

Building a Skyscraper

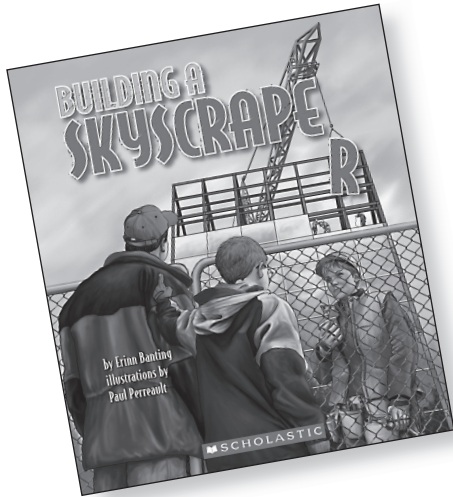
Written by *Erinn Banting*

Illustrated by *Paul Perreault*

Text Type: Info-fiction: Description — Account

Guided Reading Level: N

Summary: This account, told through a young boy's eyes as he walks to school, tells in detail the stages of building a skyscraper.



Text Features

- ▶ table of contents

Visual Literacy

- ▶ environmental print
- ▶ labels and captions

Text Supports

- ▶ strong text support through diagrams, photographs, and illustrations

Possible Text Challenges

- ▶ high degree of technical vocabulary

First Session (pages 4-11)

Reading Strategies

Comprehension

- ▶ sequencing
- ▶ analyzing

Working with Words

- ▶ using photographs, drawings, and diagrams to help solve unfamiliar words
- ▶ using word parts to read multi-syllabic and compound words

Assessment Opportunities

Note each student's ability to:

- ▶ understand the sequence of steps in building a skyscraper
- ▶ analyze: identify the equipment used and the type of work required at each stage
- ▶ identify the ways safety is addressed
- ▶ use the chunking strategy to read multi-syllabic words
- ▶ use the labels, captions, and pictures to assist in reading unfamiliar words

Oral Language Opportunities

- ▶ discussing with a partner or a small group
- ▶ oral summary report of a construction phase
- ▶ asking and responding to questions



BEFORE READING

Making connections: text to self

Activating and Building Prior Knowledge

Distribute the books, and look at the title and picture on the front cover. Ask students if they know what a skyscraper is and discuss. If they are unfamiliar with the word, ask, *What two smaller words can you find in the word skyscraper?* Ask, *If something can “scrape the sky,” what do you think that tells you about it?* Ask them if they have ever looked at a construction site and watched what was happening there. Let them share their experiences. Have them look at the photos on the back cover and speculate about what is happening in each photo. Ask, *Do you think you might find out about what’s happening in these photos when you read the book?* Explain that they are going to learn about all the stages involved in building a skyscraper. To activate prior knowledge, have students provide ideas to complete a chart listing the tools and materials they think will be used in building a skyscraper.

Predicting

Have students turn to the table of contents and discuss the titles of the chapters, then make predictions about what part of the building each one might describe.

Analyzing

Have students look at the illustrations on pages 2–3. Ask what is happening in each picture. Ask, *Do you think the last picture in the bottom corner of page 3 shows you the final building—or do you think there might still be other jobs to do to complete it? What do you think those jobs might be?*

Visual literacy

Overcoming Text Challenges

Do a book walk, pointing out the photos, captions, and labels. On pages 6–7, point out that the labels help students see what each machine looks like. Explain that the captions give information about the photos, diagrams, or illustrations. Remind students that the pictures may help them figure out “tricky” words.

Word solving and building

It may be helpful to build a word wall or pocket chart list of “building” vocabulary to use throughout the reading of the book. You may wish to start with any words students already know, then add the ones that are labelled on page 7.

You may wish to bring in some plastic toy replicas of some of the machines shown on page 7. This would be particularly helpful to ESL students and others who might have trouble with the vocabulary. The tactile experience of handling the toys and seeing what kinds of task they can do will be helpful to all students.

ESL Note: To avoid intimidating ESL students with the difficult vocabulary in the environmental print on page 5, ask them to talk about construction signs they might have seen in their own country. Lead them to understand that these signs are simply ensuring the safety of workers. Tell them that they do not need to worry about what the signs say; they simply need to understand their purpose. To further assist ESL students with the vocabulary in this selection, have them work with a partner to match up the construction vocabulary with the labels in the pictures.

Sequencing

Setting a Purpose

Tell students they will be reading pages 4–11 in this session. Ask them to notice the different stages of building they learn about as they read.



DURING READING

Ask students to read the text independently, thinking about the purpose for reading.

Encourage students to read slowly and carefully to make sure they understand the vocabulary on each page before moving on. Observe and listen to students as they read, assisting them with word-solving strategies and noting their use of text features to read unfamiliar words, e.g., captions, labels, diagrams, sidebars, illustrations. Remind them to use “chunking” for figuring out multi-syllabic or compound words. As well, assist them with vocabulary, punctuation, and comprehension queries. Offer prompts, such as, *Have you seen these types of machines in your neighbourhood? If so, do you know what were they building? Were they in the early stages of building, similar to what’s pictured on pages 4–11?*

Encourage students who finish early to reread pages 4–11 independently or with a partner. After their reading, they can tell their partner the stages in construction they have read about.

