



What has five sides, five rings, five levels, a five-acre garden—and sixteen parking lots? The Pentagon! Built alongside a lagoon in Arlington, Virginia, near Washington, D.C., the Pentagon is the headquarters of the United States' Department of Defense. Its five-sided geometric shape and its name are famous around the world. The Pentagon is the world's largest office building, and its great size covers 29 acres. Filling all this office space uses lots of everything: 7,754 windows; 691 drinking fountains; 4,200 clocks, 284 restrooms—and over seventeen miles of hallways!

On any day, there are about 24,000 people working at the Pentagon. Some are military officers with the Army, Navy, Air Force or Marines—and others are civilians. Almost a city in itself, the Pentagon has its own restaurants and snack bars; a shopping mall, banks, library, post office, gym, bus and subway stations. It's a busy place!

The Pentagon was designed to have enough room to bring people from seventeen separate offices to work in one location. Before 1941, people who worked for what was then called the War Department were scattered in offices and buildings all over Washington. With the start of World War II, the War Department quickly added more people, in more jobs. All those people and jobs also needed room to file and store tons of paper records. They needed a big building.

Government architects quickly drew plans for a huge building unlike any that anyone had seen. Their five-sided design of five connecting rings of offices, on five levels, used miles of connecting halls, walkways, and bridges. Using this walkway system, you can walk to any office in less than seven minutes! Once President Franklin Roosevelt and the architects agreed on a building site, he approved the construction costs of \$83 million dollars. Beginning on September 11, 1943, 15,000 people worked night and day to build the Pentagon in record time. A building of this size would normally take four years to complete, but it was finished and ready for all those workers, and filing cabinets, in only sixteen months.

DO YOU KNOW?

Ten hallways connect the five rings of offices, like spokes of a big wheel. The hallways are numbered from 1 to 10. The five rings of offices are lettered: A, B, C, D, E—from the center, out.

To find office # 3B7: The first number (3) shows its on the third floor; the letter (B) shows it's in Ring B; the last number (7) shows that office is along hallway 7.

WOWSER!

The Pentagon was built during World War II when few construction materials were available. By building it out of poured concrete, the federal government saved 43,000 tons of steel—enough steel to build a new battleship.

Discussion questions

1. A pentagon is a closed shape that has five equal sides that all connect at the corners. Using a ruler, draw a pentagon where each side is 2 inches long.
2. If the sixteen parking lots have enough parking spaces for 8,770 cars—how do the other 15,000 non-drivers get to work?
3. The Pentagon is located in Arlington, Virginia. Research another famous national government site in Arlington and write a paragraph about it.



THE PENTAGON