

Lesson: Five of the world's “ugliest” buildings!

This is a quick, easy, ready-to-go lesson that will inspire your students. It'll also give them opportunities to improve their speaking, listening, reading and writing skills. This lesson comes with Teacher's Notes, a Resource Sheet, a PDF of the lesson, and an audio file. Simply follow the lesson ideas for a fantastic class that'll really motivate your students.

1 Warm-up

Show students this video from YouTube on ugly buildings and ask them to vote on the worst one:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fLvOFB1hgFI>

Or, search YouTube for “25 Ugliest Buildings In The World That You Have To See To Believe”, or simply write “ugly buildings” and see what comes up.

2 Lesson activities

Go through the activities for the lesson on the sheet **at the end of this document**: the Pre-reading, Reading I and Reading II activities.

3 Follow-up activities

Retell it!

Assign a paragraph (or two, etc.) to each student. Students have a minute or two to try to remember the text. When they're ready, students try to recount the information, using as much of the language as possible. Or, ask for volunteers to retell the information, using as much of the original language as possible (or even by heart if they can).

Discussion: **RESOURCE SHEET**

Students have a discussion about architecture. Print off the questions on the Resource Sheet (see **the end of this document**) for students to ask in pairs; or ask them to students in general as part of a class activity. Remind students that they can answer any questions they like (and in any order), and that the objective of these questions is to get them talking. If a question appears a bit “personal”, they can just ignore it or invent the answer.

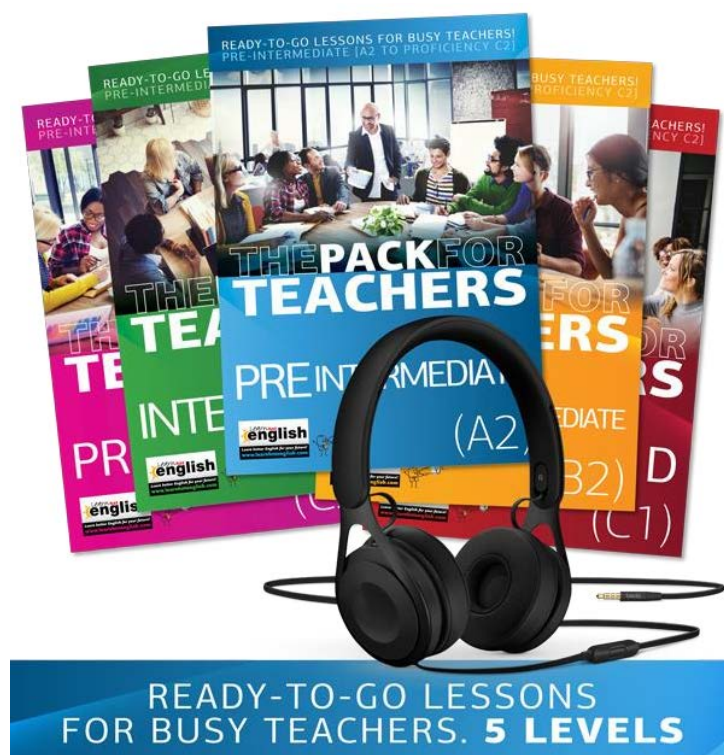


Dialogue

In pairs, students write up notes for a dialogue between a reporter and someone connected to one of the buildings in the article in this lesson (the architect, owner, tenant, for example). Tell your students to make the dialogue as funny, silly or serious as they like. When they're ready, ask for volunteers to act out their dialogues (from memory or by using notes, not reading it out word-for-word). Other students listen and vote on the best ones.

Design & presentation

Students design a new building. Then, they write notes for a one- or two-minute presentation on it, explaining what it is, what it's called, what it's for, how it's going to be built, etc. When they're ready, ask for volunteers to give their presentations (using notes, not reading it out word-for-word). Other students vote on the most interesting ones.



