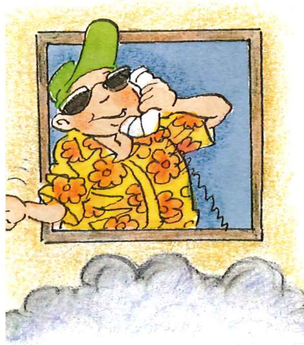
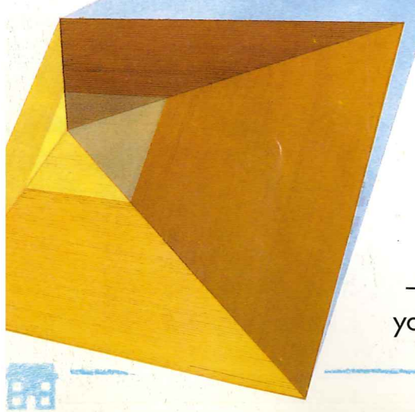
Which are the world's tallest buildings?

Skyscrapers are the world's tallest buildings—but they've only held the record for 100 years or so. Before then, the world's tallest buildings were the great cathedrals of Europe.



• In some skyscrapers, people live high above the clouds. They have to phone down to find out if it's raining at street level!

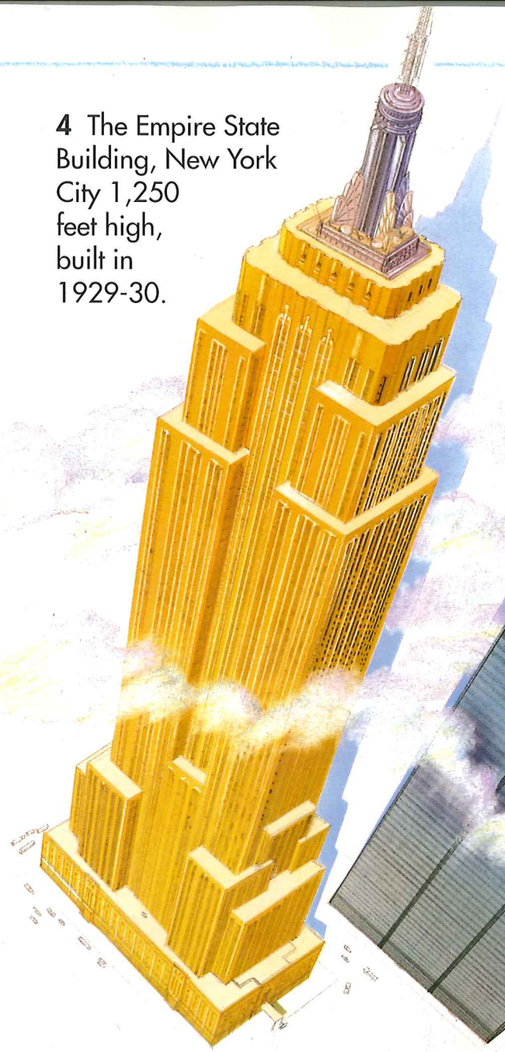


1 The Great Pyramid was built 4,500 years ago at Giza, in Egypt. It's 480 feet high.

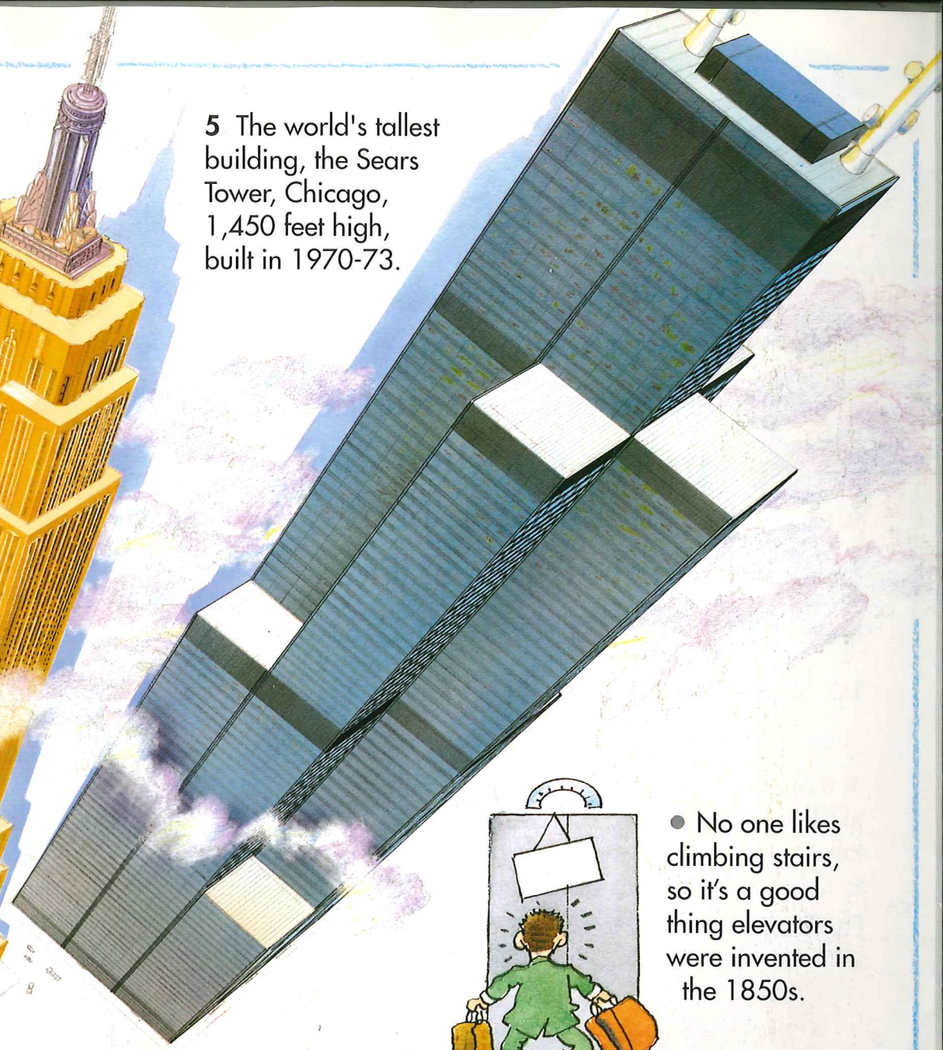
