

Take our LittleClickers Internet field trip, and learn about:

# Skyscrapers

Do really tall buildings (we like calling them skyscrapers) get hit by lightning during thunderstorms? (Yes). Has anyone ever jumped off the top of one and lived? (Yes, but they used a parachute, and they landed in jail). Let's learn more about tall buildings.

## 1) What city has the tallest building?

- A) New York City, United States of America
- B) Taipei, Taiwan
- C) Dubai, United Arab Emirates

Answer: B. According to <http://www.dirjournal.com/info/ten-tallest-buildings-in-the-world/>, the world's current tallest building is the Taipei 101 (in Taiwan) with a height of 1,671 feet. But that record will end in September '09, when the Burj Dubai (United Arab Emirates) is finished. This giant building, pictured below, will smash the world record. See it here [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WTF7\\_Z\\_G3do](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WTF7_Z_G3do).

## 2) What about earthquakes and tornados?

Skyscrapers are designed with natural disasters in mind. In a strong wind, they sway. In an earthquake, one of these buildings uses a computer-controlled counterbalance, with motion detectors, to keep the building still. See <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xF7foZ-oiSo>, and you can see how they work. Here's a video of what it was like to be this building (Taipei 101) during an actual earthquake. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NYSgd1XSZxc>.

## 3) Want to visit the top of a tall building?

Most have public observation decks (some inside; some outside) so you can enjoy the views. If you happen to be in the Chicago area, you'll want to know about the new Observation Ledge, <http://abclocal.go.com/wls/story?section=news/local&id=6791075> at the Sears Tower. If you can't get to China, we found a view from the top of the Shanghai World Financial Center, at [http://www2.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2008-08/29/content\\_6980360.htm](http://www2.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2008-08/29/content_6980360.htm).

## 4) T/F Has anyone jumped off the top of a skyscraper and lived?

Yes. There's a sport called Base Jumping, defined in Wikipedia, here: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/BASE\\_jumping](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/BASE_jumping). In 2008, two French base jumpers snuck into a very tall building called Burj Dubai, and jumped off the 160th floor. They carried a video camera with them and posted the adventure on YouTube, after they were released from jail. Here's their story: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9pGp1LX8yZY>.

## 5) If there's a thunderstorm and I'm in a skyscraper, should I worry about lightning?

Skyscrapers act as giant lightning rods during storms, transferring the energy from the lightning bolt into the ground, keeping the people inside safe. Here's a video of the Sears Tower in Chicago getting hit: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LJGE51oBAms>.

## 6) How are skyscrapers made?

They sit on gigantic footings that are dug deep into the ground. Learn more at <http://science.howstuffworks.com/skyscraper2.htm>. Try to build your own at <http://pbskids.org/zoom/activities/sci/tallsturdybuilding.html>.

## 7) How much bigger will buildings get?

Over the next decade, the world record will change many times, thanks to computers and new construction materials. At <http://tinyurl.com/futuretallbuildings> you can see plans for building that will be twice the height of the Taipei 101.

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Want more? We discovered many more links than we had space for, but will list them at [www.littleclickers.com/skyscrapers0609.html](http://www.littleclickers.com/skyscrapers0609.html)

