

MAKE IT PUBLIC

GRADE: 6-12

TIME: Two 50-minute sessions

What is the purpose of public art? How can public art be an expression of organic design? Students will explore these questions in this lesson, considering how Frank Lloyd Wright's philosophy of organic design can be applied to a work of public art. To support this inquiry, students will observe and explore public art in their own communities, considering if, and to what degree, these works are examples of organic design. Then, students will be challenged to redesign an existing public artwork to make it more organic.

INTEGRATED SUBJECTS: Social Studies, Visual Arts, Social-Emotional Learning

OBJECTIVES

MATERIALS | RESOURCES

Model Magic or modeling clay
Paper
Pencils
Colored pencils, crayons, or markers
(optional)
Images of Frank Lloyd Wright's building designs
Images of public art in your community

1. Understand the concept of organic design and how it can be applied to a work of public art.
2. Explore the many forms, ideas, and possibilities that can be expressed in public art.
3. Refine an existing work of public art in order to better suit its purpose, place, and time.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

1. What roles do art and design play in a community?
2. What is the purpose of public art?
3. How can public art be an expression of organic design?

LESSON PROCEDURE

EXPLORE

Session One

- **Introduce students to Frank Lloyd Wright and the concept of organic design, or the idea that architecture should be suited to its environment and be a product of its purpose, place, and time. With images of Wright's architecture, demonstrate how Frank Lloyd Wright designed organically. Images and information to support this discussion can be found at <https://www.teachingbydesign.org>.**
- **Have students consider:** Can a building be a work of art? How? What role does architecture play in a community? **Encourage students to highlight differences between public architecture and private architecture.**
- **Introduce students to the concept of public art, providing examples of public artworks in your community.**
 - For Chicago schools, we recommend exploring <http://www.chicagopublicartgroup.org/> and <https://www.chicago.gov/content/dam/city/depts/dca/Public%20Art/publicartguide1.pdf>.
 - Differentiation: Have students independently research and explore examples of public art in their community.
- **Ask students:** What is the purpose of public art? What role does it play in a community? **Highlight how public art can teach about or honor a community's history, visually enhance an environment, provoke curiosity, inspire, challenge, and engage. Note how public art is not always outside; it can be located inside a public building or linked with public infrastructure such as a subway platform.**

ENGAGE

Session One

- **Have students consider:** Can organic design be expressed in public art? How?
- **While exploring examples of public art in your community, challenge students to determine whether or not each work is an example of organic design. Focus discussion on the work's relationship to its environment, its audience, and its social context.**
 - Differentiation: Take a field trip to explore public artworks in your community.
- **Have students pick one work to explore further.**

ENGAGE

Session Two

- **Review the concept of organic design and how it can be expressed in a work of public art.**
- **Invite students to share which public artwork they have decided to explore further, noting why they were attracted to that particular work.**

ENGAGE

Session Two

- **Challenge students to redesign their chosen artwork in order to make it better connect to its surrounding environment. Have students sketch a few ideas and pick one for further development.**
 - Optional Extension: Have students sketch ideas for a new public artwork to replace the existing work. The new work must be an example of organic design.
- **Have students use Model Magic or modeling clay to construct a prototype of their redesigned public artwork.**
 - Optional Extension: Use any available materials to add color and detail to the prototype.

LESSON PROCEDURE (continued)

CRITIQUE & INTERPRET

Session Two

- **Have students view the work of other teams in the classroom, identifying ways their peers succeeded at the project.**
- **As students share their work, encourage students to reflect on the design process. Have students consider:**
What was challenging about creating a public artwork that is designed organically? How did the surrounding environment influence the design?