

# A TEACHING GUIDE

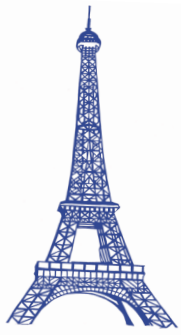
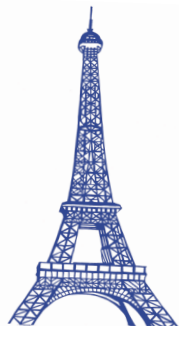
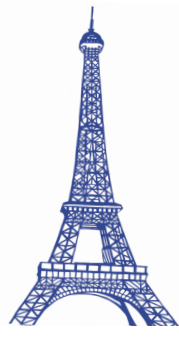
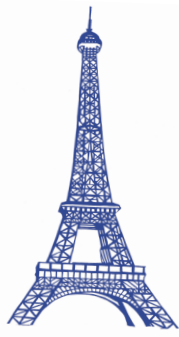
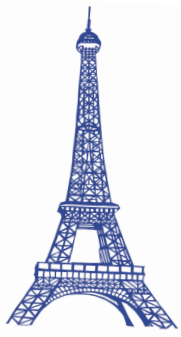
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# *Eiffel's* FOR YOUNG PEOPLE *Tower*

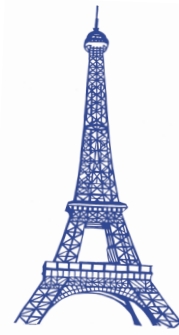


Eiffel drawn as his tower in the June 29, 1889, issue of *Punch*  
Source: Library of Congress

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ADAPTED BY REBECCA STEFOFF



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*Eiffel's Tower for Young People*

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 \$17.95 | 9781609809171 | Trade Paperback, 368 pages  
 \$40.00 | 9781609809058 | Hardcover, 368 pages

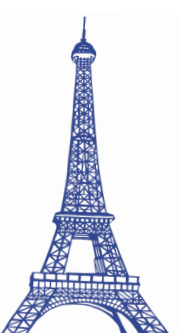
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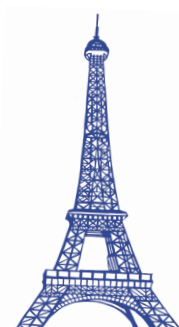
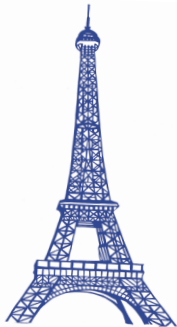
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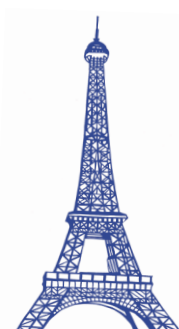
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## PURPOSE:

This curriculum guide provides a variety of progressive classroom approaches—reading strategies, discussion questions, explorations, projects, and extensions—to further develop the reader's understanding of historical, social, and cultural themes within *Eiffel's Tower for Young People*.

## SUMMARY:

*Eiffel's Tower for Young People* is a story about Gustave Eiffel's determination to design, build, and complete the Eiffel Tower in time for France's 1889 World's Fair, and the daunting challenges he faced—limited financial funding, technological issues, labor disputes, public ridicule and suspicion. Each chapter features a recurring cast of international characters including visual and performance artists, inventors, businessmen, politicians, journalists, trendsetters, and royalty who play important roles in this historic moment in time. Close attention is paid to the French and the Americans, including master engineer Gustave Eiffel, inventor Thomas Edison, artist Rosa Bonheur, sharpshooter Annie Oakley, and showman Buffalo Bill. The author weaves together their personal histories, experiences, and accomplishments that made the World's Fair an international success and a symbol of modernity and national pride on the world stage.

*Eiffel's Tower for Young People* can help to illuminate units in Science, Technology, and Engineering as well as in Social Studies and the Language Arts. With its close focus on the design challenges of the Eiffel Tower, the text makes natural connections to physical science (structure and properties of matter), earth and space science (human impacts on the environment), and engineering design (defining engineering problems). Structured in narrative non-fiction form, this text also draws connections to such units in history, world cultures, art, and geography as students experience an informational text that provides biographical sketches of French and American change-makers involved in the 1889 World's Fair, and recounts key historical events that defined the era.

