

Teachers Guide

GRADES FOURTH - EIGHTH



Frank Lloyd Wright Samara: A Mid-Century Dream Home | February 9th -April 21st, 2015

INTRODUCTION

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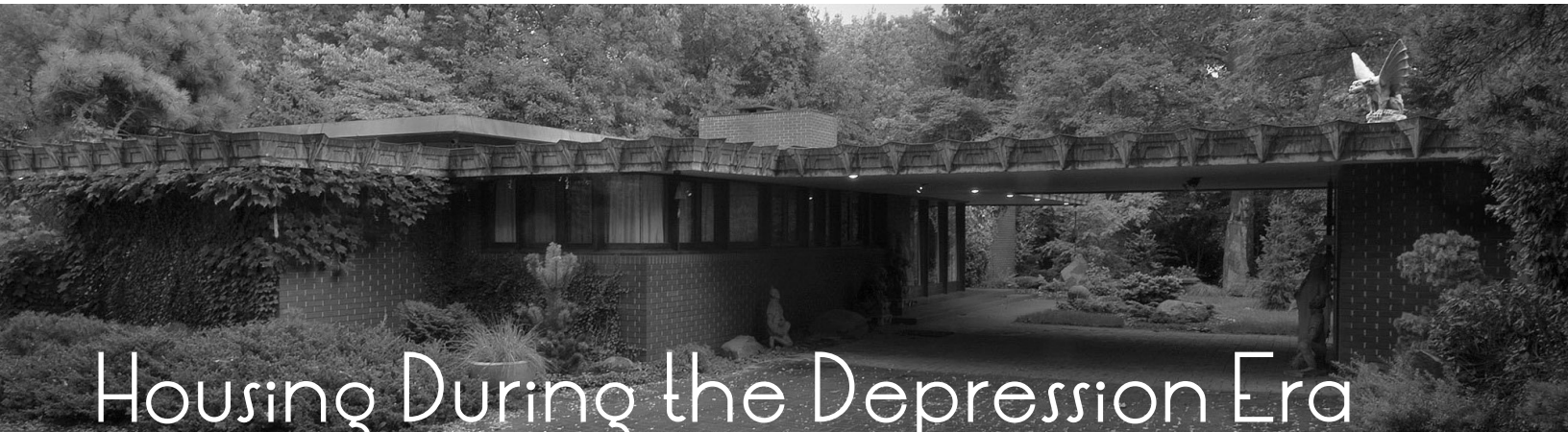
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“A BUILDING IS NOT
JUST A PLACE TO BE.
IT IS A WAY TO BE.”

- FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT



Housing During the Depression Era

Materials:

Pen/pencil and paper
Internet access
Library access (optional)
Frank Lloyd Wright's Samara: A Mid-Century Dream Home worksheet (attached)

Objectives:

Students will gain an understanding of post-World War II social and economic culture. Students will apply critical thinking and reasoning strategies to new concepts. Students will gain fluency in using and managing technology-based information sharing resources.

Student Instruction:

1. Inform your students that your class will be visiting an exhibit at your local museum called *Frank Lloyd Wright's Samara: A Mid-Century Dream Home*. Ask your students if they can predict the subject matter of the exhibit and if they have ever heard of "America's Greatest Architect," Frank Lloyd Wright.
2. Explore the housing realities in America before World War II with the following statistical information.

United States Bureau of the Census Report of 1940:

- 31% of households did not have running water
- 18% needed major repairs
- 44% lacked a bathtub or a shower for exclusive use of occupants
- 35% did not have a flush toilet in the structure
- 20% of occupied units were "crowded"
- 9% of occupied units were "seriously crowded"

PRE-VISIT LESSON PLAN

3. Investigate the conditions and needs of housing in America after World War II. America was faced with a housing crisis: returning veterans needed and were entitled to moderately priced, quality housing, but there was not enough of this housing available to meet the expectation and demand.

Have each student visit the United States Census Bureau webpage (<http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/housing/census/historic/owner.html>) that includes a table showing a state-by-state accounting of how home ownership numbers had changed over the past century. Instruct students to find their state and calculate the percentage difference between the 1940 number and the 1950 number. This percentage difference likely represents the largest decade-to-decade shift of all listed.

4. The Bureau attributes this postwar surge in homeownership to “A booming economy, favorable tax laws, a rejuvenated home building industry, and easier financing saw homeownership explode nationally...”

Using the K-W-L model (you can find a printable chart here: <http://www.eduplace.com/graphicorganizer/pdf/kwl.pdf> and see the example at the end of this activity), students will choose one of the above factors contributing to the expanding home ownership of postwar America.

