

The Global Influences of Frank Lloyd Wright

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ABOUT THIS LESSON

Frank Lloyd Wright often shows up on elementary school lists of famous Wisconsinites. Through a combination of ELA and social studies standards, this lesson will allow students to explore the local and global influences on his future architectural designs. In addition to learning about Wright, students will have the opportunity to learn more about Ukiyo-3 woodblock prints and Japanese art. Finally, students will be given the opportunity to explore personal interests and experiences that influence how they view the world.

GRADE LEVEL

Wisconsin history is typically covered in fourth grade, so this lesson is suitable for students in grades 3-5.

CLASSROOM TIME

This lesson is designed to take an hour and a half and be split into three half-hour class periods. If teachers choose to complete the optional woodblock art activity, the time will be longer.

RESOURCES

- *The Shape of the World: A Portrait of Frank Lloyd Wright* (Book). Author: K.L Going Publisher: Beach Lane Books (2017)
- [The Shape of the World: A Portrait of Frank Lloyd Wright](#)
- [Victoria and Albert Museum Japanese Woodblock Prints](#)
- [Frank Lloyd Wright and the Japanese Print](#) (image collection)
- [Library of Congress Analyzing Primary Sources Tool](#)
- [Japanese woodblock printing with Rebecca Salter RA Video](#)
- [Frank Lloyd Wright Virtual Classroom: Japanese Art Wood Block Print 3-Day Activity](#)

Background Information

- [Frank Lloyd Wright and Japan article](#)

STANDARDS

ELA standards

- *R.5.8* Explain how claims in a text are supported by relevant reasons and evidence, identifying which reasons and evidence support which claims
- *R.5.9* Make informed judgments about quality of text; make connections to other texts, ideas, cultural perspectives, identities, eras, and personal experiences.

Social Studies Standards

- *SS.BH1.a.4* Describe how a person's understanding, perceptions, and behaviors are affected by relationships and environments.
- *SS.Hist2.c.i* Analyze individuals, groups, and events to understand why their contributions are important to historical change or continuity.
- *SS.Hist3.b.i* Identify different historical perspectives regarding people and events in the past.

Objectives/I can statements

1. I can describe how Frank Lloyd Wright's childhood experiences and travel in Japan influenced his architecture.
2. I can analyze a primary source by using the observe, reflect and question technique.
3. I can examine how my past experiences have influenced how I view the world.

LESSON

Note: Before the lesson, the teacher may wish to familiarize themselves with the history of Frank Lloyd Wright's work and the influences of Japanese culture on his designs. Suggested articles of background information for teachers have been provided in the resources.

1. Students will read the book or listen to the recording of the *Shape of the World* as an entire class. After reading the book, the teacher should guide a discussion about the early facts about Lloyd's childhood and the start of his career. The teacher should emphasize the influence that playing with shapes and the encouragement of his mother had on his future career. If there is time, students can begin to explore and name influences and experiences that shaped how they viewed the world. It may be helpful for the teacher to share an example. This will be explored in more detail in future steps of the lesson.
2. During this step, the teacher should explain that Wright had the opportunity to travel to Japan and was greatly influenced by the culture and art that he had experienced while traveling and living there. It is up to the teacher to describe how much detail to go into about his travels, but it should empathize that his future work would be greatly influenced by his time there. Depending on time, this is an opportunity to explore more about Japanese culture and history.
3. Explain to students that one of Wright's favorite art styles was a popular type of Japanese art called Ukiyo-e woodblock prints. Students should take time to study different images of the Ukiyo-e. There are many examples available online. The link for an online exhibit from Albert and Victoria Museum has been provided in the resources. The link to examples of wood prints actually owned by Frank Lloyd Wright has also been provided. After studying all the images, students should choose one image to explore more in-depth. It is commended that students use the Library of Congress's Analyzing Primary Sources tool to study the image. Students should be given time to share their thoughts with the entire class or in small groups. Depending on the time, the teacher can show the students the video *Japanese woodblock printing with Rebecca Salter RA*. This video shows students how the prints were made.
4. Repeat that all this artwork influenced Frank Lloyd's architectural designs. Although there is an opportunity for lots of discussion about how exactly Japanese culture influenced Wright, the main points for students to understand are
 - There is a value for nature and open spaces. Buildings should be in harmony with their natural environment
 - An appreciation for minimalist, simplistic, and useful buildings

Students should study pictures of Frank Lloyd Wright's buildings and see if they can identify these features in the buildings. There are many websites that have images of buildings. Suggestions of buildings to study:

1. Taliesin West
 2. Robie House
 3. Fallingwater
 4. Guggenheim Museum
 5. Marin County Civic Center
 6. Taliesin
 7. Jacobs House
5. Students should review how the influences and experiences of life influenced Wright's architecture. After reviewing the lesson, students will have time to reflect on their own experiences and influences. A graphic organizer has been provided to help them organize their thoughts. This graphic organizer will be helpful for the assessment part of this assignment.

Assessment/Final Activity

Depending on time, students can create their own woodblock prints. They can attempt to design woodblock prints using the same principles that inspired Frank Lloyd Wright to design his buildings.

They can also design a woodblock print of a building of their own design and describe what inspired them to create such a building. This can be used as the assessment to activity. There are multiple online sets of directions for making woodblock prints. The suggestions from the Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation are listed in the resources.

Note: If there is no time or resources to make woodblock prints, students can create drawings and write their explanations.

My Experiences and Influences

1. Who are three people who are important to you?

What important lessons did they teach you?

How do you use these lessons today?

2. What are three memorable experiences you have had in your life?

Why were these experiences so memorable?

What did you learn from these experiences?