2 Before its spire fell down in 1548, England's Lincoln Cathedral topped 520 feet.

3 The Eiffel Tower, Paris, France, 984 feet high, built in 1887-89.

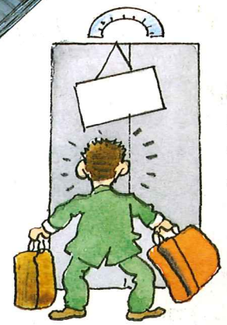
• The world's tallest house of cards was well over 13 feet high —that's probably higher than your bedroom ceiling.



4 The Empire State Building, New York City 1,250 feet high, built in 1929-30.



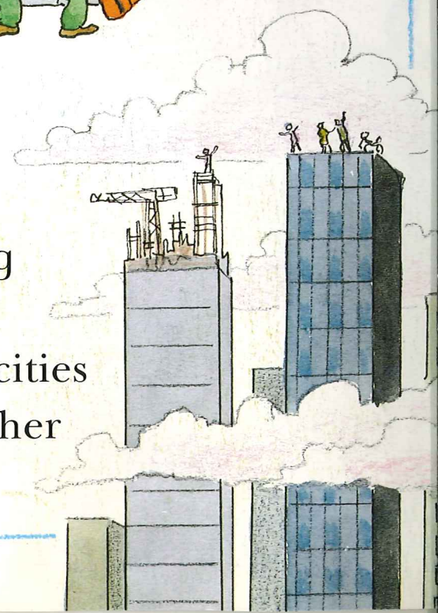
5 The world's tallest building, the Sears Tower, Chicago, 1,450 feet high, built in 1970-73.



• No one likes climbing stairs, so it's a good thing elevators were invented in the 1850s.

When was the first skyscraper built?