Their topic header should read: “ _____(insert factor)___ and the American Dream of Home Ownership.”

They can use web-based resources to complete the chart or books like *Decades of American History: America in the 1950s* by Charles Willis.

5. Following completion of the K-W-L chart, ask students, “What does this have to do with Frank Lloyd Wright?” Explain that famed architect Frank Lloyd Wright was determined to find a democratic solution to creating housing for the average American family in postwar America. He was determined that even middle-income Americans were entitled to housing that considered contemporary needs and allowed these families “to get more for their money.” Wright believed that these houses (called Usonian houses) for moderate-income Americans should give their owners a sense of dignity and pride, regardless of the size of the property.

6. Inform students that during the field trip, they will learn about one of Frank Lloyd Wright’s Usonian homes, called Samara. They will develop an understanding of what it was like to live in a Frank Lloyd Wright home and work with the architect in creating the mid-century dream home. Prior to the field trip, distribute the subsequent worksheet to be completed during the museum visit and incorporated into the post-visit lesson plan.

PRE-VISIT LESSON PLAN

K-W-L Chart: sample

Topic: Booming Economy & the American Dream of Home Ownership

WHAT I KNOW	WHAT I WANT TO KNOW	WHAT I LEARNED
<i>After the war the economy boomed.</i>	<i>Why did it boom?</i>	<i>Factories that had been shut down during the Great Depression reopened to help support the war effort. Factories went on to produce consumer goods after the war.</i>

Frank Lloyd Wright's Samara: A Mid-Century Dream Home

1. Where does the term **Usonian** come from?
2. What does **organic architecture** mean?
3. Where was **Samara** located?
4. Name the three family members who lived in Samara and tell something about each.
5. What was it like to live in a Frank Lloyd Wright home? Would you want to live in one? Why or why not?

POST-VISIT LESSON PLAN



Architecture for the People

Materials:

Internet/computer access
Printer access
Poster board
Scissors & glue

Objectives:

Students will gain fluency in using and managing technology-based information and sharing resources. Students will gain an understanding of post-war housing solutions and architectural movements. Students will engage in effective communication to present research findings.

Student Instruction:

1. Remind your students of their recent visit to the local museum to see the exhibit called *Frank Lloyd Wright's Samara: A Mid-Century Dream Home*. Ask your students what the exhibit was about, using the title as reference.
2. Ask students if they would like to live in a Frank Lloyd Wright Usonian home. Why or why not? Would they consider a Frank Lloyd Wright Usonian home a “dream home?”
3. Refer to the pre-visit lesson plan wherein students learned about what affordable housing options were like after the Great Depression. Explain that Frank Lloyd Wright was not the only architect who reacted to the boom in housing for average Americans but that other architects and companies tried to address the need for affordable housing too.
4. Explain that you will be surveying other architectural movements that attempted to answer the question of how to house America's booming middle-income population. Direct students' attention to the following websites: <http://usahomeandgarden.com/architecture/searshomes/>

POST-VISIT LESSON PLAN

searshomes.html (Sears Model Homes) and <http://www.midcenturyhomestyle.com/plans/national-plan/1952/index.htm> (National Plan Service)

5. After exploring both websites (the second will require the student to click on a model name from the left side bar), instruct students to choose one of the Sears model homes (<http://usahomeandgarden.com/architecture/searshomes/searshomes.html>) or one of the National Plan Service homes (<http://www.midcenturyhomestyle.com/plans/national-plan/1952/index.htm>) that they might consider a “dream home.”

6. Next, direct students to choose one of the following Frank Lloyd Wright Usonian homes to document:

a. Samara: <http://www.samarahouse.org/welcome.htm>

b. The Jacobs House: <http://www.usonia1.com/>

c. The Zimmerman House:

http://www.greatbuildings.com/buildings/Zimmerman_House.html or

<http://www.currier.org/collections/zimmerman.aspx>

d. Hagan House: <http://www.kentuckknob.com/>

7. Students will be creating a poster or multi-media project that compares and contrasts either:

- A Sears Model Home and a Frank Lloyd Wright Usonian home or
- A Nation Plan Service Home and a Frank Lloyd Wright Usonian home.

They will begin by presenting pictures of each model chosen (one Sears or National Plan Service and one Frank Lloyd Wright Usonian), with the floor plans whenever possible. The students will then write four summaries addressing the following:

- A. The home’s unique design features
- B. The home’s history, including costs
- C. Advantages of living in the home (from a contemporary perspective)
- D. Disadvantages of living in the home (from a contemporary perspective)

8. Students will present their poster or multi-media projects to the class and be prepared to answer questions and/or defend their choice of a mid-century “dream home.”