

PRESERVATION: UNCOVERING HISTORY

GRADE: 3-5, Middle School, High School

TIME: OPEN

Preservation is the act of keeping something alive or in existence. For hundreds, sometimes thousands of years, artworks, designs, structures, and landmarks all over the world have been preserved. These items help mark significant moments in history and tell the stories of their creators and admirers. In this lesson, participants will be challenged to go out into their local community and uncover a work of art and investigate its story and importance. They will then create their own artwork to help re-tell the story and share their findings.

INTEGRATED SUBJECTS: Visual Art & Social Studies

OBJECTIVES

MATERIALS | RESOURCES

Images of the Oak Park Home and Studio
Access to local libraries and records
Sketchbooks
Pencils
Additional resources as needed
Artmaking supplies as needed

1. Understand the importance of preservation and its role in communities.
2. Investigate a subject through looking activities, in-depth research, and primary sources.
3. Communicate a story by creating a work of art.
4. Gain deeper knowledge about the history of the surrounding community.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

1. What is a work of art and where can they be found?
2. What role does preservation have in maintaining a community's identity?
3. What can a work of art communicate or share?

LESSON PROCEDURE

EXPLORE

- Introduce Frank Lloyd Wright as an American architect and designer and his Oak Park Home and Studio.
- Discuss preservation and why the Oak Park community thought it was important to save Wright's first Home and Studio. (<https://www.teachingbydesign.org/about/home-and-studio/>)

ENGAGE

- **Turn discussion to your local community. Ask:** Are there artworks and designs in our community that have been preserved or should be? What is an artwork or design? What makes them valuable to a community? What stories do they tell?
- **To help participants, brainstorm a list of local artworks and designs. Look at maps or conduct brief online searches.**
- **Have participants choose a work of art or design to investigate and research further. Set research guidelines for the quantity and types of sources.**
- **Encourage participants to document their findings in their sketchbooks.**
- **After participants have completed their research, help them reflect and analyze it through written summaries, brief oral presentations, or sketches.**

DESIGN

- **Have participants create a work of art that illustrates what they discovered during their research. Artworks could include models, paintings, sculptures, or poems.**
- **Remind participants to be thoughtful about the symbols and imagery they use and how it communicates the story they want to tell.**
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CRITIQUE & INTERPRET

- **Have participants display and share their works of art.**
- **Suggestion: Have participants record interviews with one another about the work of art they researched and how it inspired the art they created.**
- **Provide time for participants to debrief about the process. Ask:** What research methods did you use? What information was easy/difficult to find? What strategies did you use to create your work of art? How did the strategy relate to the story you wanted to tell and/or the artwork you researched? What was the most challenging about telling a story visually?