

The Sydney Opera House

The Sydney Opera House in Sydney, Australia, is famous throughout the world.

It stands on Bennelong Point, a point of land that **juts** into Sydney Harbour, near the Sydney Harbour Bridge. The roof of the opera house was **designed** and built to look like a ship under full sail. Since its official opening on October 20, 1973, the building and its **spectacular** white-sailed roof have become a symbol of Australia.

The Sydney Opera House was designed in the late 1950s by Jorn Utzon, a Danish **architect**. He quit the project in 1966 **due to** differences with the state government over cost and design **issues**, and the building was not completed until 1973.

The opera house cost close to \$100 million to **construct**. It is 600 feet tall, almost 390 feet wide in places, and more than 600 feet long. It sits on 580 **concrete piers**, some of which are sunk 80 feet below the sea. Over 1 million white **tiles** were used to construct its famous roof, and the roof **sections** are held together by over 200 miles of steel **cable**.

The building has five **performance** rooms. The largest is the Concert Hall (2,679 seats); the smallest is the Studio Theatre (364 seats). Each year, more than 2 million people attend the 3,000 performances that are held in the various **venues**. These include performances by Opera Australia, as well as by the Sydney Theatre Company and the Sydney Symphony Orchestra. **Rehearsal** halls, restaurants, bars, and souvenir shops are among the more than 1,000 rooms in the building.

The Sydney Opera House is considered by many to be one of the finest examples of modern **abstract** architectural design in the world.

Pre-Reading Warm Up Questions ☀

1. Do you like the design of the Sydney Opera House?
2. Do you know when the Sydney Opera House first opened?
3. How much do you think it cost to build the Sydney Opera House?
4. Do you like opera music?
5. Have you ever been to an opera? If so, what did you see?
6. Do you like modern architecture?



COMPREHENSION 📖

A. True or False. Read the statements below. If the statement is true, write T beside the sentence. If it is false, write F. If it is false, correct the information.

1. The Sydney Opera House is located in Sydney Harbor.
2. The Sydney Opera House was designed by a Swedish architect.
3. The architect, Jorn Utzon, had some disagreements with the government about the project.
4. There are more than 1000 performance rooms in the building.
5. The opera house cost almost \$100 million to build.

B. Practice asking and answering the following questions with your partner. Then write the answers in complete sentences.

1. Where exactly is the Sydney Opera House located?
2. When was the Sydney Opera House designed and who designed it?
3. Why did the original architect quit the project?
4. What is the roof of the opera house designed to look like?
5. What are the dimensions of the opera house?
6. How was the roof constructed?
7. What kinds of rooms are in the opera house?
8. What kinds of performances are held in the opera house?

VOCABULARY REVIEW 

A. Match the word on the left with the correct meaning on the right.

- | | |
|-----------------------|---|
| _____ 1. jut | a) build |
| _____ 2. design | b) practice (for a public performance) |
| _____ 3. spectacular | c) square piece of baked clay used for walls, roofs, floors, etc. |
| _____ 4. architect | d) place where an event occurs |
| _____ 5. due to | e) stick out; extend out |
| _____ 6. issues | f) kind of art or design that does not represent things in the usual way |
| _____ 7. construct | g) amazing; fantastic to look at; great |
| _____ 8. concrete | h) prepare a plan or drawing of something to be made |
| _____ 9. pier | i) a show; a public presentation of music, a play, etc. |
| _____ 10. tile | j) because of |
| _____ 11. sections | k) a person who designs buildings |
| _____ 12. cable | l) a structure built out into the water to walk on or as a place to tie up a boat |
| _____ 13. performance | m) parts; pieces |
| _____ 14. venue | n) questions for discussion |
| _____ 15. rehearsal | o) very strong rope, wire or chain |
| _____ 16. abstract | p) a hard building material |

B. Choose the correct word(s) from the left column above to complete the following sentences.

1. The boys sat on the _____ and fished all afternoon.
2. _____ the rain, the picnic will be cancelled.
3. The musicians should have one more _____ before their big weekend show.
4. The officials of the Olympic Games have not yet chosen the _____ for the skating events.
5. There will be several important _____ to discuss at today's meeting.
6. She slipped on the wet, _____ floor and cut her head. (two possibilities)

DISCUSS 

1. What kind of architecture do you like? Give some examples of famous buildings that have impressed you.
2. The Sydney Opera House has become a symbol of Australia. Give some other examples of famous places that symbolize their countries. Have you visited any of these places?
3. What do you think is the most beautiful building in the city in which you live? What do you like most about this building?



ANSWER KEY

Please note: The reading for this topic is also available in full-page format at the end of the lesson (page 4).

PRE-READING QUESTIONS

1-4. Individual answers.

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

A. True or False

1. T 2. F 3. T 4. F 5. T

B. Written Answers

1. The Sydney Opera House stands on Bennelong Point, a point of land that juts into Sydney Harbour, near the Sydney Harbour Bridge.
2. The Sydney Opera House was designed in the late 1950s by Jorn Utzon, a Danish architect.
3. The original architect quit the project in 1966 due to differences with the state government over cost and design issues.
4. The roof of the opera house was designed and built to look like a ship under full sail.
5. The opera house is 600 feet tall, almost 390 feet wide in places, and more than 600 feet long.
6. The roof was constructed with over 1 million white tiles and the roof sections are held together by over 200 miles of steel cable.
7. There are five performance rooms, rehearsal halls, restaurants, bars, and souvenir shops.
8. There are performances by Opera Australia, as well as by the Sydney Theatre Company and the Sydney Symphony Orchestra.

VOCABULARY REVIEW

A. Matching

1. e 2. h 3. g 4. k 5. j 6. n 7. a 8. p
9. l 10. c 11. m 12. o 13. i 14. d 15. b 16. f

B. Choose the correct word

1. pier 2. due to 3. rehearsal 4. venue 5. issues
6. *concrete, pier or tile* could be used

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