

Famous Buildings

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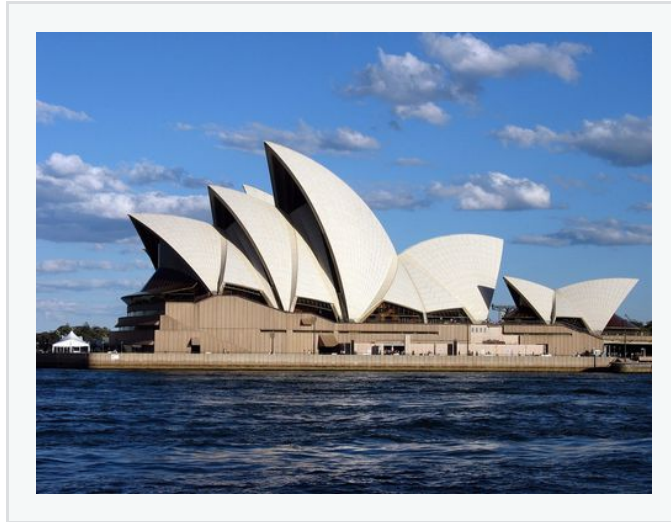
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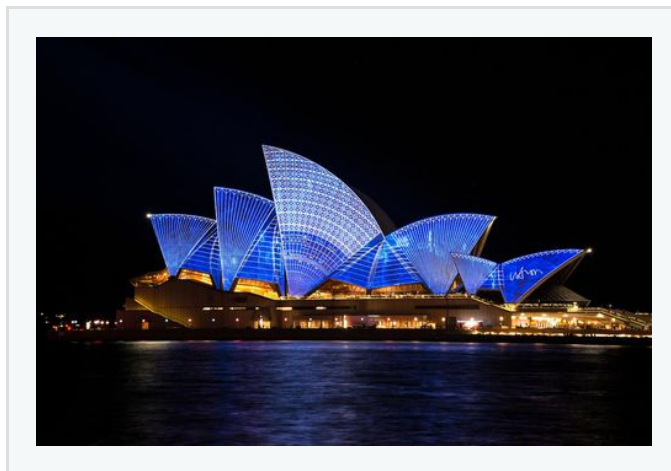
The Sydney Opera House

By ReadWorks



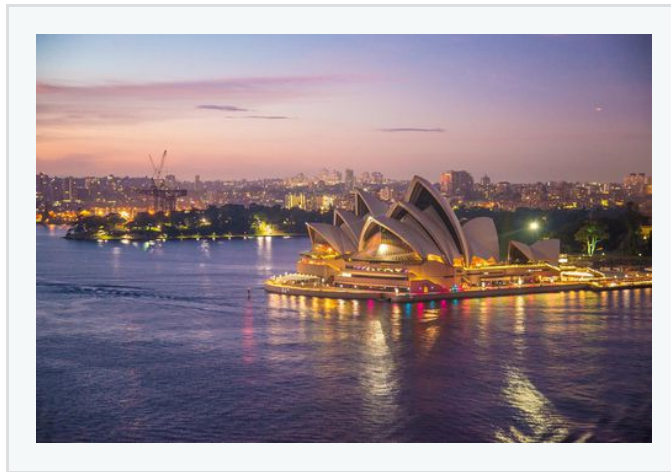
The Sydney Opera House

The Sydney Opera House is one of the most famous buildings in Australia. It is known for its unique architectural style. The main architect, Jørn Utzon, was inspired by the natural world as he designed the building. Utzon wanted the building to highlight the beauty of the sea. So he decided to shape his building's roof like rising boat sails. The white roof is also covered in tiles that look like the patterns found on leaves. These tiles reflect the sunlight. The roof glimmers on a sunny day. Can you guess how many tiles are on the roof of the Opera House? There are over one million tiles! Sometimes images will also be projected onto the roof, as you can see in the picture below. These projections look beautiful at night. They are often used to celebrate a holiday.