## PRIMING THE PUMP

### 1. Preparing the Classroom

To trigger student curiosity about Paris and the 1880s, create space on classroom walls (or a nearby hallway) to display related images, artifacts, and words. *Eiffel's Tower for Young People* contains a number of images that can be duplicated for this purpose. For example, consider posting:

- Images of Paris landmarks, including the Eiffel Tower, Arc de Triomphe, Louvre, Notre Dame Cathedral, Tuileries Garden, Sacre Coeur Basilica, Avenue des Champs Elysees, River Seine.
- French words and expressions, including liberté, égalité, fraternité, république, technologie, élégance, la joie de vivre, je viens, la Belle Époque, Exposition Universelle.
- Images of 19th century inventions and developments, including: telegraph, locomotive, telephone, incandescent light bulb, bicycle, kinoscope, phonograph, steam engine.
- Political world map of the 19th century highlighting two world capitals, Paris, France and Washington, D.C., USA.
- Tricolor flag of France and the Stars and Stripes of the U.S. flag from 1889 (showing 13 stripes and 42 stars).

### 2. Triggering Student Collaboration and Prior Understandings

**Historical Content:** Before beginning *Eiffel's Tower for Young People*, explore your students' prior understanding about related concepts, places, time periods, and national icons. On a poster, place key terms, one per poster, and place them on a hallway wall or around the classroom. Here is a sample of ideas: "Iconic Steel Structure," "An International Event," "American and European Artists," "France," "1889," "Changing the Skyline," "Triumph of Technology," "Buffalo Bill and the Wild West Show," "Technical Challenges," and "19th Century Inventions". Working in teams, students have one minute to brainstorm ideas/questions/drawings/responses related to the poster's label. Each team writes something on each poster they encounter. After one minute, all teams then travel to another poster and engage in a new brainstorming session with their partner about that poster's specific term. Students are working quickly, collaborating without making judgments, writing down notes on what they know or think they know. They can add on or question a previous team's responses. Depending on time constraints and student interest, teams could brainstorm at four–five posters in total. Periodically, students could update these posters based on their continued reading of the book. This serves as an informal, collective instrument to document the class's developing familiarity with and understanding of key concepts related to this text.

**Genre Familiarity:** What is nonfiction? How does this genre compare to fiction? Have the class brainstorm on the full range of nonfiction texts that they encounter on a regular basis (e.g., directions, street signs, shopping lists, textbooks, news articles...). *Eiffel's Tower for Young People* can be classified in several ways. It is a nonfiction, historical text as it is based on actual events that happened in the past. It is also an informational text as it seeks to inform the reader about the world. Lastly, it is also considered an example of "narrative nonfiction" as it weaves factual matter within a storytelling format.

### 3. Pre-reading Strategies

—Have students take time to explore and become familiar with the “text features”—table of contents, character list, chapter titles, index, glossary, sidebars, captions, photographs, captions, primary documents—within this informational text. How can these elements help the reader?

—*Eiffel's Tower for Young People* is adapted by Rebecca Steffoff from the original book, *Eiffel's Tower*, by Jill Jonnes. What does it mean when something is adapted from an original work? What other books has Rebecca Steffoff adapted for young readers? Explore her website at: [www.rebeccasteffoff.com](http://www.rebeccasteffoff.com).

### 4. Multiple entry points for reading the text

1. **Design a time line:** *Eiffel's Tower for Young People* is written chronologically and explores two interrelated events in Paris: the design and construction of the Eiffel Tower and the opening of the 1889 World's Fair (“Exposition Universelle”). Students could use the text to create a time line noting pivotal events that occurred with the development of both events. Students could then add to this time line by charting major events that were happening in other places around the world—noting inventions, social and technological developments, etc.

2. **Create character lists:** Each chapter features recurring characters who were connected in some way to the 1889 World's Fair. Create a graphic organizer that will help students keep track of the individuals/events that they will encounter in this text. They could then add to this page when they encounter the character/event again in a subsequent chapter.

3. **Display notable quotes:** On a classroom wall, have students post opinions and impressions of the Eiffel Tower taken from the book. These could be quotations from people who either appreciated his design or were critical of it.

4. **Perspective writing:** Have students explore one of the photographs that is included in the text. Have them study the image and select one person in the photograph. Students will then write from that person's point of view in a form of their choosing.



## END-OF-BOOK DISCUSSIONS

Depending upon your time and structure, these questions can be explored in various settings (full class, small group, triad). You may also assign individuals different roles in these discussions as: clarifier, note-taker, timekeeper, presenter.

