

Kids & Schools Tools

The Eiffel Tower, Paris, France

The Eiffel Tower is one of the 21 finalist candidates in the campaign to choose the New 7 Wonders of the World. The winners of this unique vote will be announced on July 7, 2007 – 07.07.07 and will become part of history. They will be recognized as monuments that have truly global meaning—they are part of our common cultural heritage. We can all be proud of the 21 finalists, since each of them is a unique monument that belongs to its particular culture and country in a very special way.

The creation of French engineer Gustave Eiffel, this magnificent steel tower has come to serve as a symbol of Paris and of France. Built as the entrance arch for the 1889 World Fair in Paris celebrating the centenary of the French Revolution, it is probably the best-known architectural achievement in the Western world and is also famous for being one of the few tall structures in the world that is perfectly vertical. The tallest man-made structure in the world until New York's Chrysler Building was built, which was quickly followed by the Empire State Building, the tower is visited by six million people every year.

The Eiffel Tower is 300 meters (986 ft) or some 75 stories high, has 1665 steps, and took over two years to build. Its metal structure weighs 7,300 tons, with the total weight an impressive 10,100 tons. Three hundred workers joined 18,038 pieces of puddle iron (a pure kind of structural iron), using two and a half million rivets. Despite the high risk of accident, since the tower is an open frame without any intermediate floors except the two platforms, Eiffel's care with his workers led to only one man dying—as the elevators were being installed. Depending on the outside air temperature, the top of the tower can shift away from the sun by up to 8 cm (3.25 inches) because the metal on the side facing the sun expands. Every seven years, 50 tons of paint are applied to protect the tower from rust, and the color changes occasionally—right now, the Eiffel Tower is brown. On the first floor, interactive screens let visitors give their opinion as to what color it should be painted in the future.

Originally, Eiffel had a permit for the tower to stand for 20 years. After this, it became the property of the City of Paris, which had originally planned to tear it down. However, the high structure had become valuable for communications, both for military and other purposes, and the city let it stand after the permit expired. When the tower played an important role in capturing the infamous spy Mata Hari during World War I, it gained such importance to the French people that there was no more thought of demolishing it. During its lifetime, the Eiffel Tower has witnessed a few odd scenes, including being scaled by a mountaineer in 1954 and parachuted off of in 1984 by two Englishmen—the most spectacular was in 1923, when a journalist even rode a bicycle down from the first level, with some accounts saying he rode down the stairs, others that he sped down the outside of one of the tower's legs, which curve outward.

The Eiffel Tower is a symbol of Challenge & Progress!



If you want to find out more about the exciting campaign to name the New 7 Wonders of the World, please go to the New7Wonders website at www.new7wonders.com.

07.07.07

Official Declaration of the New 7 Wonders of the World

... be part of the making of history!

www.new7wonders.com