Photograph of colorful projection on Sydney Opera House

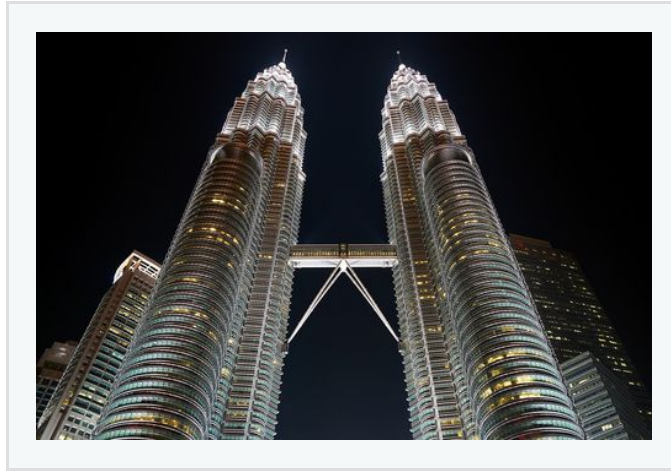
The Opera House took sixteen years to complete. Construction began in 1957 and ended in 1973. It took many years for Utzon and his fellow architects to figure out how to create the roof sails. One of the reasons why it was such a difficult process was that Utzon had to think about the acoustics of the building. Acoustics are the sounds inside a building. The Sydney Opera House needed to have good acoustics since many singers and musicians would be performing there. Thankfully, Utzon and his colleagues solved the problem. Now four million people visit or attend performances at the Sydney Opera House every year! Would you want to attend a performance at the Sydney Opera House?



Photograph of the Sydney Opera House

The Petronas Twin Towers

By ReadWorks



Photograph of the Petronas Towers Kuala Lumpur at night

The Petronas Towers are located in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. They are 1,483 feet tall! Between 1998 and 2003, the Petronas Towers were the tallest buildings in the world. In 2003, a building in Taipei became the tallest building in the world. Architects added a spire to the top of the building in Taipei to make it taller than the Petronas Towers. A spire looks like a pyramid and does not contain rooms or floors. Many people think that spires make buildings more beautiful.

36,910 tons of steel were used to build the two towers. A ton is 2,000 pounds, so the buildings are very heavy. These two steel buildings are connected at the 42nd floor. They are connected by a bridge. People can walk across the bridge and look out over the city. This walk is not recommended for people who are afraid of heights!



Up-close photograph of Petronas Towers Kuala Lumpur's exterior

Even though these towers are 88-stories high, it does not take a long time to get to the top of the towers. In fact, it only takes 90 seconds for the tower elevators to take people from the first floor to the 88th floor!

The towers also have 32,000 windows. Can you imagine the view at the top?

The Petronas Twin Towers were originally built to serve as the headquarters for a gas company called Petronas. The towers now contain many different types of facilities, such as clothing stores, theaters, and museums.



Photograph of the Petronas Towers and the surrounding city of Kuala Lumpur

The Guggenheim Museum Bilbao

By ReadWorks

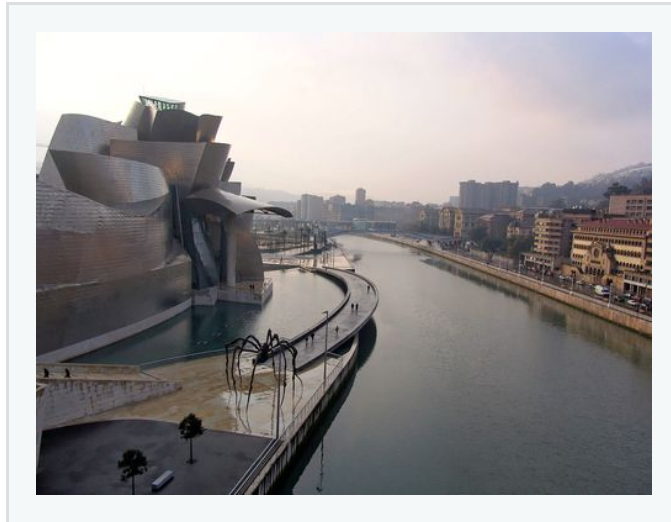


Photograph of the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao

The Guggenheim Museum Bilbao is one of the most famous art museums in the world. It was designed by Frank Gehry, an American architect known his unique architectural designs.

