

Top of the Rock at Rockefeller Center

Student group travelers seeking the ultimate New York City experience can now add Top of the Rock at the Rockefeller Center to their list. Reopened in November 2005, Top of the Rock welcomes visitors to a unique venue, removed from the hustle and bustle of the city. The renowned attraction provides lessons in history and geography that culminate with unparalleled views from the newly renovated Observation Deck on the 70th floor.

Rockefeller Center covers 22 acres and is located between Fifth and Seventh Avenues in Manhattan. It was built by the Rockefeller family, and named after John D. Rockefeller Jr. who began its development in 1930. At the time, it was the largest private building project ever undertaken in modern times. Construction was completed in 1939 when Rockefeller drove the final silver rivet into 10 Rockefeller Plaza. In 1987, it was officially declared a National Historic Landmark.

The observation deck itself was opened to the public in 1933 as a gift to the people of New York - a monument to Manhattan. After it was closed to the public in 1986, Top of the Rock underwent a \$75 million renovation and re-opened in November 2005, with three lower levels and three upper levels housed in the 70-story building.

Views from the observation deck are unobstructed for 360 degrees and stretch for miles in every direction. Top of the Rock includes a panorama of Central Park and the northern half of Manhattan that can't be found anywhere else. Famous New York landmarks are visible as well, including the Empire State Building, Chrysler Building, Times Square, the Hudson River, the East River, the Brooklyn Bridge, and the Statue of Liberty. Fully transparent safety glass provides unhindered, open-air viewing.

In addition to unforgettable views, Top of the Rock engages student group travelers with interactive exhibits on the mezzanine level. The iconic photograph of building workers in 1932 lunching on a steel beam is part of a display which allows students to virtually feel what it was like to work 60 floors up.

A stunning crystal waterfall chandelier, created by the Swarovski Group, is the centerpiece of Top of the Rock's entrance on West 50th Street. While waiting to board a sky shuttle elevator to the 67th floor, student travelers can enjoy a multimedia exhibition exploring the history of Rockefeller Center. The Top of the Rock shop features exclusive merchandise not found anywhere else. During the ride up to the top, student travelers enjoy the elevator's clear ceiling, exposing the elevator shaft during ascension. Photographs and film sequences projected onto the ceiling as well make for an entertaining trip.

Especially attractive and convenient for student group travelers are the reserved time ticketing and advance bookings to guarantee groups will not spend time waiting in lines. The system also ensures the deck is never overcrowded.

In addition to Top of the Rock, student group travelers can also take tours of the other interesting venues at Rockefeller Center. The guided tour takes students through the buildings, gardens, and places that make up this "city within a city." Frequent tour stops include:

- Radio City Music Hall, one of the largest and most opulent theaters in the world. It's famous for the Rockette dancers and the annual Christmas Spectacular show.
- The headquarters of the National Broadcasting Company (NBC) and most of their New York studios, including the legendary Studio 8H, home of Saturday Night Live.
- Adjacent to the center is the open air Ice-Skating Rink which opened on Christmas Day in 1936 and has remained a popular winter venue ever since.

Private Studio Tours of the National Broadcasting Company are also available to the public. Led by an NBC page, these tours guide students through the world of the famous Peacock Network. Interestingly, there is a history behind the NBC pages, as many have gone on to become celebrities including Willard Scott, Regis Philbin, Ted Koppel, Michael Eisner, and Dave Garroway.

The first stop on the NBC tour is the Sharp History Theatre, where visitors learn about NBC's early days in radio. Afterward, student group travelers have the opportunity to see some of the most famous studios, including The Today Show, Dateline NBC, NBC Nightly News, Football Night in America, and Saturday Night Live.

The Top of the Rock and other intriguing indoor and outdoor spaces make a visit to the Rockefeller Center in the heart of Manhattan a must for student tour groups traveling to New York City.

About the Author

[travel adventures](#) Travel Adventures is a student tour provider staffed by educators who understand the needs of teachers. It has served over one half million students since 1987 and its mission is to “empower teachers to create change by expanding the classroom to the world.”

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