

Unit 5: New York Skyscraper

Narrator: New York City is home to over 6,000 high-rise buildings. It's an amazing sight. But have you ever wondered what it's like to build a high-rise in one of the most crowded places in the world? Let's find out from the people working on One Bryant Park.

There are several factors that make this work challenging, especially on the corner of 42nd Street and Sixth Avenue. This location is one of the busiest places in the whole city. The first challenge was digging the building's foundation. It took an entire year for workers to remove 198,000 cubic meters of earth. After the foundation was finished, workers could begin bringing in building materials.

Thousands of kilograms are received at the site each day. There is very little room here in the middle of Manhattan, so there is only one option for getting the materials to the workers: Everything has to be lifted up into the tower.

About 200 meters above ground, the workers are hard at work. This crane operator is so high up that he can't see what he's lifting. Workers far below him provide careful instructions on what to do. The potential for mistakes is high, so there is no room for error.

The biggest job is lifting these huge beams that form the structure of the building. But first, the beams have to make it there. Getting access to the site is not so easy. Driving a truck this size through city traffic can be a challenge. Trucks start coming in at 5 a.m. And as the day continues, the traffic only gets worse. After the beams arrive, the men work quickly. With a building this size, everything is big—and that always presents a challenge.

This is one of five water tanks that will hold the total of 260,000 liters of water. Its size makes it difficult to place. But if you think this looks hard, the greatest challenge is yet to come: the spire. It's so large that it comes in 70 separate pieces.

Michael Keen: Going into New York City, you basically lose two days. It is true what they say, this is the city that never sleeps. And there's always traffic out there to deal with. It gets a little hairy at times, you know, but you have an escort behind you and he kind of blocks it off a little bit. Even though New York is a really big city, the streets aren't the biggest.

Narrator: Each piece must be lifted and put together nearly 300 meters above ground. With its spire, One Bryant Park stands 366 meters high, making it one of New York's tallest buildings. It attracts residents and tourists alike, and forms an important part of the New York City skyline.