

LEAVES IN OUR LIVES: A PRINTMAKING LESSON

GRADE: 3-5

TIME: Two 50-minute sessions

Frank Lloyd Wright designed homes that united architecture and the surrounding environment. Trees and leaves, along with other natural forms, play a major role in many aspects of his designs. In this lesson, students will study the leaves found in Wright's designs and examine leaves from their local environment. Students will learn to create printed patterns using leaves and will understand the various parts of a leaf. Students will discuss the beneficial experience of being in nature.

INTEGRATED SUBJECTS: Visual Arts, Science, Social-Emotional Learning, Physical Education

OBJECTIVES

MATERIALS | RESOURCES

Images of Frank Lloyd Wright's designs incorporating leaves

Internet access for independent student research (optional)

Leaves

Acrylic or tempera paint (assorted colors)

(Tip: Use tempera paint for younger students)

Small paper plates for paint

Cups for water

Block printing paper or other paper

(Tip: Experiment with old book pages, newspaper, or colored tissue paper)

Small latex sponges (optional)

Small paint brushes

Newspaper or butcher paper to protect work surfaces

Paint smocks or aprons

Magnifying glasses (optional)

1. Observe Frank Lloyd Wright's use of leaves in his designs.
2. Take part in a nature walk as a means for enhancing and maintaining physical and mental health.
3. Experiment with paint application and repetition of leaf stamps.
4. Understand and identify the parts of a leaf and how their form helps them survive and grow.
5. Discuss how trees and leaves can impact our wellbeing.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

1. How does Frank Lloyd Wright incorporate leaves and leaf patterns into his architecture?
2. How can leaf patterns be created using printmaking techniques?
3. What are the parts of a leaf and how does their form help them to survive and grow?
4. How can being in nature impact our wellbeing?

LESSON PROCEDURE

EXPLORE

Session One

- Introduce Frank Lloyd Wright and the job of an architect. Emphasize the use of nature in Wright's designs.
- Display images of the Tree of Life motif in the windows of the Darwin Martin House and the motif of sumac leaves in the Susan Lawrence Dana House. Challenge students to find the tree and leaves in the designs. Images can be found at <https://martinhouse.org/>, <https://www.artic.edu/artworks/38836/darwin-d-martin-house-tree-of-life-window>, and <https://www.moma.org/collection/works/142437>.
 - Optional Extension: Encourage students to research additional Wright designs that incorporate trees and/or leaves.
 - Optional Extension: If time and space allow, take a walk as a class to find leaves and use them to identify the surrounding trees. Remind students to find leaves that are on the ground rather than picking leaves off trees. If a walking field trip is not possible, supply a collection of leaves for the students.
 - Differentiation: Challenge students to identify the leaves they found on their walk.
- **Ask students:** What characteristics help us to identify trees? **Distribute leaves or images of leaves and have students work in pairs to identify leaf parts. Additional information available at:** <https://www.plt.org/stem-strategies/looking-at-leaves/>
- Ask students to identify the parts of the leaf and hypothesize how Frank Lloyd Wright would use them in his designs.

ENGAGE

Session Two

- Demonstrate printmaking techniques using a variety of leaf shapes. A short video can be used as an introduction: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v6fhANIZXco>
- Instruct students that only a small amount of paint is needed on their paper plate palette.
- Encourage experimentation with brushes, sponges, and a variety of papers.
- Provide specific instructions and ample time for clean-up procedures.

DESIGN

Session Two

- Have students work independently on printing with leaves.
 - Optional Extension: Have each student print a leaf of their choice on a large piece of paper to create a classroom mural.
- Encourage students to try varying amounts of paint, dry brushes, or sponges. Discuss what is working and what technique they like best.
- Challenge students to experiment by printing on newspaper, old book pages or tissue paper.

LESSON PROCEDURE (continued)

CRITIQUE & INTERPRET

Session Two

- Ask students to reflect on the walk outside and how it felt to find and work with leaves. Provide information about the benefits to our health from spending time in nature. Additional information can be found at <https://www.takingcharge.csh.umn.edu/how-does-nature-impact-our-wellbeing>
- Display students' work and ask students to identify the leaves.
- Ask students where they could imagine a leaf pattern in their classroom or home.
- Discuss the following Frank Lloyd Wright quote with students and ask how it relates to the way he used leaves in his designs: *Get patiently to the point where you naturally see this element of pattern in everything.*