

ORDINARY HEROES

GRADE: 3-5

TIME: Three 50-minute sessions

How do our heroes become who they are? In what ways do community resources like libraries help heroes make their dreams a reality? What defines a superhero? How can we take inspiration from the heroic work of others and turn it into art? In this lesson, students look at the ways in which librarians work to combat the issue of “book deserts” in communities all around the world. Using Frank Lloyd Wright’s love of reading and books and the unique geometric patterns he designed as inspiration, students create a patterned weaving of a literacy superhero and capture the culture of the community they are trying to serve.

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

OBJECTIVES

MATERIALS | RESOURCES

Photos of Frank Lloyd Wright’s work, particularly focusing on patterns he created through art glass, rugs, light fixtures, etc.

Frank Lloyd Wright’s Library through Stanford University ([link below](#))

Cardboard looms

Yarn

Pictures, magazines, and other unconventional weaving materials

Scissors

Masking tape

Paper

Pencils

1. Understand the term “book desert” and its impact on communities.
2. Understand the importance of reading to Frank Lloyd Wright and how his love of reading impacted his architecture and art.
3. Understand Frank Lloyd Wright’s use of patterns in his designs, and use these patterns as inspiration to create an original work of art.
4. Design a patterned woven design that shows the participant’s own love of reading.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

1. What makes a superhero?
2. How did reading and access to books help Frank Lloyd Wright on his path to becoming an architect?
3. What does a “reading” superhero need?
4. What role do materials play in a work of art or design?

LESSON PROCEDURE

EXPLORE

Session One

- **Introduce Frank Lloyd Wright and his architecture.** Begin by showing some of his work found on <https://www.teachingbydesign.org/about/prairie-style/>.
 - Have students write down what they notice about his architecture and discuss overarching themes.
- **Mention that Wright was a great lover of books and an avid reader of topics such as art, poetry, biography, history, philosophy, economics, and of course, art and architecture.** Additional information can be found at <https://flwlibrary.stanford.edu/frank-lloyd-wright-and-books>.
- **Discuss ways in which books are accessed--bookstores, classrooms, online resources, audiobooks, and libraries.** Ask students, How difficult might it have been for Frank Lloyd Wright to access books in rural Wisconsin? What are the steps we take to get books in our own communities?
- **Ask students,** How do books enrich our lives? How can we recognize and appreciate the people who work to provide book accessibility?
- **Discuss the term “book desert” – a geographical area where it is difficult to access printed books, especially without access to a vehicle.**
- **Lead students in a brainstorming session to determine ways to combat the issue of book deserts.**
- **Give students time to sketch independently and create a pattern inspired by Wright’s work.**
- **Ask students,** How do you think Frank Lloyd Wright’s career as an architect would have been impacted if he didn’t have access to books as a child or as an adult? How do librarians or book providers help our heroes become who they are? Are they heroes themselves?

ENGAGE

Session One

- **In small groups, instruct students to discuss whether they agree with this statement: Librarians are superheroes.**
 - Differentiation: conduct this discussion with the whole class instead of in small groups.
- **Give students time to work independently to sketch a pattern representing librarians as superheroes, particularly regarding book desert areas and how librarians help their communities.**
- **They can incorporate images, words, or colors that remind them of things that are heroic.**
- **Ensure that they focus on simple geometric patterns, like those found in the work of Frank Lloyd Wright.**
- **Reflection Questions:**
 - What do books and reading mean to me? What do books and reading mean to kids all around the world?

Session Two

- **Remind students of the material covered in Session One by giving a brief synopsis of Frank Lloyd Wright’s love of books and the importance of libraries and book access.**
- **Have students take 5 minutes to write about a special book, memory of reading, or thing they have learned about book access onto strips of paper. These can be woven into their final designs as a mark of their own personal contribution to this conversation.**
- **Introduce the art of weaving and explore weaving projects that use a wide range of materials and fabrics.** (Tip: Artists include Sheila Hicks, Anni Albers, Lenore Tawney, Kyle Meyer, and Suzanne Tick.) **Have students consider:** How are materials used? Are any found or unconventional materials used? What impact do the chosen materials have on the artwork?
- **Guide students through the process of preparing a cardboard loom for weaving. Directions can be found in the appendix below.**
 - Differentiation: Prepare all looms for students in advance.
- **Demonstrate the process of weaving. Directions can be found in the appendix below.**

LESSON PROCEDURE (Continued)

DESIGN

Session Two

- Instruct students to refer to the patterns they designed in the previous class, one inspired by Frank Lloyd Wright's work and one inspired by superhero librarians dealing with book deserts.
- Show students the unconventional materials they can use for their weaving project, such as magazines, photographs, wallpaper, or fabric. Explain that students should cut the material into strips in order to weave with it.
- Encourage students to consider how the colors and shapes of the materials that they select will impact the appearance of their final weaving project.
- Allow students a full session to weave and appreciate the process of creating and improvising.
- Encourage students to redo portions of their weaving and experiment if they feel that something didn't work well.
- (Tip: Consider playing music to encourage a creative space where students can focus and learn by doing.)