ESL Note: Partner ESL students in the earlier stages of English acquisition with more advanced students who can read to them.



AFTER READING

Sequencing

Write the first four chapter titles across the board or on four pieces of chart paper: “Introduction,” “Deep Underground,” “From the Bottom to the Top,” and “The Skeleton.” Have students refer to each chapter and name at least one construction activity for each of these building stages. As you record the information, write in note form to model this way of reporting facts. Ask, *What if the book had started with Chapter 4? How do you think that would have worked?*

Analyzing

Ask, *What measures were taken to ensure the workers’ safety? What’s the purpose of a hard hat? What’s the purpose of a safety harness?*

Making connections: text to self

Ask, *Are there things that you do in your everyday life to make sure you stay safe? In what kinds of situations do you need special equipment to keep you safe?*

Word solving and building/ language predictability

Discuss the technical vocabulary to ensure understanding, and record the words if using a Word Wall or pocket chart vocabulary cards. Pay particular attention to the labels in the photographs. Ensure that students identify some of the equipment mentioned in the text.

Point out a student who you noticed was using a particular strategy such as chunking, or using a picture to understand the meaning of a word. For

example, I noticed Bilaal puzzling over some of the words on page 10. Then he looked at the illustrations and realized what girders and columns are. He knew the word column, because it's a word we use when we talk about charts and tables. It's used differently here, but Bilaal was able to figure out the new meaning.

Second Session (pages 12–20)

Reading Strategies

Comprehension

- ▶ sequencing
- ▶ analyzing

Working with Words

- ▶ using photographs, drawings, and diagrams to help solve unfamiliar words
- ▶ using word parts to read multi-syllabic and compound words

Assessment Opportunities

Note each student's ability to:

- ▶ understand the sequence of steps in building a skyscraper
- ▶ analyze: identify the equipment used and the type of work required at each stage
- ▶ identify the ways safety is addressed
- ▶ use the chunking strategy to read multi-syllabic words
- ▶ use labels, captions, and pictures to assist in reading unfamiliar words

Oral Language Opportunities

- ▶ discussing with a partner



BEFORE READING

Sequencing

Making connections: text to world/analyzing

Word solving and building/ language predictability

Activating and Building Prior Knowledge

Ask students to recall the construction stages from the previous reading. Add more information to the chart started in the previous lesson. Were students' predictions correct about what the chapters would describe?

Say, *On page 6, you learned that skyscrapers are built deep into the ground. Then ask, Why do you think this is? Does this book tell you? Where does it explain about the part that is underground? Is your house or apartment building built down into the ground? Can you guess why?*

Overcoming Text Challenges

Introduce any new vocabulary you think may pose a challenge for some students (e.g., *fastening, curtain, concrete, plumbing, electricians, electricity*). Encourage students to look for words they know within the longer words, e.g., *fasten, plumb, electric*.

Discuss any challenging words students came across, and what strategies they used to read unfamiliar words or understand vocabulary. Remind them to watch for unfamiliar words that are explained in the text, e.g., *flexible* on page 12, *welding* on page 13, *plumbing* on page 16.

ESL Note: Write some of the vocabulary from the story on word cards for students to use to form sentences.

Analyzing

Setting a Purpose

Ask students to pay special attention to the features that will make the building safe and comfortable for the people who will be working in it.

Ask students to read the text independently, thinking about the purpose for their reading.



DURING READING

Observe and listen to students as they read, assisting them with word-solving strategies and noting their use of text features to read unfamiliar words, e.g., captions, labels, diagrams, sidebars, illustrations. Remind them to use chunking for figuring out multi-syllabic or compound words. As well, assist them with vocabulary, punctuation, and comprehension queries. Offer prompts, such as, *Why do you think the boy was so interested in the construction of the building?*

Encourage students who finish early to reread the entire book independently or with a partner. Have them discuss with a partner what they learned about the features that will make the building safe and comfortable.



AFTER READING

Analyzing

Ask, *What safety measures were in place to make sure the workers were safe at their jobs? What features make the building safe and comfortable for the people who will be working there?*

Sequencing/synthesizing

Add any new information to the class chart of building stages. You may wish to have students use the chart to prepare a short summary in point form. Have them organize the chart in two columns headed “Outside the building” and “Inside the building.”

Word solving and building

Ask students to share examples of any word-solving strategies they used to read unfamiliar words.

Rereadings

Provide opportunities for each student to reread the book independently or with a partner.

Focused Follow-up

The following activities are optional. Choose those that best meet the needs of your students.

