

THE HISTORY CHANNEL CLASSROOM STUDY GUIDES

Modern Marvels

The Eiffel Tower

This episode of *Modern Marvels* provides an historical tour of Paris's Eiffel Tower. Completed in 1889, the Eiffel Tower remains a symbolic icon of France's history and the industrial age. *Modern Marvels* takes you on a tour of this world famous monument from its inception to the present day. *The Eiffel Tower* would be useful for classes on European history, the history of science and technology, geography and cultural history. It is appropriate for middle school and high school.

- [aerodynamics](#)
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- [catacombs](#)
- [celestial](#)
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- [esprit](#)
- [ethereal](#)
- [existentialism](#)
- [exposition](#)
- [exultation](#)
- [haute cuisine](#)
- [insurrection](#)
- [lofty](#)
- [mired](#)
- [mundane](#)
- [pre-fabrication](#)
- [profiteering](#)
- [reprieve](#)
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- [subterranean](#)
- [vilified](#)

Discussion Questions

1. The Eiffel Tower is seen as a symbol of various themes. What are some of these themes? Why is the tower a symbol of them?
2. What other monuments around the world are seen as symbolic? How do symbolic monuments promote nationalism?
3. The Eiffel Tower was constructed shortly after the Franco-Prussian War. Why was it so important for the French to have an impressive monument?
4. The Eiffel Tower is one of the world's most visited tourist attractions. What is the lure of the tower? Why is it so attractive?
5. When Gustav Eiffel began the tower, many French citizens, especially artists protested. They did not consider the tower a work of art. Do you think the tower is a work of art? What makes an object a work of art?
6. Was Gustav Eiffel an artist? Was he a businessman?
7. The Eiffel Tower was originally intended to stand for only twenty years. What events occurred that changed the original plan and left the tower intact?

Extended Activities

1. Imagine that you are a reporter for a show such as Entertainment Tonight and your job is to cover the grand opening of the Eiffel Tower. How would you describe the tower and the opening events to your television audience?
2. Construct a monument (using whatever medium you choose) that you feel would symbolize the spirit of your school and your community.
3. The Eiffel Tower is considered to be one of the engineering and technological marvels of the 19th century. Write an essay in which you define a marvel of the 20th century. Be sure to include the reasons for your choice and support them.