

LET THERE BE FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT LIGHT

GRADE: 6-12

TIME: Three 50-minute sessions

Natural lighting was an integral aspect of Frank Lloyd Wright's architecture. The dawn of the 20th century would introduce America to the electric light bulb and Frank Lloyd Wright creatively included this new technology in his buildings and homes. In this lesson, participants will consider how electric light transformed life, and how Wright incorporated electricity and lighting in his architecture. Participants will explore Wright's lighting plans and create a design to be applied on a paper bag luminary of their own.

INTEGRATED SUBJECTS: Visual Arts, Science, Social Studies

OBJECTIVES

MATERIALS | RESOURCES

Paper lunch bags (brown, white, or both)
X-Acto knives
Hole punches and pattern punches
Small pieces of cardboard to insert in bags
Sand (optional)
Battery-operated tea lights (optional)
Internet access for independent student research (optional)

1. Develop an awareness of the impact that the invention of electricity would have had on daily life.
2. Examine the types of lighting designed and used by Frank Lloyd Wright.
3. Explore the collaborative partnership of Frank Lloyd Wright and George M. Niedecken.
4. Design and create a luminary.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

1. How did the invention of electric lighting change the way buildings are designed?
2. How did Frank Lloyd Wright incorporate lighting design into his architecture?
3. What is meant by collaboration? Why would Frank Lloyd Wright collaborate with George M. Niedecken?

LESSON PROCEDURE

EXPLORE

Session One

- Introduce Frank Lloyd Wright and show examples of natural and electric lighting in his architecture. (Resources include the Robie House in Chicago and the Avery Coonley House in Riverside. <https://www.sothebys.com/en/buy/auction/2021/important-design-5/sconce-from-the-avery-coonley-house-riverside>)
- Provide students with images of Frank Lloyd Wright’s lighting designs and the lighting designs of George M. Niedecken. Ask students: What comparisons can be made in the work of Frank Lloyd Wright and George M. Niedecken? What method of lighting was used prior to the electric light? (Resources include: <https://flwright.org/researchexplore/franklloydwrightleadedglass> and <https://onmilwaukee.com/articles/mam-wright-150th-birthday-show>)
- Introduce participants to the history of the light bulb and the invention of electricity. <https://americanhistory.si.edu/lighting/19thcent/consq19.htm> and <https://www.energy.gov/articles/history-light-bulb>
- Show examples of the Taliesin lamp and discuss Wright’s thoughts on lighting. The following article will be helpful. <https://alamoderna.com/blog/frank-lloyd-wright-designs/>
- Demonstrate the steps to create a paper bag luminary. Reinforce safety measures in use of X-Acto knives for cutting paper bags. The following video will be useful to prepare: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x3W_dTsC8gE
 - Differentiation: Hole punch or pattern punches may be used to create designs in place of X-Acto knives.

ENGAGE

Session Two

- Participants will research the invention of electricity and share their findings and ideas about the implications for life and design.

DESIGN

Session Three

- Participants will plan a pattern or design on paper or in their sketchbook. Have students transfer the drawing onto the paper bag. Encourage a variety of ideas and experimentation.
- Insert a small piece of cardboard into the paper bag prior to cutting with the X-Acto knife to ensure that students only cut one side of the paper bag. Remind students of proper care and storage of X-Acto knives and blades.
- Optionally, students can insert a white lunch bag into the brown bag. Students can take home the project as-is, or be instructed to pour sand into the bottom of the bag, before placing a tea light inside. Battery-operated tea lights are a safer option and may be ordered in bulk online.

CRITIQUE & INTERPRET

Session Three

- If possible, darken the environment and display the luminaries.
- Ask students to reflect and write a list of their daily interactions with an electric object or power source. These thoughts may be shared with the group.