

FROEBEL BLOCKS & FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT

GRADE: K-12

TIME: 45 minutes

Participants will explore Frank Lloyd Wright's design legacy by working with Froebel Gifts 3 and 4 through a series of guided activities. These activities will provide an introduction to design concepts used by Frank Lloyd Wright and help participants identify key connections between the Forms of Life, Forms of Beauty, and Wright's designs. Participants will also be encouraged to question the relationship between aesthetics and utility to determine if something can be both useful and beautiful.

INTEGRATED SUBJECTS: Visual Art & Math

OBJECTIVES

MATERIALS | RESOURCES

Froebel Blocks (Gifts 3-6)

Forms of Life Figures

Forms of Beauty Figures

Grids

Inventing Kindergarten

by Norman Brosterman

Examples of Wright's designs

Frederick C. Robie House

Unity Temple

Art Glass

1. Explore and make connections between Frank Lloyd Wright's design legacy and Froebel's Forms of Life and Forms of Beauty.
2. Engage in the design process by creating and building a unique Form with 3D geometric shapes.
3. Communicate ideas and design concepts visually and verbally.
4. Examine the relationship between beauty and utility.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

1. What similarities can you find between Froebel's Forms of Life and Beauty and Frank Lloyd Wright's work?
2. What steps do you take when you design and create? Is this different for a 2D or 3D design?
3. Can something be both beautiful and useful?

To rent a FLWT Education learning kit, which includes blocks, figures, and grids visit:
<http://flwright.org/education/learningkits>.

LESSON PROCEDURE

EXPLORE

5 minutes

- Distribute blocks. Allow participants to explore and play without specific instructions.
- After a few minutes, begin asking questions about the blocks to guide exploration.
- How do the blocks feel? How do they smell? What do you want to do with them? What do you want to know about them?

ENGAGE

25 minutes

- Ask participants to return the blocks to their original state inside their box container.
- Distribute grids and figure sheets with the Forms of Life and Forms of Beauty available at: <https://www.teachingbydesign.org/multimedia/>
- Introduce Froebel's system of building Forms by transforming figures.
To remove the blocks from their box:
 1. Tip the entire box upside down on the grid with the lid closed.
 2. Gently slide the lid out and set aside.
 3. Pull the box up to reveal the stacked blocks inside. Note that this will be the first Form of Life (Figure 10 for Gift 3 & Figure 74 for Gift 4).
 4. Continue to work through each figure in chronological order by altering the block configuration without knocking them down. Blocks should be moved as little as possible to change form figure to figure.
- Allow participants to build the Forms of Life and Forms of Beauty.
- Share designs created by Frank Lloyd Wright and guide participants to make observations about what they see. Images available at: <https://www.teachingbydesign.org/multimedia/>
- Are any of Froebel's Forms recognizable in Wright's work? How do Forms impact the architecture, space, window, room? How does the design function? Is it a light, window, chair, or the shape of the building?

DESIGN

7 minutes

- Taking inspiration from Wright's designs, encourage participants to build their own unique Form of Life or Beauty.
- Ask participants to consider whether their Form is one of Life or Beauty and why.

CRITIQUE & INTERPRET

8 minutes

- Have participants share their designs.
- Ask: What do you see? Did you encounter any challenges when designing? What were they? How did you address them? How could the Forms be included in the design of the classroom? How would they change the space?
- Finally, ask participants if a Form can be both one of Life and Beauty? Why or why not?