

FREEDOM & FORM: RHYTHM IN ARCHITECTURE & POETRY

GRADE: Middle School, High School

TIME: 2, 60 Minute Sessions

Participants will be introduced to the concept of rhythm in architecture and poetry and learn how both are used to shape or inform ideas. Participants will then apply these concepts by creating unique poems and visual designs that reflect the influence of rhythm, repetition, and form.

INTEGRATED SUBJECTS: Visual Art & Language Arts

OBJECTIVES

MATERIALS | RESOURCES

Sketchbook
Drawing Paper
Pencils
Images of building & structures
Poems for reading aloud or scansion activities

1. Learn about the concepts of rhythm, repetition, rhyme, and poetic meter.
2. Explore and make connections between rhythm in poetry and rhythm in architecture.
3. Engage in the creative process by composing poems and creating an architectural drawing.
4. Communicate ideas and design concepts visually and verbally.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

1. What similarities can you find between rhythm in architecture and in poetry?
2. Does form (poetic form, architectural use) cause you to design in different ways? Why or why not?
3. How can you mimic or replicate something visually that you hear?

LESSON PROCEDURE

SESSION ONE

EXPLORE

10 Minutes

- Introduce the concept of rhythm. Ask participants if they are familiar with the term, and what contexts they have heard it used in, ask for an example/ definition. (<https://www.teachingbydesign.org/design-elements/elements-of-design/>)
- Have participants think of a song they like (they can also clap/drum/hum it for the group). Ask them whether the rhythm stays the same throughout or whether it changes. What do they notice about the continuity or the change?

ENGAGE

20 Minutes

- Introduce the concept of meter and poetic feet (or refresh if the group has already learned about these topics)
- Distribute copies of poems and have participants read them aloud. Poem suggestions: Shakespeare's "Sonnet 18" (iambic pentameter), Elizabeth Barrett Browning's "Sonnet 43" (iambic pentameter), Robert Frost's "Birches" (blank verse), H.D.'s "Storm" (free verse), William Carlos Williams's "This Is Just To Say" (free verse)
- Ask participants what they notice about the rhythm: does it make it easy to guess how the next line will sound? Is there rhyme present; if so, does the rhythm of the poem alert you to when the rhyme will appear?
- Ask participants how they reacted to the metered verse poems vs free verse. Have them compare the form, reaction, how the poet conveys images.
- Have the group participate in discussion questions: consider whether metered poetry sounds similar or different to an everyday conversation. Ask what form of poetry participants preferred, and why. Ask if meter or rhyme made it easy to guess how the next line would sound.

DESIGN

20 Minutes

- Have participants compose a poem in both metered verse and free verse.
- Ask participants to consider the process of writing with both. What were the challenges? How did verse style influence the poem?

LESSON PROCEDURE

SESSION TWO

EXPLORE

5 Minutes

- Have participants review the poems they wrote the previous session and ask a couple to read them aloud to the group.
- Review the experience of writing poetry and ask participants whether they have seen rhythm (repetition) used in other places.
- Have participants visualize their home. Can they find any rhythm there? Encourage them to think about window placement, cabinets, or room layout.

ENGAGE

20 Minutes

- Share images of Frank Lloyd Wright's designs and begin discussing rhythm and pattern as a visual design element. Images are available at: <https://www.teachingbydesign.org/multimedia/>
- **Ask participants to consider:** How is rhythm represented as whole throughout the entire design? How do different design elements come together to create rhythm and pattern? What happens to the design if you remove the (repeating windows, columns, shingles, etc.)? How does this parallel the use of rhythm in poetry?
- **Compare Wright's designs with other buildings and designs from around the world.**

DESIGN

20 Minutes

- Keeping in mind ideas about repetition and rhythm, have participants create visual designs that reflect the ideas and imagery in the poems they wrote in session one.

CRITIQUE & INTERPRET

15 Minutes

- Have participants display and share their poems and designs making sure that they are scattered throughout the group and not shown side-by-side.
- Provide time for participants to view each other's work.
- Together, have participants work to identify the pairs of poems and visual designs.