1. In the Exposition Universelle, France and the United States were both allies and rivals. Explore the ways that both countries worked to make their specific mark on both the Eiffel Tower and at this remarkable World's Fair. Who were the major figures and events that showcased French talent? American talent?
2. *Eiffel's Tower for Young People* integrates elements of 19<sup>th</sup>-century history, culture, and society. How does this help the reader to better understand and appreciate the design and construction of the Eiffel Tower? Of the Exposition Universelle?
3. Gustave Eiffel faced many challenges in his life. During the 22 months that it took for him to construct this tower, he faced enormous technical issues, financial concerns, labor problems, and public opposition. His work with the Panama Canal Company resulted in a criminal trial. Discuss the challenges he faced in life and how he persevered.
4. What is the purpose of a World's Fair? Is it a showcase? A celebration? A competition? Why was the 1889 World's Fair important to France? When and where is the next World's Fair (also called "World Expo," "Universal Exposition," "International Exposition")?
5. How did the Wild West Show both represent and misrepresent the United States in the 1889 Exposition Universelle? In what ways were certain individuals (e.g., Annie Oakley, Buffalo Bill, and also Thomas Edison) and groups (Sioux involved in the Wild West show) informal cultural ambassadors at the 1889 Exposition? In other words, how did their presence and performances represent their country?
6. Discuss the role of the Native Americans who were part of the Wild West Show. To what extent were they treated as "celebrities"? As "exotic beings"? Why did some Sioux decide to return back to the U.S.? Why was the Bureau of Indian Affairs concerned about the Sioux's involvement in the Wild West Show?
7. What challenges did General Rush Hawkins face in showcasing American artists at the Exposition Universelle?
8. If the Eiffel Tower is the national symbol of France, what is the national symbol of the United States—the Washington Monument? The Statue of Liberty? If the Eiffel Tower communicates strength and elegance, what values do American national symbols communicate?
9. What special events in the world today help to develop cross-cultural dialogue and bring together diverse groups of people from around the world such as artists, engineers, inventors, scientists, publishers, journalists, and performers?

## EXPLORATIONS

Students might be interested in the opportunity to delve deeper into a particular area within the text. The following provides specific lines of inquiry.

1. Gustave Eiffel was born in a middle class family, not from the wealthy, elite echelons of French society. After college, he was expected to run his uncle's vinegar and paint factory. What happened? How did he eventually become a self-made millionaire and the creator of one of the world's most famous structures? Create a time line of the pivotal events in his life.
2. Gustave Eiffel was well prepared to design and build the Eiffel Tower in 1889. Over the years as an engineer, he had designed a number of different steel structures in Europe and all over the world (Indochina, Russia, Peru). He also designed the interior frame of the Statue of Liberty! Explore his various designs of train stations, dome observatories, department stores, churches, and bridges. Create a gallery display of his work.
3. Otis Brothers and Company were well equipped to build the elevator for the second and third platform of the Eiffel Tower. They had just completed building an elevator for the Washington Monument in Washington, D.C.! Explore their work and the various projects this company engaged in internationally.
4. One of the popular attractions of the Exposition Universelle, was the various modes of transportation at the fair. Explore the various pavilions at the fair, noting elevators at the Eiffel Tower, Decauville steam locomotive, rickshaw, Wild West stage coach, moving sidewalk in the Galerie des Machines.
5. Explore the two-minute video on the Eiffel Tower at History Channel's website: [www.history.com/topics/landmarks/eiffel-tower](http://www.history.com/topics/landmarks/eiffel-tower). This video shows intriguing facts about the Eiffel Tower through engaging visuals and lively music. Some of the topics include structure's weight, reaction to climate, comparison to other landmarks.
6. Even though the French government celebrated the visit of every royal visitor that arrived at the Exposition Universelle in 1889, most of the European rulers and royals snubbed this event. Why?
7. Explore archival articles about the 1889 Exposition Universelle in both the New York Tribune and the Paris Herald. Use the Library of Congress website to locate these artifacts: [www.loc.gov](http://www.loc.gov).
8. Explore the different ways that artists (e.g., Paul Signac, Henri Rivière) and political cartoonists have painted the Eiffel Tower since its construction.
9. Along with being the entranceway to the 1889 Exposition Universelle and an enduring French landmark, the Eiffel Tower has also influenced scientific discoveries. Explore.
10. France and the United States have a similar history; both had revolutions in the quest for independence (U.S. in 1776, France in 1789). Explore how these two countries continue to share common bonds.



## PROJECT-BASED WORK

These long-term projects may be done in school or at home. These projects might take between two–three weeks to complete. Consider assigning informal reports that students will write on an ongoing basis about their progress, challenges, and next steps.

