

# Exploring Nonfiction Text

## 3rd–5th Grade

### Objective

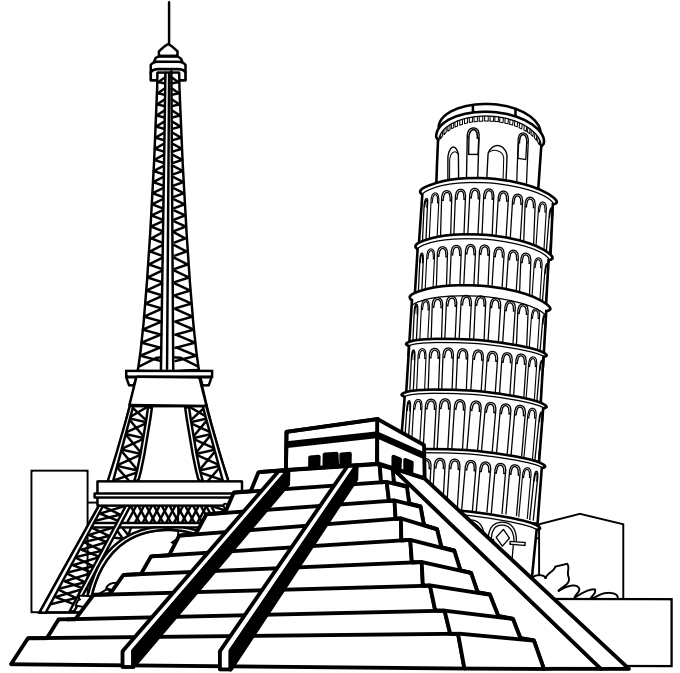
#### CCSS Reading: Informational Text

- RI.4.5: Describe the overall structure (e.g., chronology, comparison, cause/effect, problem/solution) of events, ideas, concepts or information in a text or part of a text.

### Materials Needed

- “Artful Architecture” nonfiction reading selection
- Construction Paper - 9" x 12" (cut into 9-inch squares) [TA50]
- Safety Scissors [GS454]
- Lakeshore Glue Sticks [TT505]
- Pencils or markers

*Products with item numbers are available at [LakeshoreLearning.com](http://LakeshoreLearning.com).*



### Introduction

Explain to students that they are going to learn about some different types of buildings and architecture by reading a nonfiction selection. Tell students, “Today we are going to see how the author uses the organizational strategy of comparing and contrasting.”