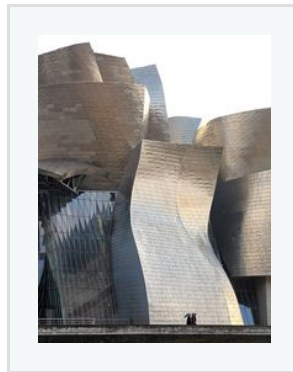
The government of Bilbao, a city in Spain, paid Gehry to design this museum. Bilbao needed money, and they thought that Gehry's building would bring many visitors to Bilbao. These visitors would then help the economy improve. It turns out that the government of Bilbao made a very good decision. Right after Gehry's building was open to the public, the economy improved. Many tourists traveled from around the world to see Gehry's building. These tourists spent money in Bilbao, which helped to bring more jobs to the local people.

Why has this museum been such a popular place for tourists? One reason is that Gehry's building design is one - of - a - kind. Before Gehry had designed the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao, most art museums looked similar. Their designs were simple and traditional. For example, many of these art museums had columns and were built out of stone.



Photograph of the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao with spider sculpture

Gehry's museum did not look like traditional art museums. Instead of building his museum with stone, he used titanium. Like the river it sits on, the museum has a flowing shape. Its curves make it look like a sculpture. Inside of the museum, there are 20 different art galleries. The main source of light for these galleries comes from a large window on the roof of the museum. This window is called a skylight. Gehry designed this skylight to look like a flower. Would you want to visit the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao?



Photograph of Guggenheim Museum Bilbao exterior

Las Lajas Sanctuary

By ReadWorks



Photo Credit: ollie harridge, CC BY 2.0

Photograph of the front of Las Lajas Sanctuary

The Las Lajas Sanctuary is a church in Colombia that is famous for its origin story. The origin story claims that a woman and her daughter were caught in a violent storm in a gorge in 1754. The mother-daughter pair felt more than just the power of the raging storm, however. They felt an invisible force. They believed this force to be the Virgin Mary, the mother of Jesus. Her image appeared to them on the rocks of the gorge. The myth also claims that the daughter, who was both deaf and mute, began to see and hear after this storm.

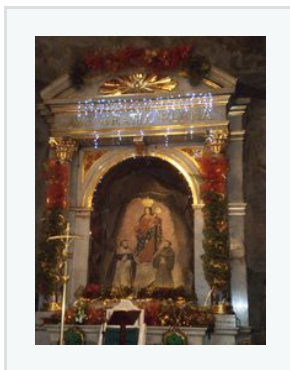


Photo Credit: KANDU, CC-BY 3.0

The image of the Virgin Mary

After people found out about this miracle, they set up a shrine at the location of the image. People would worship the Virgin Mary's picture at this shrine. But some people did not think a shrine was enough to celebrate this miracle. They wanted to build a chapel instead. So one man traveled across Colombia to collect donations for ten years. The myth claims that this man was blind, but when he returned from his trip, he could see again.

The construction of this chapel occurred between 1916 and 1949. While 33 years may seem like a long time, the chapel was built on a bridge that is 130 feet tall! The bridge hangs over the Guaitara River. People who stand on this bridge can watch the waterfall below. Would you want to visit this chapel?



Photograph of Las Lajas Sanctuary

Burj Khalifa

By ReadWorks



Photograph of the Burj Khalifa

The Burj Khalifa is located in Dubai. It is the tallest building in the world. Standing at 2,716.5 feet, the Burj Khalifa contains over 160 stories. On these stories there are hotels, luxury apartments, restaurants, and more. It was constructed between 2004 and 2010, which is a short time considering how tall this building is.

As they were constructing the Burj Khalifa, engineers conducted many tests to see how the building dealt with wind. Air pressure and temperature changes with elevation. So the engineers also conducted tests to see how the building reacted to these changes. Because many people were expected to visit and live inside the Burj Khalifa, engineers spent years trying to make the building as safe as possible.



Photo Credit: Muhammad Mahdi Karim, CC BY-SA 2.5

Photograph of the Hymenocallis flower

In addition to making sure that the structure was safe, engineers wanted the building to be beautiful. In fact, they modeled the building after a flower from the local area. It is called the Hymenocallis flower. Its petals form Y-shapes. Like the flower, Burj Khalifa has a Y-shaped design. Do you think that the Burj Khalifa looks like the Hymenocallis flower?

