

THE THREE LITTLE ARCHITECTS

GRADE: K-2

TIME: 60 minutes

Participants are introduced to architecture and the design process through the classic tale of *The Three Little Pigs* and conduct an in-depth exploration of building materials. Participants will think about cause and effect, the qualities of different building materials, and the problem-solving aspects of design. After listening to, reading, or acting out a version of the tale, they will consider how weight, texture, size, color, and other qualities of building materials can address environmental forces.

**This lesson was inspired by the Robie House Teacher Education Project supported by the Terra Foundation for American Art.*

INTEGRATED SUBJECTS: Visual Art & Literacy

OBJECTIVES

MATERIALS | RESOURCES

Your favorite version of *The Three Little Pigs*

Building material samples

Examples:

Brick	Concrete
Tiles	Stone
Glass	Plastic
Cardboard	Wood (clapboard)
Tin	Carpet samples

Labels with descriptive words

* For a fun twist on the original story, try *The Three Little Pigs: An Architectural Tale* by Steven Guarnaccia)

1. Explore different materials to understand their strengths and weaknesses.
2. Understand that design can shape and improve the way we live by helping to solve every day problems.
3. Participate in the design process by understanding different decisions architects must make.
4. Increase descriptive vocabulary.
5. Practice sorting and categorizing.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

1. What is unique about Frank Lloyd Wright's architecture and the materials he chose for his designs?
2. How can you design with different materials?
3. How does the environment impact a design?

LESSON PROCEDURE

EXPLORE

20 minutes

- Read, tell, or have participants help you act out a version of *The Three Little Pigs*, introducing the idea of building materials and cause and effect.
- Introduce Frank Lloyd Wright as an American architect and designer that selected his building materials very carefully based on the building's location and purpose. Share an example of Wright's work like the Frederick C. Robie House. Images are available at: <https://www.teachingbydesign.org/multimedia/>
- Have participants consider how Frank Lloyd Wright could have helped the Three Little Pigs design and build better houses.

ENGAGE

30 minutes

- Arrange examples of real building materials for participants to explore. Give them time to interact with each material and ask them to think about how each one looks and feels. Prompt exploration of the materials with questions about size, shape, weight, texture, temperature, color, etc.
- After several minutes of open exploration, encourage students to sort and categorize the materials. Begin with size, asking participants to separate the big pieces from the small pieces. Then ask for other ways to group the materials (weight, color, texture).
- Have participants close their eyes and feel the samples again. Ask them to share descriptive words about how the materials feel.
- Share the descriptive word labels with participants and read through each one. Some words should have already been shared, while some may be new.
- Ask participants to match the labels with each building material. Have participants consider: Can a material have more than one label? Can something be both shiny and smooth? Can two materials both be rough but still feel different?
- After students have explored the materials, display the materials in the classroom with the labels for review and reinforcement.

*Consider going on a scavenger hunt to discover the building materials the school is built from. Include an additional 15 minutes for the walk.

CRITIQUE & INTERPRET

10 minutes

- Return to the story of *The Three Little Pigs* and discuss how their exploration of building materials may have changed their minds about the Pigs material choices.
- Discuss other elements that may influence the building materials an architect might use (location, weather, climate, etc.)