

WRITING POETRY WITH FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT

GRADE: 4-6

TIME: Four 50-minute sessions

How does nature inspire art? Frank Lloyd Wright evoked the natural world in his architecture and art glass designs. In this lesson, students will explore how various forms of expression—poetry, architecture, music—can be inspired by the natural world. After exploring examples, students will write their own nature-inspired poem and use it as inspiration for an original art glass design.

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

OBJECTIVES

MATERIALS | RESOURCES

Grade-level poems focusing on nature.
Images of Frank Lloyd Wright's architecture
and art glass designs
Colored pencils
Sketchbook or drawing paper
Paper
Pencils
Sticky notes

1. Describe the work of Frank Lloyd Wright and identify how nature inspired his designs.
2. Identify themes in the work of Transcendentalist writers.
3. Understand how nature can inspire various forms of art.
4. Create poetry inspired by nature.
5. Create an original work of art inspired by poetry and nature.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

1. Who is Frank Lloyd Wright and how did nature influence his work?
2. How does Frank Lloyd Wright's work connect to the work of the Transcendentalist poets and writers?
3. How can language and literature inspire visual art?

LESSON PROCEDURE

EXPLORE

Session One

- **Display images of Frank Lloyd Wright’s art glass windows or other nature-inspired architectural elements. If possible, display these images on the walls around the classroom. Encourage students to independently explore the examples and use sticky notes to write a one-word description of each image.** (Tip: Have students write their word on the back of each sticky note in order to ensure that students are not influenced by others’ ideas!)
- **Introduce Transcendentalist writers and poets such as Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, and Walt Whitman. Have students consider:** How are Transcendentalist poems inspired by nature? **Use grade-level examples of these authors’ works to identify Transcendentalist themes, such as individualism, self-reliance, the sanctity of nature, and the inherent goodness of humanity and the natural world.** (Tip: More information can be found at <https://franklloydwright.org/for-you-o-democracy/>)

ENGAGE

Session One

- **Discuss any recurring words, themes, or ideas that students identified in the images of Frank Lloyd Wright’s work. This can be done as a whole class or in small groups.**
- **Introduce Frank Lloyd Wright as an architect. Use student observations and prior discussion to highlight Wright’s love of nature. Have students consider:** How might these designs be inspired by nature?

Session Two

- **Remind students that architecture can be a form of artistic expression, just like poetry, music, or visual art. Ask students where else they may find work inspired by nature. Use wait time and then offer a few examples such as music, fabric, wallpaper, and clothing.**
 - **Optional Extension:** Listen to music inspired by nature. Have students consider: How does nature inspire the piece? (Tip: Examples can be found at <https://www.classical-music.com/features/works/classical-music-inspired-by-nature-weather-thunderstorms-and-wind>. If students are struggling, have students first describe each song. It may help to play a few different examples so students can compare and contrast the various elements in each song.)

DESIGN

Sessions Two and Three

- **Invite students to select some key words from those posted around the classroom and incorporate them into a creative writing piece. This may be a poem, haiku, song, essay, or other grade-appropriate written piece.** (Tip: This can be incorporated into a larger English teaching unit about rhyme schemes and patterns in poetry!) **Allow time for brainstorming and revision.**

Sessions Three and Four

- **Challenge students to design their own nature-inspired glass window design. Encourage students to use their poetry as inspiration for their window design. Sketches and drawings can be done on paper or in a sketchbook with colored pencil. Allow time for brainstorming and revision. Have students consider:** How are my poem and my window design similar? How are they different?

LESSON PROCEDURE (continued)

CRITIQUE & INTERPRET

Session Four

- Have students share their poetry by posting it around the room alongside their corresponding art glass design.
- Clearly instruct students on the guidelines of peer review feedback in order to create a community where meaningful connections can be made. Encourage students to give feedback to their peers by visiting each example and writing down their reactions for each piece on a sticky note next to the student work. Allow time and encourage rewriting. For recommendations on conducting peer review sessions, visit <https://www.read-writethink.org/professional-development/strategy-guides/peer-review>.