Inside of the Burj Khalifa, there are more than 1,000 pieces of artwork. Many of the pieces are dedicated to world peace. Some of these pieces also show the importance of collaboration between different countries and cultures.



Photograph of the Burj Khalifa at night

Bibliotheca Alexandria

By ReadWorks

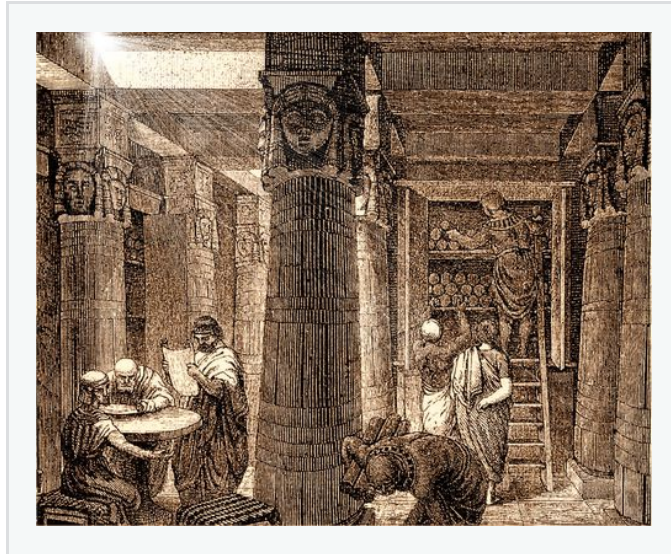


Photo Credit: Wikimedia, CC BY-SA 4.0

Illustration of scholars studying in the Library of Alexandria

The Library of Alexandria was once the most important learning institution of the ancient world. It was located on a harbor in Egypt. Many people traded along the harbor so the library was visited by people from different countries and cultures. Many famous thinkers studied at the Library of Alexandria, including Euclid. Euclid was a renowned mathematician famous for his contributions to geometry.

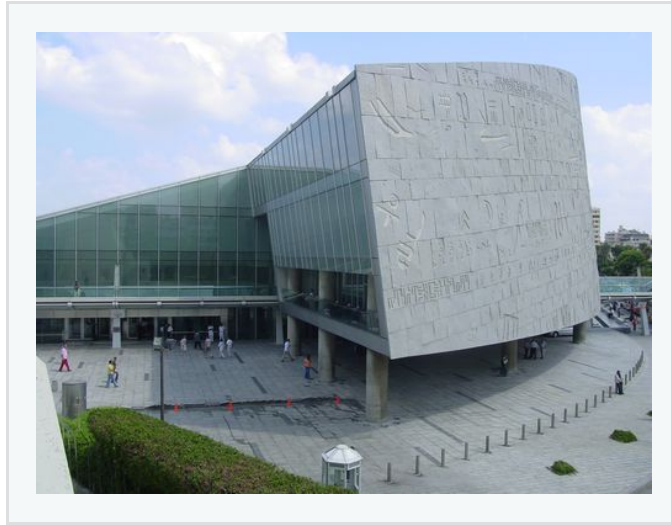
It is no surprise that ancient scholars would have visited this library. It housed thousands of important scrolls and books. At a time before computers and printing, people had to travel to read these scrolls. It was, therefore, helpful to have so many important scrolls in one place.

Unfortunately, the library did not last forever. While no one knows exactly what happened, most people believe that Julius Caesar had his army set it on fire. Julius Caesar was the dictator of the Roman Republic.

In 2002, a new library was opened to the public. It is called the Bibliotheca Alexandria and it is a revival of the Library of Alexandria. The new library shares the same purpose as the original library. Like the Library of Alexandria, the new library is a place of learning. The new library also sits along the same harbor as the Library of Alexandria once did. Its architecture is far from ancient, however.

It is shaped like a tilting circle, which is a very modern design.

Would you want to visit the Bibliotheca Alexandria?



Photograph of the Bibliotheca Alexandria plaza



Photo Credit: David Stanley, CC BY 2.0

Photograph of the Bibliotheca Alexandria plaza