The Mall of America

Pre-reading

Questions:
- What do you know about the Mall of America?
- What would you like to know about it?

Definitions:
- Skeptic – a person who shows doubt, questions, or does not believe

Reading

The Mall of America welcomes more visitors each year than Walt Disney World, the Grand Canyon and Graceland combined. The early skeptics who thought the mega-mall would be a “mega-disaster,” have happily been proved wrong.

In 1982, Minnesota’s baseball and football teams, the Twins and the Vikings, moved from the Metrodome in downtown Minneapolis. Losing the two teams, gave the city of Bloomington 78 acres of prime real estate. The land was located only a mile and a half from the Minneapolis/St. Paul International Airport and at the intersection of four major highways.

A vision for the Mall of America was born. In 1986 the Ghermezian brothers signed an agreement to develop the nation’s largest retail and entertainment complex. The Ghermezian’s had just completed building the world’s largest retail and entertainment center, the West Edmonton Mall in Alberta, Canada.

On June 14, 1989 ground was broken and three years of construction began. The Mall of America opened its doors on August 11, 1992. On that date, the 4.2 million square foot complex was 71 percent leased with 330 brand new stores open for business. It was the first time in history that the department store giants, Bloomingdale’s, Macy’s, Nordstrom, and Sears were all together under one roof.

Despite the fact it is known for its awesome shopping (it now has more than 520 stores), the Mall of America is more than just a shopping mall. It is a retail and entertainment experience. You can see a movie at the fourteen screen movie theater. If you like amusement parks, you’ll love Camp Snoopy, the nation’s largest indoor theme park. You can take a ride on the 74-foot Ferris wheel or experience the rush of the Flume. The new Timberland Twister will take you on a fast spinning quarter-mile ride through the park.

Explore life underwater at Underwater Adventures, a 1.2 million gallon walk-through aquarium. Traveling 14 feet underwater in the 300 foot-long curved tunnel, you can experience breathtaking views of sharks, stingrays, and other “giants” of the sea. A great time for ocean enthusiasts of all ages!

Has all of that shopping and playing made you hungry? The Mall of America offers much more than a simple food court. There are 30 fast-food restaurants and 20 sit-down restaurants. You could have lunch at Little Tokyo and dinner at The Rainforest Café, without leaving the building.

Feeling a little tired? A new store will sell you a nap for 70 cents a minute. (Yes, the Mall has it all!) The store is called MinneNAPoils, and is aimed at those who need a nap after a long flight and don’t want to book a hotel room. The store’s sound-proof rooms allow for a quiet rest.

Do you desire a unique wedding? The Mall of America can meet those needs too. In the last ten years, more than 4,000 couples have been married at the Chapel of Love.

The mega-mall continues to attract mega-visitors and generate mega-dollars. Over 42 million people visit the Mall of America each year. Annual sales in 2001 were nearly 900 million dollars. The Mall of America is a mega-success.
Understanding

1. Who built the Mall of America?

2. Why was that construction team selected?

3. What does the word unique mean?

4. The Mall of America boasts some of the nation’s “largest” and “firsts”. What are they?

5. What does the word mega mean?

6. In a sentence, how would you describe the Mall of America?

7. Why was the proposed Mall of America site considered prime real estate?

8. How were the skeptics proved wrong?

Writing

Option A: Summarize the reading in your own words.

Option B: Write about a visit you’ve made to the Mall of America.

Option C: What does the Mall of America represent? How is it reflective of culture in the U.S.?