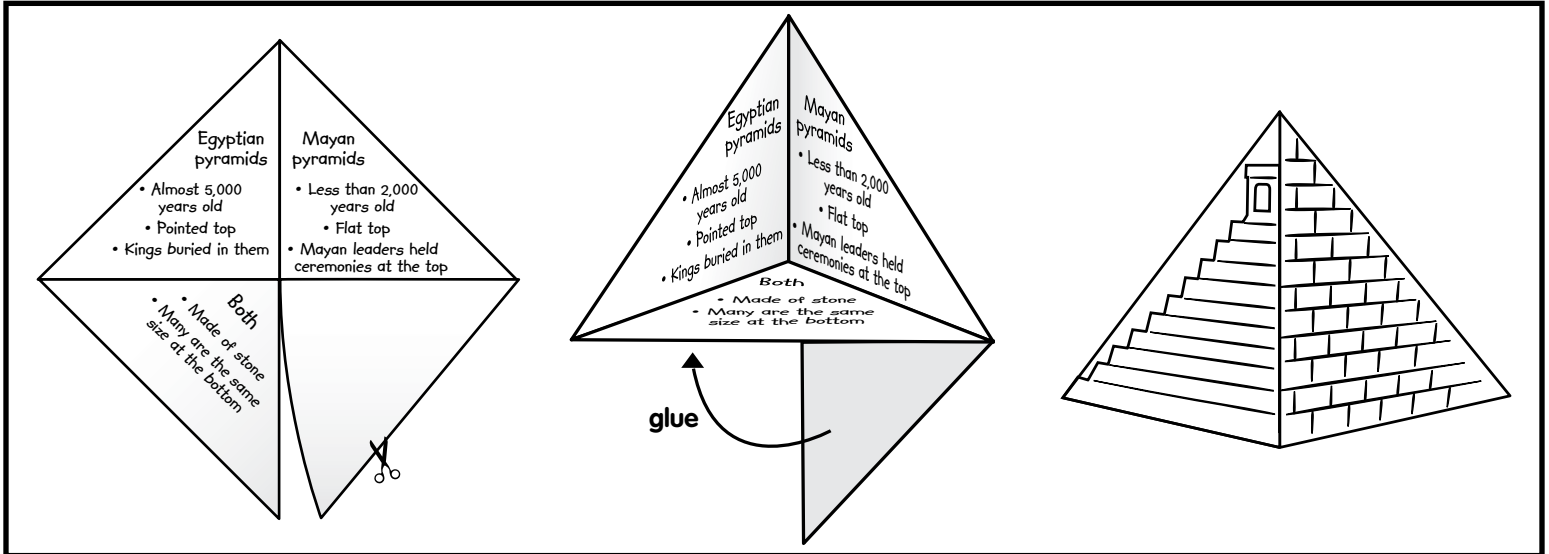
### Procedure

1. Give each student a copy of the “Artful Architecture” reading selection.
2. Invite students to take a look at the information and pay attention to how it is organized. You may want to point out that in nonfiction text, authors often organize their writing to help readers better understand what they are reading.
3. Explain that one of the ways to organize this information is by comparing and contrasting.
4. Ask students to look for comparing and contrasting language, such as “different,” “same,” “in contrast,” “but,” “like,” “unlike,” “however” and “as well.”
5. Read aloud (or have students take turns reading aloud) the articles in the text.
6. As you read, pause to ask students to compare and contrast the information they are reading. For example, you could ask, “How are homes in Africa different from homes in Switzerland, Thailand and Mongolia? What do all these homes have in common? How are they different?” Ask students to cite evidence from the text to support their answers.
7. Repeat steps 5 and 6 with different articles so that students understand how the information they are reading can be compared and contrasted.

### Independent Practice

1. Give each student a 9-inch square of light-colored construction paper.
2. Instruct students to fold the square in half to form a triangle. Then tell them to fold it in half again to form a smaller triangle.

3. Have students unfold the paper and cut along one fold line, stopping at the intersection of the folds.
4. Ask students to choose two types of pyramids mentioned in the reading selection, and have them write three facts about each pyramid on the top triangles.
5. Prompt students to draw a picture of each pyramid on the back.
6. Then, on one of the bottom triangles, have students write what the pyramids have in common.
7. Finally, have students overlap the two bottom triangles so that the writing is on top, and have them glue the triangles together to make a 3-D pyramid.



# ARTFUL ARCHITECTURE

Have you ever built a tower from blocks or tried to put together a gingerbread house? If so, you had to place each piece just right to keep the whole thing from falling over. That is what architects do every day! Architecture is the art of building, and architects are people who decide how the buildings should look.

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## Home, Sweet Home

All around the world, people live in different kinds of homes. When people build homes or other buildings, they must think about what the building will be used for, what kind of weather it will be in, and what kinds of materials they can use.

On the hot plains of Africa, some houses are built from grass. In the mountains of Switzerland, however, wooden houses keep out the cold. Their steep, A-shaped roofs make it easy for snow to slide off. In contrast, some homes in Thailand are built on poles. When the river rises after a heavy rain, these houses stay safe and dry. In contrast, shepherds in Mongolia often live in tents called yurts. These homes can be rolled up and moved so the people can follow their sheep.

# Pyramids

## The Pyramids of Egypt

Pyramids are one of the earliest shapes in architecture, and the pyramids of Egypt are some of the oldest buildings in the world. They have been standing for almost 5,000 years! No one knows exactly how these pyramids were made. Scientists believe that at least 20,000 people worked for 20 years to build each one. Since there were no complex machines at that time, workers carved and moved each stone by hand!

