

NEIGHBORHOODS & CITIES: COMMUNITIES

GRADE: 3-5, Middle School, High School

TIME: OPEN

What makes up the ideal community? Is it wide, open space and pristine parkland? Is it a well planned transportation system and convenient access to neighborhood necessities? Frank Lloyd Wright detailed his vision for the perfect community in his book *The Disappearing City*. It prioritized cars and green space, with a minimum of 1 acre of land per family, a few strategically placed skyscrapers, multi-level highways, and conveniently placed commercial businesses. In this lesson, participants examine Wright's designs for Broadacre City and reflect on their own local neighborhoods and cities. Afterward, participants answer the question of what makes the ideal community and design their own city plan.

**Pair this lesson with others in the Neighborhoods & Cities series for a more in-depth exploration.*

INTEGRATED SUBJECTS: Visual Art & Social Studies

OBJECTIVES

MATERIALS | RESOURCES

Images of Broadacre City
Images and maps of the local community
Butcher paper or poster board
Rulers
Markers
Construction Paper

"Is the World Ready for Frank Lloyd Wright's Suburban Utopia? Inside the Architect's Overlooked Plan for Broadacre City" by James Nevius, *Curbed* (Available at: <https://archive.curbed.com/2017/1/4/14154644/frank-lloyd-wright-broadacre-city-history>)

1. Evaluate and determine the criteria for the ideal community.
2. Explore Frank Lloyd Wright's architectural and design concepts through Broadacre City.
3. Create a large-scale collaborative work that synthesizes the conclusions and discoveries made.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

1. What makes up the ideal community? How is this determined?
2. How are Frank Lloyd Wright's architectural and design concepts presented in his design for Broadacre City?
3. What strategies are needed when creating a collaborative work?

LESSON PROCEDURE

EXPLORE

- Present images of Broadacre City and allow participants to quietly observe the designs.
- After a few minutes, encourage participants to discuss what they see. Ask: Do the images look familiar? Is anything recognizable?
- As discussion progresses, begin adding details and background information about Frank Lloyd Wright and Broadacre City. (<https://www.teachingbydesign.org/about/frank-lloyd-wright/>)
- Optional: Have participants read and discuss “Is the World Ready for Frank Lloyd Wright’s Suburban Utopia? Inside the Architect’s Overlooked Plan for Broadacre City” by James Nevius, *Curbed*. Available at: <https://archive.curbed.com/2017/1/4/14154644/frank-lloyd-wright-broadacre-city-history>

ENGAGE

- Have participants reflect on their own surrounding community.
- **Ask participants to consider:** What is the center of their city or neighborhood? Why? How was this determined or how did it come about over time? What is the layout of the community? Is it grid-like? Are there diagonal streets or streets that follow a more free-form, organic path? What types of public spaces exist? Where are they? How do you get there? Are things in the community driven by need? Is there something that is needed in the community that does not exist?
- To help reflection and discussion, provide images and maps of the local city and neighborhood.

DESIGN

- Divide participants into groups to collaboratively design and plan the ideal neighborhood.
- Plans can be mapped out on large sheets of butcher paper or poster board and can be two or three-dimensional.
- If models were created with the Teaching by Design lesson *Neighborhoods & Cities: Buildings*, participants’ buildings should be included in the neighborhood plan. Other elements of the neighborhood can be modeled with available time.
- Remind participants to consider:
 - Transportation: How will people move around the community?
 - Needs: What do communities need in order to survive?
 - Public and private spaces: Where do people live and work? Where do people relax?
 - Nature: What role do parks or green, open spaces play?

CRITIQUE & INTERPRET

- Once each neighborhood is complete, have participants share their community plans with their peers.
- Begin discussing similarities and differences in the various neighborhood designs. How would they support each other? Do any neighborhood designs have a distinct identity?
- As discussion evolves, have participants begin laying out their neighborhoods in relation to one another.
- Once all the neighborhoods have been placed, examine the designs as an entire city.
- Compare and contrast their city design to your local city and help participants reflect on their design choices.