The Taj Mahal
Why I choose this structure?

I wanted to learn about a structure that I did not know anything about. I visited the CN Tower and studied the Eiffel Tower in Grade Three. I was also familiar with the Empire State building because my mom traveled to New York City. I was excited to learn all about a structure I knew nothing about.
Taj Mahal is located in the city of Agra India, one of the most powerful cities in the medieval world. Agra is a part of the state of Uttar Pradesh, in the northern region of India. It is a part of the great northern plains and is situated on the west bank of river the Yamuna. Agra is 204 km south of Delhi.
Why I think this location was selected?

- I think it was selected because of its beauty and the fabulous surroundings.
What makes this landmark famous?

- It was Shah Jehan who ordered the building of the Taj, in honor of his wife, Arjumand Banu who later became known as Mumtaz Mahal, the *Distinguished of the Palace*. Mumtaz and Shah Jehan were married in 1612 and, over the next 18 years, had 14 children together. The Empress used to accompany her husband in his military campaigns, and it was in 1630, in Burhanpur, that she gave birth to her last child, for she died in childbirth. So great was the Emperor love to his wife that he ordered the building of the most beautiful mausoleum on Earth for her.
When was the structure built?

- The structure was built in the year of 1626.
How many years did it take to build the Taj Mahal?

- It took 22 years to build the structure.
In what year was it completed?

- It was completed in the year of 1648 C.E.
How did the landmark get its name?

In 1628, the King of the World ascended the throne in a ceremony of unrivaled splendor. Beside him stood his queen, his comrade and confidante. He titled her "Mumtaz Mahal", "Chosen One of the Palace", and commissioned for her a luxurious royal residence of glistening white marble. In turn, she gave him tender devotion, wise counsel and children - many children - to insure the continuance of the magnificent Mughal dynasty.
Dedication

The Taj Mahal is dedicated in memory of Shah Jahan’s second wife, Mumtaz Mahal, a Muslim Persian princess. She died while accompanying her husband in Burhanapur in a campaign to crush a rebellion after giving birth to their 14th child. The death so crushed the emperor that all his hair and beard were said to have grown snow white in a few months.
Damage

- The surface of the onion-domed monument became yellow over the years because of automobile fumes, smoke from small factories, a large oil refinery near Agra and funeral pyres at a nearby cremation ground. Two years ago, authorities used a pack made of brown clay to restore the original whiteness of the mausoleum. "Pollution is no longer a problem. But the building is stressed because of the huge number of visitors," said D. Dayalan, head of the Archaeological Survey of India in Agra. "Vandalism remains a big threat. The breathing of the visitors can damage the building. Also, so many people walking on the same path for years has caused some abrasion on the floor," he told.

It may be a monument to love, but the Taj has seen its share of trials and tribulations. Last year, the Uttar Pradesh government began work on a shopping mall on a river bank near the Taj before it was halted following a row over the plan, which environmentalists said posed a danger to the monument. When war clouds loomed in 2002, Indian officials drew up a plan to camouflage the monument, one of the seven wonders of the world, with olive green cloth to stop Pakistani jets from spotting it.
My Drawing of The Taj Mahal

by: Rebecca
Who was the designer of the structure?

- Taj Mahal was constructed over a period of twenty-two years, employing twenty thousand workers. It was completed in 1648 C.E. at a cost of **32 Million Rupees**. The construction documents show that its master architect was **Ustad ‘Isa**, the renowned Islamic architect of his time. The documents contain names of those employed and the inventory of construction materials and their origin. Expert craftsmen from Delhi, Qannauj, Lahore, and Multan were employed. In addition, many renowned Muslim craftsmen from Baghdad, Shiraz and Bukhara worked on many specialized tasks.
What materials were used to build this structure?

- The material used to build the structure was red sandstone base, topped by a huge white marble terrace on which rests the famous dome flanked by four tapering minarets. The tomb is set against an awesome backdrop of the river and it is this background that works its magic of colors through their reflection and transforms the view of the Taj. The colors change at different hours of the day and during different seasons. Like a jewel, the Taj sparkles in moonlight when the semi-precious stones inlaid into the white marble on the main mausoleum catch the glow of the moon. The Taj is pinkish in the morning, milky white in the evening and golden when the moon shines. These changes, they say, depict the different moods of woman.

Different people have different views of the Taj but it would be enough to say that the Taj has a life of its own that leaps out of marble, provided you understand that it is a monument of love. As an architectural masterpiece, nothing could be added or subtracted from it.
Lord William Bentinck, governor of India in the 1830s, planned to demolish the Taj Mahal and auction off the marble. In some versions of the tale, the demolition crew were ready to begin their work but were stopped only because Bentinick was unable to make the scheme financially viable.
What would be pointed out if you were on a guided tour?

- The entire mausoleum (inside as well as outside) is decorated with inlaid design of flowers and calligraphy using precious gems such as agate and jasper. The main archways, chiseled with passages from the Holy Qur’an and the bold scroll work of flowery pattern, give a captivating charm to its beauty. The central domed chamber and four adjoining chambers include many walls and panels of Islamic decoration.

- In the middle of the main chamber there are the pseudo-tombs of Mumtaz and Shah Jehan. The original tombs lie in a lower-burial vault. A marble screen surrounds the tombs. It is cut with such finesse that it appears almost translucent. Both tombs are embellished with precious stones and gems brought from far flung places of the world. While the top of Mumtaz's tomb is embellished with the 99 names of Allah, Shah Jahan's tomb is set with a pen box, the stylemark of a male ruler.
Why do people come to see this landmark?

- Taj Mahal is built entirely of white marble. Its stunning architectural beauty is beyond adequate description, particularly at dawn and sunset. The Taj seems to glow in the light of the full moon. On a foggy morning, the visitors experience the Taj as if suspended when viewed from across the Jamuna river. That is why I think this location was selected.
Interesting Facts

- There is a picture of The Taj Mahal on That’s So Raven’s fridge.
- It is also the site of many famous movies.
- The Taj Mahal is regarded as the eighth wonder of the world.
- It is a symmetrical figure.
Pictures of the Taj Mahal
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