

Learning Places Fall 2016
Site Report #1
Grand Central Terminal



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Introduction/Insights

We visit Grand Central Terminal first by taking an exterior look at the corner of East 42nd street and Madison Avenue. After a 20 minute sketch, we then move on to visit inside first through the “Whispering Gallery”. A well known spot where sound travels from corner to corner, so that two people can hear each other through whisper. Later, we move on to the main concourse or the center of the terminal. As we look above in this huge space, we witness a painting of the constellations of the zodiac that covers up the whole ceiling. We then wrap up our visit by taking a look at the Metro North railroad. After this visit, I learned that the terminal's interior is much more than a subway line, railroad, and the main concourse. I was not expecting to be surrounded by the amazing décor, long hallways, shops, and dining spots. I can see why it is a big tourist attraction and an icon to New York City.

Keywords/Vocabulary:

Cornelius Vanderbilt

Grand Central Depot

Grand Central Station

Whispering Gallery

Main Concourse



Located on top of the building is “The Glory of Commerce”, a collection of sculptures designed by Jules Felix-Coutan. Illustrating Minerva, Mercury, and Hercules. Which represent wisdom, speed, and strength. Right under it is the historic Tiffany stained glass clock, with a diameter of 14 feet.



The famous painted ceiling showing the constellations of the zodiac created by French artist Paul Cesar Helleu. Signs of the zodiac including Aquarius, Pisces, Aries, Taurus, Gemini, Cancer, Orion, Pegasus, Musca, and Triangulum. Some may not know but the painting is actually backwards. It was to display God's point of view from above and the heavens being seen from the outside.



All throughout the terminal are these carvings of acorns and oak leaves. Chosen by Cornelius Vanderbilt because they symbolized family, "Great oaks from tiny acorns grow". Right below it are the 24 carat gold plated Beaux Arts Chandeliers containing 110 bulbs on each one.



The iconic and recognizable outside view of Grand Central Terminal. A view that summarizes an engineering and architectural design achievement in the heart of NYC. There are several statues and sculptures all around on the outside, but one of the most important one that stand out is “The Commodore”, representing Cornelius Vanderbilt, the man responsible for accomplishing this great feat.