

FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT & THE ART OF JAPAN

GRADE: 1-5, Middle School, High School

TIME: 30 MINUTES

This looking activity introduces participants to the American designer and architect, Frank Lloyd Wright and the inspiration he found from Japanese artwork. As participants examine Wright's work alongside examples of Japanese art, they will be challenged to discuss the design elements they see and interpret the relationship between the two.

INTEGRATED SUBJECTS: Visual Art & Social Studies

OBJECTIVES

MATERIALS | RESOURCES

Examples of Frank Lloyd Wright's work
Examples of Japanese designs and artwork
Sketchbooks

Optional:

How a Set of Rediscovered 19th Century Japanese Doors leads to Frank Lloyd Wright, Claire Voon, Hyperallergic. Available at: <https://hyperallergic.com/233218/how-a-set-of-rediscovered-19th-century-japanese-doors-leads-to-frank-lloyd-wright/>

1. Introduce Frank Lloyd Wright and Japanese artwork.
2. Develop visual literacy and the ability to verbally discuss artwork.
3. Challenge the concepts of influence and originality.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

1. What does it mean to be influenced by something? How is this different from appropriation?
2. Can two things look similar but not be influenced by one another?

LESSON PROCEDURE

EXPLORE

- Present examples of Frank Lloyd Wright's work alongside examples of Japanese art. Find images and background information available at: <https://www.teachingbydesign.org/about/wright-and-japan/> and <https://www.teachingbydesign.org/multimedia/>.

Example suggestions for Wright's work:

Unity Temple
Midway Gardens
Home and Studio Playroom Mural
Robie House living room laylight screens
Hills-DeCaro House
Frank Thomas House

Example suggestions for Japanese artwork:

Red Fuji, Hokusai's series Thirty-six Views of Mount Fuji
The Great Wave off Kanagawa, Hokusai's series Thirty-six Views of Mount Fuji
Phoenix Pavilion from the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition
Irises, Ogata Korin, early 18th century
Kasuri textiles
The Great Wooden Stage of Kiyomizu-dera
Wind Blown Grass Across the Moon, Hiroshige
Additional Resource: Freer & Sackler Gallery available at: <https://www.freersackler.si.edu>

ENGAGE

- Encourage participants to sketch and take notes throughout discussion.
- During discussion have participants consider:

DESIGN ELEMENTS: What do you notice first? What effect does it have? How is it used? Are any design elements the same? What are the dominant design elements? Are these similar in Wright's work and in the examples of Japanese work? If the same design elements are present, are they used in the same way?
(<https://www.teachingbydesign.org/design-elements/elements-of-design/>)

THEME: What themes are present in the various designs? What design elements are used to illustrate or convey the themes? Are the themes universal?

INFLUENCE: Looking at examples of each, can we determine if Japanese art influenced Wright's work? How do we know? If two works look alike is it safe to assume one influenced the other? Can artists create and design without influence of any kind? What role do the works of artists and designers before us play in our own work?

CRITIQUE & INTERPRET

- After discussion, have participants write a brief statement about the role influence, or inspiration, plays in artmaking.