Egyptian kings were buried inside the pyramids. Many of the kings' treasures were buried with them as well. The pyramids are filled with secret halls, fake doors, and extra rooms to keep robbers from finding the kings' treasures.



## Towering Triangles

### Egyptian Pyramids

Built: 2000–3000 BC

Purpose: tomb for kings

Shape: pointed top

Height: 172–481 ft.

Material: stone

### Mayan Pyramids

Built: 300–900 AD

Purpose: altar for priests

Shape: flat top

Height: 60–80 ft.

Material: stone

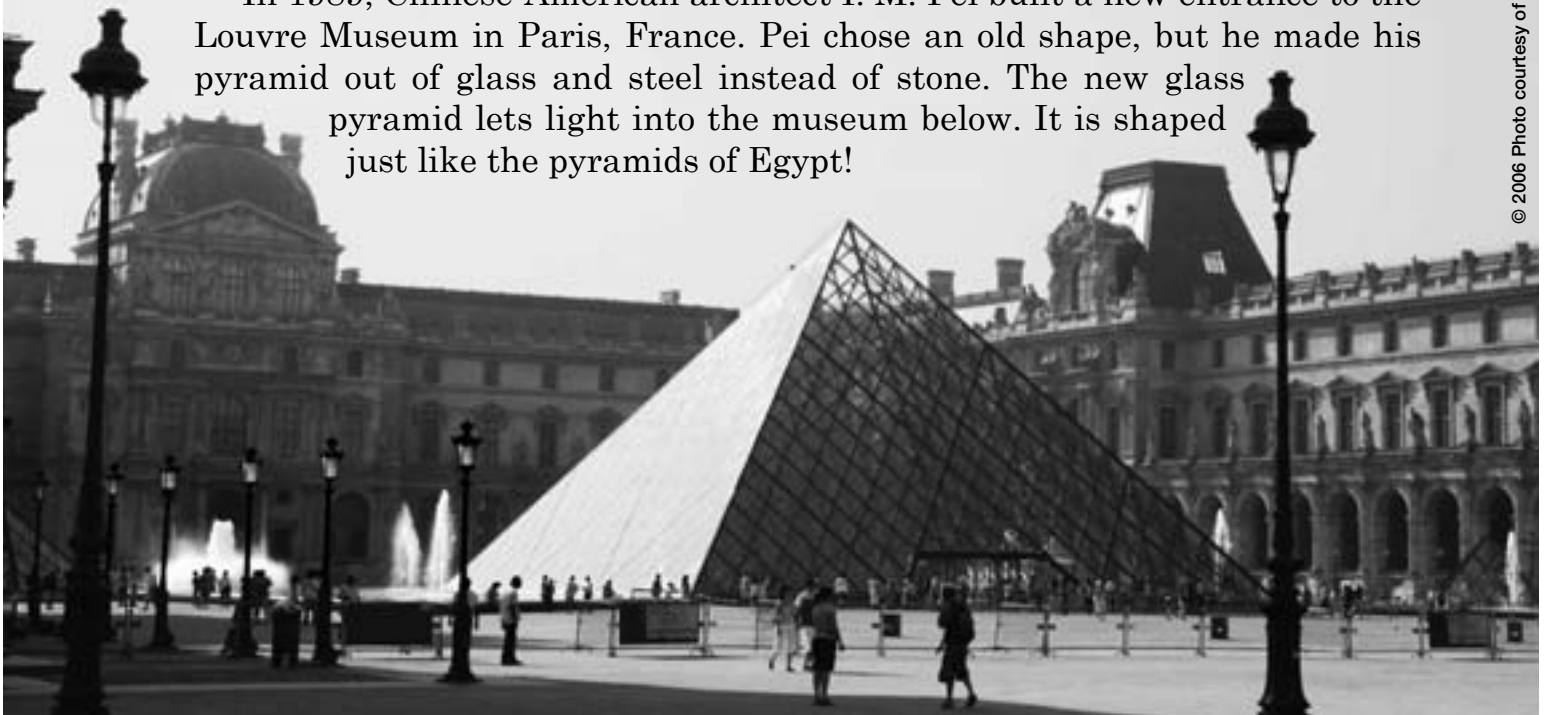
# Mysterious Mayan Pyramids

When you think of pyramids, you probably think of Egypt. But pyramids can be found in Central America as well. The Mayan people built hundreds of stone pyramids in what are now Mexico, Guatemala, and Belize.

