

Sky Boys

By Deborah Hopkinson

Contributed by: Anna Carlson

Summary: Sky Boys is about a boy who lives in Manhattan and watches the Empire State Building built from the ground up. The book describes the building process and all the materials used and work that had to be done. The writing touches on the tone of despair and hope set by the Depression.

Book Information:

Time Period: 1930's

Setting Location: New York

Genre: Historical Fiction

Booktalk: http://nancykeane.com/booktalks/hopkinson_sky.htm

Author Information

<http://www.deborahhopkinson.com/>

This website includes biographical information, and information about her books.

Illustrator Information

<http://www.jamesransome.com/>

Picture Book

Questions:

Where do you think the different men (1-4) get their names?

Why do you think the Empire State Building was built during the Depression?

Why were men in line to be hired to work at the Empire State Building?

Why do you think the Empire State Building was built in such a short amount of time?

What does the boy mean by “just swallow if your ears start to hurt?”

How do you think the Empire State Building made life better during the Depression?

Journal Topic:

Would you want to be a builder working on the Empire State Building? Why or why not?

Vocabulary:

Mr. Raskob: The builder of the Empire State Building.

Mr. Chrysler: Reference to the Chrysler Building, the tallest building in the world until the Empire State Building.

Flatbed: An open truck bed or trailer with no sides, used to carry large objects such as heavy machinery, cars, or houses.

Assembly line: an arrangement of workers, machines and equipment in which the product being assembled passes consecutively from operation to operation until completed.

Manhattan: A portion of New York City.

Pittsburgh: A town in Philadelphia known for producing steel.

Derrick: A kind of crane with a moveable arm for moving and lifting heavy objects.

Girder: A large iron or steel beam used for building the framework of large buildings.

Rivet: A bolt for holding together two plates of metal that is pressed or beaten down when in place.

Mason: A stone worker.

Efficiency: Reaching the highest point of productivity

Silhouette: Shape, figure, shadow

Interdisciplinary Activity

Empire State Building Baseball Cards

Directions: 1) Count students off by fives. There will be five groups: Masons, Carpenters, Electricians, Iron Workers, and Plumbers.

2) Have students create baseball cards for the person/worker that they are.

3) Must draw a person in worker gear, or showing what their job was while constructing the Empire State Building. Must put an actual name on the card (doesn't have to be real name)

4) Have students write salary, ie: \$.15/day, # of children, etc. Let children be creative with thoughts and ideas.

5) Cards must be colored.

Other Works by Deborah Hopkinson:

A Band of Angels

Girl Wonder

A Packet of Seeds

Saving Strawberry Farm

Apples to Oregon

Sweet Clara and the Freedom Quilt

Birdie's Lighthouse

Sweet Land of Liberty

Bluebird Summer

Under the Quilt of Night

Fannie in the Kitchen

Related Titles

Hine, Lewis. Lewis Hine: The Empire State Building Photographs.

Additional Websites:

<http://www.esbnyc.com> - This is the official website of the Empire State Building.

The tourism link has facts, trivia, and history sections. There are also educational and kid links.

http://www.randomhouse.com/kids/pdf/storyhours_feb06_skyboys.pdf - activity sheet

http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_7729/is_200705/ai_n32217010/ - book summary and facts about the Empire State Building.