READY-TO-GO LESSONS
FOR BUSY TEACHERS. 5 LEVELS

Resource Sheet

Discussion: buildings & architecture

Ask and answer the questions in pairs. You can answer any questions you like (and in any order). Remember, the aim is to practise speaking – what you say doesn't really matter, it's how you say it! So, speak as much as you can. **NO ONE WORD ANSWERS!**

- What are some of the biggest buildings in your town or city? What are they for?
- What are some of your favourite buildings in your town or city?
- What are some of your favourite buildings in your country or the world?
- Are there any ugly buildings in your town or city? What are they? What are they used for?
- What makes a building beautiful or ugly in your opinion?
- What are some of the best buildings you've visited or seen? Why did you like them?
- What kind of architecture do you like?
- What do you like or dislike about the following types of architecture: modern, gothic, art deco, Romanesque, Baroque, Bauhaus, Neo-classical...?
- What kinds of materials do you like for buildings?
- How would you describe the main styles of architecture in your country?
- What kinds of houses should the government construct for people to live in? Why?
- What makes a good interior for a restaurant, office, home, classroom, etc.?
- Do you think that old buildings are more beautiful than new ones? Why? Why not?
- What's your favourite room in your house? Why?
- What historical buildings are there in your country?
- What would your dream house be like?
- What are some of the most unusual buildings or constructions you've visited or seen?
- What about the scariest ones? Why were they scary?



Five of the world's "ugliest" buildings

Answers on page 44

1 Pre-reading

Look at the pictures of the buildings. Which one is the ugliest? Why?

2 Reading I

Read the article once. Which building is the most unusual? Why?

3 Reading II

Read the article again. Then, write the name of a building next to each statement.

1. Construction work stopped for a number of years due to a lack of funds.
2. It's an office block that was opened in the 1990s.
3. It's based on the design of an older building.
4. Some believe that it's had a negative effect on the city skyline.
5. It stands out because there's a large hole in it.

4 Language focus

Phrasal verb particles

Look at the extract from the article on this page, "...The tower, which went up in the 1950s, is..." The writer has used a phrasal verb ("go up"). Complete the following sentences with the correct particles.

1. The handles on the building rise _____ above the roof.
2. The building doesn't fit _____ with the surrounding architecture.
3. We think it takes _____ too much space. It should be smaller.

What makes a building ugly? Everyone's got their own opinion, so it's hard to say. For example, if you're a fan of modern architecture, you may like many buildings that other people can't stand. However, there are some buildings that seem to appear regularly on lists of the world's worst architecture. Here are five of them.

1 The Torre Velasca



The Torre Velasca in Milan is in the centre of Milan (Italy) near the cathedral, between Corso di Porta Romana and via Larga. The tower, which went up in the 1950s, is about 100 metres tall and has both residential and commercial properties in it. It looks as if someone has put a square Lego brick on top of a tall rectangular one. However, the design is actually a modern representation of a traditional Lombard castle, where the lower parts were narrower than the upper parts. As a result, although many hate the tower, others see it as a link between Milan's past and present.

2 The Mirador Building



Blanca Lleó. The building, which is a block of flats, opened in 2005, and includes a communal roof terrace. Its most distinctive feature is a large rectangular hole in the upper part.

3 The Ryugyong Hotel

The 105-storey Ryugyong Hotel is in

Pyongyang (North Korea). It looks a bit like an enormous rocket. Work started on the building in 1987, but then stopped in 1992 when money ran out. Construction started again in 2008 when the windows were installed. The exterior was finally finished in 2011. If you ever find yourself in Pyongyang, you know where to stay.



4 The Prague TV Tower

The Prague TV tower is in Prague (the capital of the Czech Republic). It stands 216 metres high and looks a bit like a tall, thin space ship. There's a revolving restaurant on the top providing amazing views of the city skyline, which many feel has been ruined by the tower! Prague is famous for its architectural beauty, so when the tower was put up in 1985 by architect Václav Aulický and structural engineer Jirí Kozák, many felt it didn't fit in.



5 The Longaberger Basket Company



The Longaberger Basket Company building is in Newark, Ohio (USA). The office block was opened in 1997 and looks like a very large basket. It's got seven floors and two handles which rise up above the roof. The handles weigh about 150 tons. It may not be the ugliest building in the world but it's certainly one of the most unusual.

It's hard to say what's ugly in terms of architecture. However, although some people don't like these buildings, they're all considerably more interesting than a typical 1960s London block of flats! 🍷