- 1. Research and Enact:** At the beginning of *Eiffel's Tower for Young People* there is a list of over 20 notable individuals who had important connections to the 1889 Exposition Universelle in Paris. Working in teams or on their own, have students conduct research on a particular individual. As a culminating event, the students could then enact their specific character “live” or on video/audio as a way to showcase key facts that they have discovered.
- 2. An International Happening:** Research those who travelled near and far to attend and participate in Paris's 1889 Exposition Universelle. On a world map, post pins on those countries that sent official representatives to Paris in 1889. Using another color, post pins from those nations who participated in particular pavilions and cultural events (e.g., Algeria, Bulgaria, Egypt, Java, and more).
- 3. Classroom Transformation, World's Fair:** Transform the classroom to a World's Fair by exploring how it was done in 1889. Discuss the pavilions that could be part of this event. As a frame of reference, explore such pavilions as Art Show, History of Habitation, Gallery of Machines, American Corn Palace, Palace of Food Products, Educational Exhibits, Forestry Pavilion, Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show. Don't forget to include publicity stunts. Divide the class into groups to help organize this happening. Remember such tasks as invitations, decorative banners, and souvenirs for visitors.
- 4. Artistic Energy:** Space was limited and competition was fierce for artists to show their work at the French Universal Exposition. Explore the paintings that were selected for the official exhibitions and those that were on informal display at Monsieur Volpini's Café des Beaux-Arts. Have students create a visually engaging project that displays some of these paintings (e.g., create a gallery of images, design a power point) and text that highlights key biographical information from a particular artist.
- 5. Gilded Age: 1870s – early 1900s:** The 1889 Exposition Universelle was in the historical era commonly known as the “Gilded Age.” Gilding refers to the practice of painting a thin layer of gold over worthless metal. In Europe and the U.S. few people built immense fortunes; many lived in poverty. Explore a particular social reform movement during this time period that helped the average citizen: workers' rights, women's suffrage, ending child labor, settlement houses. Students could then “teach” the class about their research findings.

## EXTENSIONS

1. **Material Culture:** While *Eiffel's Tower for Young People* is set in Paris, France, the text provides a context for understanding 19<sup>th</sup>-century life in the United States as well. Create a center that explores everyday objects from this time period. Include such items as a political map of the U.S. in 1889 (showing states, territories), U.S flag from 1889 (showing 13 stripes and 42 stars), artifacts (or images), telegraph, locomotive, telephone, incandescent light bulb, bicycle, kinoscope, phonograph, steam engine. . . You can also include popular music and literature from that time frame.
2. **Photography in the 1880s:** Have students take notice of the images provided in *Eiffel's Tower for Young People*. What decisions did the photographer take with how he/she took the shot: wide angle/focused, interior/exterior, posed/candid? As a point of contrast, have students explore images in Jacob Riis's work *How the Older Half Lives*. How can photography both limit and expand our notion of the world?
3. **Moving Sidewalks:** Have students explore the invention of the escalator and the people who were connected with this innovation. The 1889 Exposition Universelle contained a moving sidewalk in the Galerie des Machines.
4. **Design:** There were over 100 designs submitted for building the entranceway to the World's Fair in 1889. Explore ten of these alternative designs.
5. **Architectural Design Competition:** Create a design competition for students to work in teams to create a new symbol for the United States. Each team could then present its model to the class and explain how the structure communicates a particular message. The class must vote for the top three designs. In the final round, each team of designers creates a particular location for their structure. In the final presentation, the three teams discuss their designed structure and its location. The students who are not part of the design teams can be members of the jury, newspaper reporters, or photographers. Stage an "opening" where the three designs are on public display and the "architectural teams" are available for the media.
6. **Iconic Landmarks:** Travel the world by studying the iconic landmarks in various countries to understand the creation and design of national monuments. Begin in the U.S. with the Statue of Liberty in New York City, the Washington Monument in Washington, D.C., and the National Parks ([www.nps.gov](http://www.nps.gov)). Visit the World Heritage Site and explore international landmarks in various categories, such as: archaeological, cultural, natural, urban ([www.worldheritagesite.org/list/categories](http://www.worldheritagesite.org/list/categories)).
7. **Did you know?:** Before the Eiffel Tower, the Brooklyn Bridge was built in 1883. Similar to the Parisian structure, it was a construction marvel also made of steel. The Brooklyn Bridge was the longest suspension bridge at that time. Conduct research on this structure and find out more about its history.
8. **Tallest Structures:** The Washington Monument was built in 1884 and was the tallest structure in the world until the Eiffel Tower's completion in 1889. The Eiffel Tower was the tallest structure until 1929 when the Chrysler Tower was built in Chicago. Create a time line showing the world's tallest structures over time. As an alternative, locate the tallest man-made structure in each continent.
9. **Other World Fairs:** Research and create a list of the various countries that held World's Fairs in the last three decades of the 19th century. For instance, explore the World's Fair in honor of the 100th anniversary of U.S. Independence (Philadelphia, 1876).