Reading Captions

Sequencing

Have students reread the captions for each photo or drawing to review the stages of construction. Discuss, allowing time for students to ask questions or respond to what they have learned.

Timeline for Building a Skyscraper

Sequencing

Using the BLM “Timeline for Building a Skyscraper,” have students construct a timeline showing the sequence of the construction of the skyscraper. Alternatively, provide students with a photocopy of the stages from pages 2–3. Have them cut out and place pictures on a large piece of paper in the correct order, allowing room underneath to print the key features for each stage.

Taking on a Role

Analyzing/synthesizing

After brainstorming a list of all the different workers on the site, print the names on individual cards. Let students choose a card for their role. Have them make a list of the activities their worker does on the job, noting the safety equipment and tools they use. Students can present their findings as an oral report, accompanied by a picture or poster of their person with their tools and safety equipment.

Safety Posters

Synthesizing

Provide large poster-sized paper. Ask students to create a poster with pictures of all the safety features from the book. Remind them to use the illustrations, photos, and text for ideas. Have them come up with a safety message for their poster.

What Makes It Safe?

Analyzing

Using the BLM “What Makes It Safe?,” have students analyze various construction-related situations and situations they may have discussed in class. On the line beneath each drawing, ask students to write what makes each situation safe.

Compound Word Search

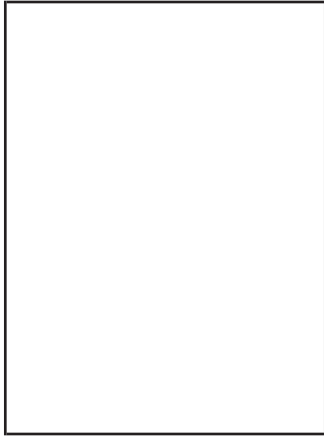
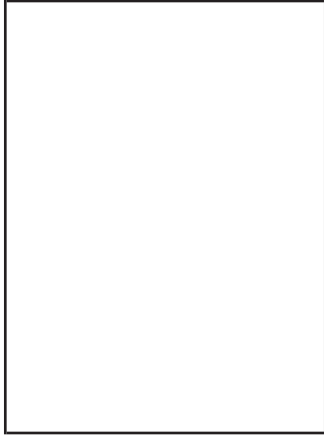
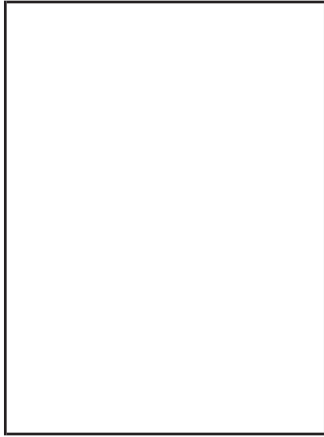
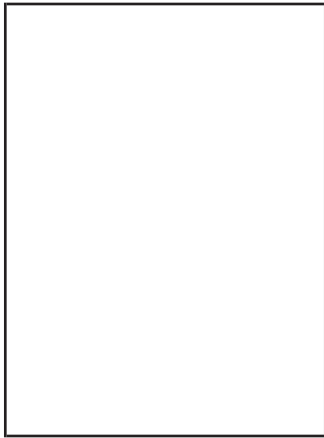
Word solving and building

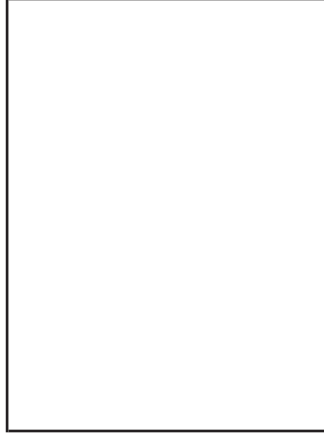
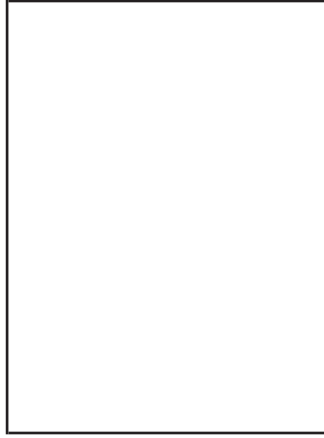
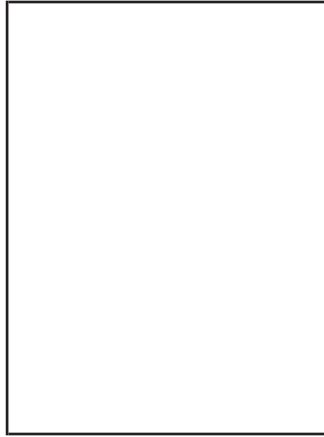
Have students search through the text to find as many compound words as they can, showing the word in two parts.

Timeline for Building a Skyscraper

Name: _____

In the boxes, draw and name each stage, then write one or two main points about each stage of construction on the lines beneath the boxes.





What Makes It Safe?

Name: _____

