

# LIGHT & SHADOWS

**GRADE:** 3-5, Middle School, High School

**TIME:** 60 MINUTES, Optional Tour

Frank Lloyd Wright was the master of creating dazzling effects by manipulating light and shadow. Through art glass designs, lay lights, sconces, and doorways both light and shadow were integral parts of Wright's designs. In this lesson participants examine the effects of light and shadow in Wright's work and relate it to the use of positive and negative space in design. Participants will then create a linoleum cut tile borrowing aesthetic elements from Wright's work.

**INTEGRATED SUBJECTS:** Visual Art & Science

## OBJECTIVES

### MATERIALS | RESOURCES

Images of Wright's designs  
Linoleum tiles  
Linoleum cutters  
Pencils  
Sharpie Markers  
Sketchbooks  
Optional: Block printing ink, brayers

1. Look closely at Wright's use of light and shadow to understand its importance in design.
2. Understand and apply the concept of positive and negative space to the creation of a unique work of art.
3. Develop precision and fine motor skills.
4. Introduce new materials and resources for artmaking.

## ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

1. What role do light and shadow play in Frank Lloyd Wright's designs?
2. How do light and shadow relate to positive and negative space?
3. How can you use light, shadow, positive, and negative space in design?

# LESSON PROCEDURE

## EXPLORE

5 Minutes

- Present examples of Frank Lloyd Wright's work for participants to look at closely. Images are available at: <https://www.teachingbydesign.org/multimedia/>. If possible, visit a Wright site to provide participants a chance to experience Wright's use of light first hand. For current tour times and reservations go to: <http://flwright.org/tours> or contact the education department at [educate@flwright.org](mailto:educate@flwright.org).
- Examples of Wright's use of light include:
  - Robie House art glass windows, lay lights, and sconces
  - Oak Park Home and Studio dining room laylight, table, and chairs
  - Unity Temple skylights

## ENGAGE

5 Minutes

- As participants look at Wright's designs, encourage them to sketch and make notes in their sketchbooks.
- Discuss what participants see. Focus on design choices Wright made that impacted the effects of light and shadow in his designs.
- Encourage discussion around the contrast of light and shadow and compare to the concept of positive and negative space.
- Ask participants to consider how these elements of design are used in creating artwork.

## DESIGN

45 Minutes

- In sketchbooks, have participants sketch different designs that focus on positive and negative space. Provide opportunities for feedback and time for participants to revise and further develop their designs.
- Once participants have finalized a design, have them draw it on a linoleum tile in pencil.
- After designs are marked in pencil, participants can trace over them in Sharpie.
- Carefully, have participants cut their designs from the linoleum tile. Remind participants to take note of which areas are positive and which are negative space.
- Optional: Once the tiles are cut, participants can create block prints of their design.

## CRITIQUE & INTERPRET

5 Minutes

- Assemble the linoleum tiles together for participants to view.
- Have participants consider similarities/differences, different ways others used light and shadow, methods and strategies that were used, the designs collectively as a large work of art.