

SHADES OF FALLINGWATER

GRADE: 1-5

TIME: Two 50-minute sessions

Frank Lloyd Wright famously unified structure and site in the design of Fallingwater, his iconic 1935 Pennsylvania summer home built above a waterfall. In this lesson, participants will take a closer look at the design of Fallingwater and its colors, considering how colors in nature can inspire a work of art or architecture. Then, participants will look at the colors in their own natural surroundings and create a nature collage with found materials. As an optional extension, participants can also create a “local color palette” that can be used in organic architecture in their community.

INTEGRATED SUBJECTS: Visual Arts, Science, Physical Education

OBJECTIVES

MATERIALS | RESOURCES

Small objects from nature such as sticks, pebbles, seed pods, dried leaves
Liquid glue
Small paint brushes
9" x 12" cardboard
Plastic lids for glue, or scraps of cardboard
Newspaper
Images of and/or videos about Fallingwater
Fallingwater color chart (example linked below)
Paper (optional)
Pencils (optional)
Magnifying glasses (optional)
Crayons or colored pencils (optional)
Magazines (optional)

1. Explore the architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright's Fallingwater, with emphasis on Wright's use of color.
2. Understand the concept of designing in harmony with nature.
3. Through “close looking,” find small objects in nature on a walk, or objects will be supplied by the teacher. Possible use of magnifying glasses.
4. Take part in a nature walk as a means for enhancing and maintaining physical and mental health.
5. Match nature objects to colors used in the design of Fallingwater.
6. Create an original work of art.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

1. Are the colors in the participants' environment similar to or different from the colors found in Pennsylvania at Fallingwater?
2. What are the natural colors found where I live?
3. What colors would you use in your home or school to reflect your environment, local park, or yard? (Instructors can adapt these questions for any unhoused students.)

LESSON PROCEDURE

EXPLORE

Session One

- **Introduce Frank Lloyd Wright and the job of an architect.** Emphasize how Frank Lloyd Wright designed in harmony with nature, an approach called organic design.
- **With images and/or videos, introduce Fallingwater, Wright's iconic 1935 design for Edgar J. Kaufmann.** Resources include <https://fallingwater.org/> and <https://fallingwater.org/fallingwater-from-home/>. Ask students: How is Fallingwater an example of organic design?
- **Ask participants to notice the colors of the home at Fallingwater and the natural areas surrounding the home.** (Tip: Be sure to show images reflecting the colors of all four seasons!)
 - Optional Extension: Students can reflect in writing.
- **Ask participants to think about the colors of their own home, apartment, or room, and the environment outside.** Students may consider natural or built environs such as sidewalks, trees, or bushes.
 - Optional Extension: Students can reflect in writing.
 - Differentiation: Accommodate unhoused participants by redirecting this discussion to focus on the school building.

EXPLORE

Session Two

- **Review the work of Frank Lloyd Wright and the design of Fallingwater.** Ask students: What colors were used in Fallingwater? Do you think we can find the same colors where we live? Why or why not?

ENGAGE

Session Two

- **Take a 30-minute walk outside for students to each collect approximately 5 small objects from nature, such as pebbles, dried leaves or sticks.** (Tip: Give students reminders about not picking plants or flowers!)
 - Differentiation: If a walk is not possible, provide students with a variety of items from nature. (Tip: Smaller, lightweight objects will work best!)
- **Provide participants with a chart of colors inspired by Fallingwater.** (An example can be found at: <https://www.ppgpaints.com/color/color-collections/fallingwater/the-colors-of-fallingwater>)
- **Ask participants to match their found objects to the colors on the chart.**
 - Differentiation: This can be done independently or in small groups.
- **Have participants share their findings to see how many matches they have made.**

DESIGN

Session Two

- **Challenge students to work in small groups to arrange their found objects in preparation for a collage.** Encourage students to test out multiple ideas.
- **Demonstrate how to apply glue or other adhesive using the proper amount or application with a small brush.** (Tip: A small amount of glue will work best!)
- **Have each group use glue and their found materials to create a nature collage.**
- **Review clean-up procedures, including cleaning brushes, washing hands, and closing all glue bottles.** (Tip: We suggest using newspaper to protect desks or surfaces from glue!)

LESSON PROCEDURE (continued)

CRITIQUE & INTERPRET

Session Two

- **Once the glue has dried, have participants display their finished collages. Encourage students to pay close attention to any colors emphasized in the work of their peers.**
- **Facilitate a discussion about what colors are most predominant, what colors are exclusive to the students' neighborhood, and what colors Frank Lloyd Wright may have used if designing a house in their area.**
 - Optional Extension: Have students use crayons, colored pencils, magazines, or paint swatches to create a "local" color chart that reflects the colors found in the natural objects they selected. Have students consider: How does the local color chart differ from the one inspired by Fallingwater?