Many of the Mayan pyramids are the same size as the Egyptian pyramids at the bottom. But they are much shorter. This is probably because they were meant to be climbed. Unlike the Egyptian pyramids, which have smooth sides, Mayan pyramids have stairs leading to the top. Mayan leaders often held ceremonies on top of the pyramids.

## A Modern Pyramid in Paris

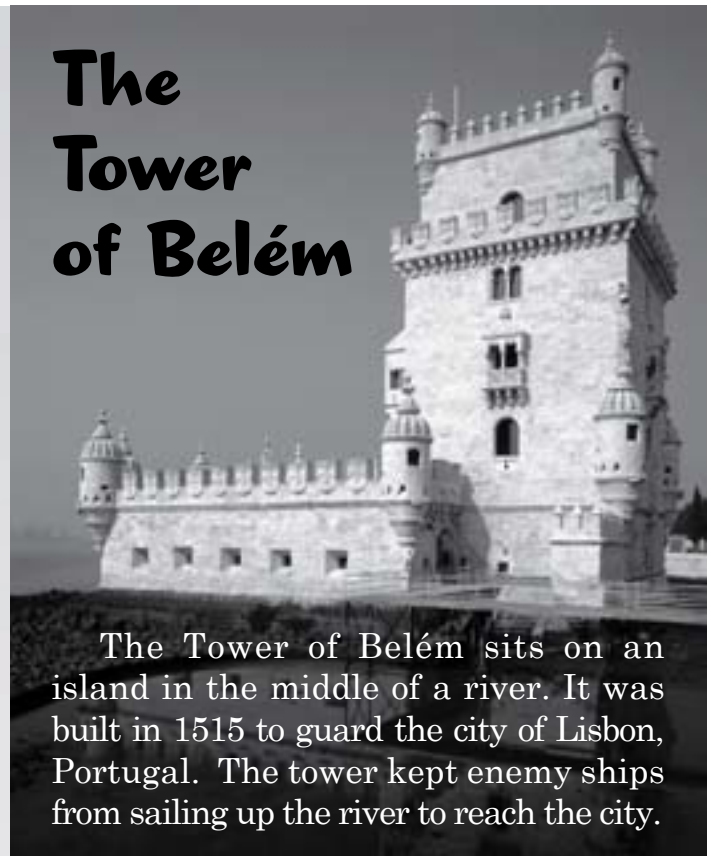
In 1989, Chinese-American architect I. M. Pei built a new entrance to the Louvre Museum in Paris, France. Pei chose an old shape, but he made his pyramid out of glass and steel instead of stone. The new glass pyramid lets light into the museum below. It is shaped just like the pyramids of Egypt!



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**High in the Sky**  
Towers are  
built all around the world,  
yet they come in many  
different styles.

## The Tower of Belém



The Tower of Belém sits on an island in the middle of a river. It was built in 1515 to guard the city of Lisbon, Portugal. The tower kept enemy ships from sailing up the river to reach the city.



## The Leaning Tower of Pisa

The Leaning Tower of Pisa in Italy is famous for a mistake in its architecture. The tall stone tower is too heavy for the sandy soil it sits on. Even before it was finished, the tower began to lean. Today, architects are trying to find a way to keep it from leaning too far and tipping over!



## The Eiffel Tower

At 984 feet high, the Eiffel Tower was once the tallest building in the world. It was built for the 1889 World's Fair in Paris, France. Its architect, Gustave Eiffel, also built the iron frame that holds up the Statue of Liberty!