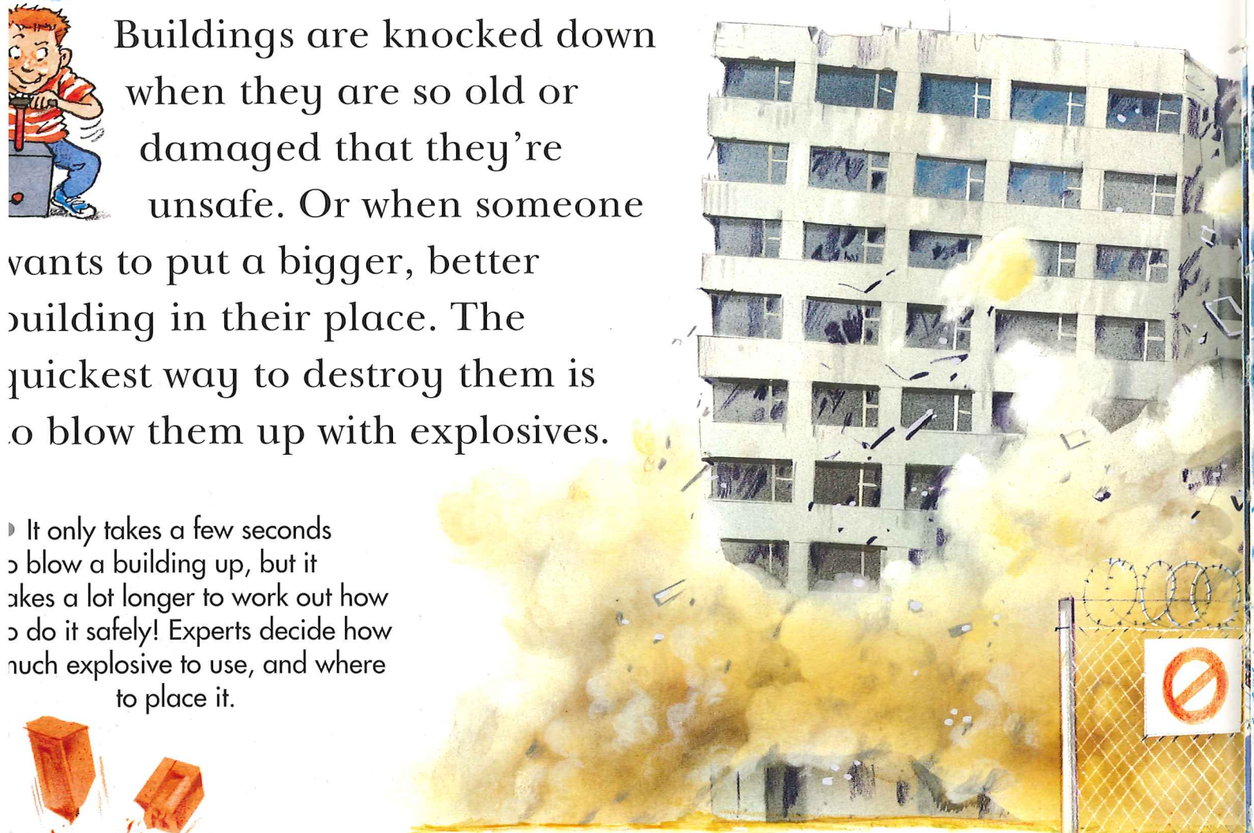
In 1885, the people of Chicago were amazed to see a ten-story building being built in their city. It was the world's first skyscraper. Over the next 15 years, the cities of Chicago and New York raced each other to build the world's tallest skyscraper.



Why are some buildings knocked down?

Buildings are knocked down when they are so old or damaged that they're unsafe. Or when someone vants to put a bigger, better ›uilding in their place. The ›uickest way to destroy them is .o blow them up with explosives.

• It only takes a few seconds › blow a building up, but it ›kes a lot longer to work out how › do it safely! Experts decide how ›uch explosive to use, and where to place it.



How do you wreck a building?

You smash it to pieces by swinging a huge metal wrecking ball from a crane! At 10 tons, a big wrecking ball weighs as much as 14 cars, and can do a lot of damage as it smashes into a wall.

• A warning whistle or hooter tells everyone that the building is about to explode!

• Canadian karate experts once knocked down a seven-room farmhouse with their bare hands and feet in just over 3 hours.

How do you clean up all the mess?

Bulldozers start by pushing all the rubble into big heaps. Then frontloaders scoop it up and load it into dump trucks. The trucks drive off to a special disposal area and dump their loads. Then they return to the construction site for more.