Empire State Building"

Summary:

Vanessa, Alexander and Lisa talk about the history of the Empire State Building.

In this radio broadcast, Vanessa, Alexander, and Lisa are in the middle of a live show in a radio studio. Listen to their conversation and answer the question that follows about the main idea.

Dialogue:

Vanessa: Welcome to *Monuments around the World*. Today we'll be talking about The Empire State Building; N.Y. City's most famous landmark.

Alexander: Hi everyone. Yes, The Empire State Building is known even to those who've never **set foot in** New York.

Lisa: And the **funny thing** is that this building became famous **thanks to** King Kong... you know the popular movie.

Vanessa: Yes, and it's become the most popular tourist destination in New York ever since.





Alexander: That's true. And did you know, that so far it's been visited by over 110 million people?



Vanessa: Wow! So, Alexander can you **give us some more insight** into its history.

Alexander: Well, everything started in 1930 when construction began. Everyone was **taken by surprise** when 18 months later they saw this huge building



Lisa: What? It took only 18 months!? **No wonder** it's considered to be one of the Seven Wonders of the Modern World.

Vanessa: Yes, but bear in mind that about 3400 workers worked on this project!!



Lisa: Well, that explains it.... Still... the Empire State Building is a great example of art deco, and it takes up a whole block!

Alexander: In fact, it was the world's tallest skyscraper for 41 years.



Now answer the following question...

What are Vanessa Alexandra and Lisa talking about?

They're talking about how the Empire State Building became famous and its history.

Now listen again to the dialogue in parts. After each part there will be 3 to 4 questions on the details...

Part 1

Vanessa: Welcome to *Monuments around the World*. Today we'll be talking about The Empire State Building; N.Y. City's most famous landmark.

Alexander: Hi everyone. Yes, The Empire State Building is known even to those who've never **set foot in** New York.

Lisa: And the **funny thing** is that this building became famous **thanks to** King Kong... you know the popular movie.

Vanessa: Yes, and it's become the most popular tourist destination in New York ever since.

Alexander: That's true. And did you know, that so far it's been visited by over 110 million people?

Vanessa: Wow!

Now answer some questions...

1. Alexander says: "The Empire State Building is known even to those who've never **set foot in** New York." What does "set foot in" mean?

"Set foot in" means to visit a place; so here Alexander wants to emphasize how famous the Empire State Building is, since it is known to people who've never visited N.Y.

2. Lisa says: "And the **funny thing** is that this building became famous thanks to King Kong." What does "funny thing" mean?

"Funny thing" here means strange; so here Lisa means that it's rather strange how the Empire State Building became famous.

3. Lisa says: ... "this building became famous **thanks to** King Kong." What does "thanks to" mean?

"Thanks to" means "because of"; so here Lisa wants to say that the Empire State Building became famous because of King Kong, the movie.

Now listen to the second part of the dialogue.

Part 2

Vanessa: So, Alexander can you **give us some more insight into** its history.

Alexander: Well, everything started in 1930 when construction began. Everyone was **taken by surprise** when 18 months later they saw this huge building

Lisa: What? It took only 18 months!? **No wonder** it's considered to be one of the Seven Wonders of the Modern World.

Vanessa: Yes, but bear in mind that about 3400 workers worked on this project!!

Lisa: Well, that explains it.... Still... the Empire State Building is a great example of art deco, and it takes up a whole block!

Alexander: In fact, it was the world's tallest skyscraper for 41 years.

Now answer some questions...

1. Vanessa says: "Can you **give us some more insight into** its history?" What does "to give some insight into something" mean?

"To give some insight" is to help someone understand something clearly.

2. Alexander says: "Everyone was **taken by surprise** when 18 months later they saw this huge building..." What does "taken by surprise" mean?

"To take someone by surprise" means to surprise someone. So here Alexander wants to emphasize that no one expected this building to be completed in 18 months.

3. *Lisa says:* "**No wonder** it's considered to be one of the Seven Wonders of the Modern World." What does "no wonder" mean?

"No wonder" means "it's not surprising."

Please visit our site at www.hau.gr to find the transcripts, explanations and activities.

GLOSSARY

Bear / keep in mind (verb): to remember a piece of information when you are making a decision or thinking about a matter.

e.g. Bearing in mind how young she is, I thought she did really well.

Construction (noun): the work of building or making something, especially buildings, bridges, etc.

e.g. She works in construction/in the construction industry.

Destination (noun): the place where someone is going or where something is being sent or taken.

e.g. We arrived at our destination tired and hungry.

Huge (adjective): extremely large in size or amount.

e.g. The costs involved in building a spacecraft are huge.

Insight (noun): (the ability to have) a clear, deep and sometimes sudden understanding of a complicated problem or situation.

e.g. an insight into the causes of the Greenhouse Effect

Landmark (noun): a building or place that is easily recognized, especially one which you can use to judge where you are.

e.g. The Rock of Gibraltar is one of Europe's most famous landmarks.

Set foot (in): to go to a place.

e.g. He refuses to set foot in an art gallery.

Take up (phrasal verb): to fill an amount of space or time:

e.g. This desk takes up too much room.

Take by surprise: to surprise someone

e.g. The sudden noise took her by surprise.

Wonder (noun): a feeling of great surprise and admiration caused by seeing or experiencing something that is strange and new:

e.g. The sight of the Grand Canyon stretching out before them filled them with wonder.

ACTIVITIES

Activity 1

Practice using the words in the glossary. Choose the most appropriate word from the glossary to complete the following sentences.

1. His letter never reached its _____.
2. His last three films have all been _____ successes.
3. It was an interesting book, full of fascinating _____ into human relationships.
4. Neil Armstrong was the first man to _____ on the moon
5. Of course, repair work is expensive and you have to _____.
6. The boys gazed in _____ at the shiny red Ferrari.
7. The return of my parents two days from holiday early took me _____.
8. This website is currently under _____.
9. Too much of this report is _____ with out-of-date figures.
10. The Acropolis is a familiar _____ on the skyline of Athens.

Activity 2

Change the following sentences about the Empire State building from active to passive.

1. The Waldorf-Astoria Hotel occupied the block in the late 19th century.
2. People took its name from the nickname for the state of New York.
3. The American Society of Civil Engineers named The Empire State Building as one of the Seven Wonders of the Modern World.
4. The authorities of New York designated the building and its street floor interior landmarks of New York.
5. Harold Helmsley's company owns and manages the building.



Activity 1.

1. destination 2. huge 3. insights 4. set foot 5. bear that in mind 6. wonder 7. by surprise 8. construction 9. taken up 10. landmark

Activity 2.

1. The block was occupied by the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel in the late 19th century.
2. Its name was taken from the nickname for the state of New York.
3. The Empire State Building was named as one of the Seven Wonders of the Modern World by The American Society of Civil Engineers.
4. The building and its street floor interior were designated landmarks of New York.
5. The building is owned and managed by Harold Helmsley's company.