CRITIQUE & INTERPRET

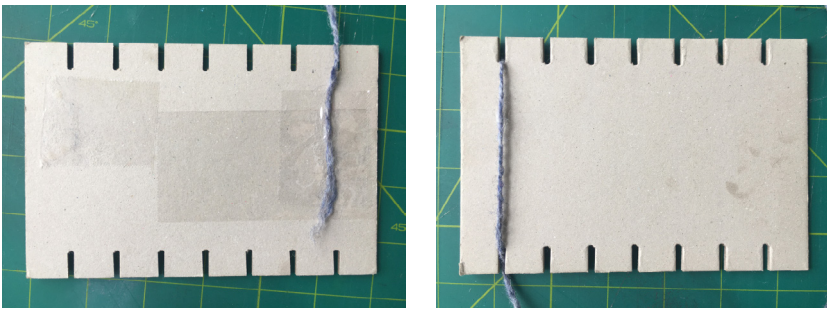
Session Three

- Guide students through the process of finishing their weaving and taking it off the loom. Directions can be found in the appendix below.
- Ask students to write a paragraph reflection or a poem about the meaning of their artwork. Have them consider: How do the materials I found make this work meaningful? How did the work of Frank Lloyd Wright impact my design? How was I impacted by the "librarian as superhero" discussion? How do my other design choices impact the work's meaning?
- Once all weaving has been completed, instruct students to display their work in a classroom Book Superhero Museum. Guide students through a gallery walk, observing how their classmates were inspired by Frank Lloyd Wright and librarians.

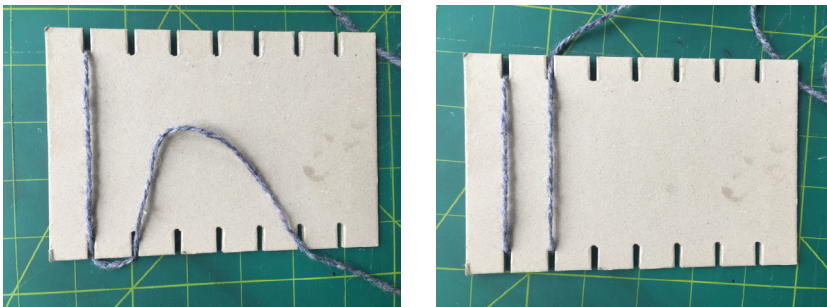
APPENDIX: HOW TO WEAVE

PREPARING THE LOOM

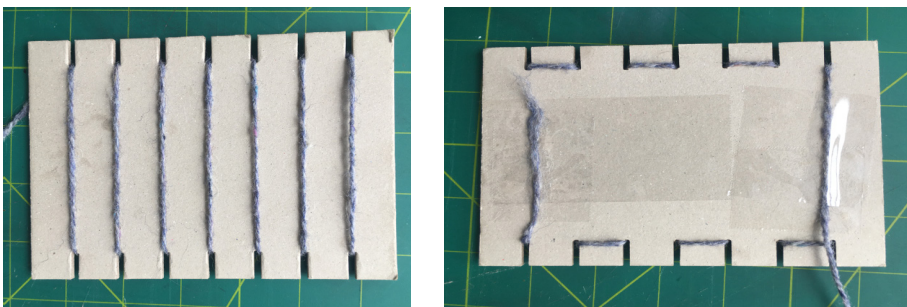
- Position the loom so that the notches are along the top and bottom edges of the loom.
- Tape one end of the yarn to the right edge of the loom and turn the loom over.



- Thread the yarn into the notch in the top left corner and carry the yarn down into the bottom left notch.
- Bring the yarn back to the front of the loom by threading it behind and up through the notch directly to the right of the leftmost bottom notch.



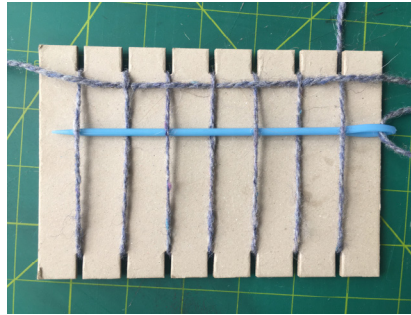
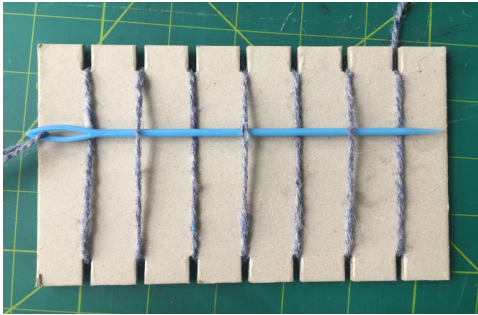
- Continue the threading motion until all notches are threaded and there are parallel lines of yarn along the entirety of the loom.
- Leave a tail of yarn and tape to the back of the loom.



APPENDIX: HOW TO WEAVE

WEAVING

- Thread a length of yarn through the tapestry needle.
- Guide the needle and yarn left to right through the loom in an over-under pattern.



- Once you have worked your way across the loom, wrap the needle around the last thread and repeat the weaving process, using an under-over pattern and weaving in the opposite direction.
- After each row is completed, push the woven yarn to the top of your loom.



- When you are ready to incorporate a new color or when you run out of yarn, cut the yarn and leave a tail of a few inches. This will be tucked into the weaving later. With a new piece of yarn, tuck a tail of yarn into the same spot as your previous yarn's tail. Continue weaving where you left off.

APPENDIX: HOW TO WEAVE

TAKING A WEAVING OFF THE LOOM

- Tuck any loose ends of yarn into the weaving by threading the loose end through a needle, guiding the needle through the edge of the weaving, and pulling tightly.



- Remove the tape from your loom and remove the weaving from the loom by pulling each loop off of the loom's notches.



- Pull all of the top loops up so that the bottom loops are flush with your weaving. Then, cut the center of each top loop and tie knots to secure.

