



Little Designers

A toolkit designed to introduce young minds to the act of architecture and placemaking through play.

AUTHORS
BENCHMARKS
TEACHING LEVEL

Design Minds
Early Years Learning Framework
K-2

EXPECTED DURATION



This workshop has been structured as a 60 minute exercise, however can be extended or shortened as required

EXERCISES

1. Little Architects

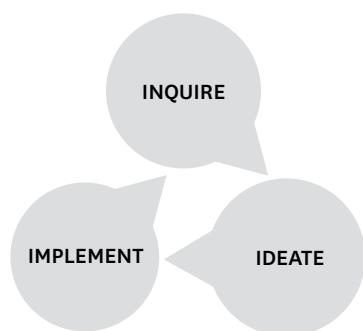
RESOURCES FOR COMPLETION

- Coloured markers, pencils, crayons
- A4 and A3 pieces of white card (coloured card optional) for each student
- Black marker for each student
- Collage materials in various colour palettes including items such as cellophane squares, wool, patty papers, coloured card/paper pieces, pipe cleaners, cotton wool, feathers
- Scissors, glue sticks and sticky tape

RESOURCES FOR DOCUMENTATION

- Digital camera to document the design process and final models

DESIGN AND CAPABILITIES



Capabilities for creating successful learners, confident and creative individuals, and active and informed citizens.

Literacy



Numeracy



ICT capability



Critical and creative thinking



Personal and social capability



Ethical behaviour



Intercultural understanding



[Visit Design Minds](#) for more info on design phases.

[Visit the Australian Curriculum website](#) for more info on general capabilities.

Little Architects



60 minutes

Inquire
Ideate
Implement



METHOD

Class introduction followed by individual activity

MATERIALS

- A3 piece of card (white or coloured) for each student (holding the card in portrait view, fold a line along the long edge on both sides, approx. 5cm from the edge–this will become your walls. Fold the bottom of the page upwards, approx. 12cm from the edge–this will become your floor. Cut a small slit on both sides of the page at the 12cm fold so you can fold the card into a standing diorama)
 - A4 piece of white card for each student
 - Black marker for each student
 - Collage materials in various colour palettes including items such as cellophane squares, wool, patty papers, coloured card/paper pieces, pipe cleaners, cotton wool, feathers
 - Scissors, glue sticks and sticky tape
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ACTIVITY

As a class, ask students if they know what an architect is. Assuming the role of an architect, explain to students what an architect does (Phil Shapiro has a good, kid-friendly explanation that you may like to use – his.com/-pshapiro/architects.html).

Explain that architects work to a brief, and that a brief describes what the architect needs to do on a project. Ask them to imagine they are architects and give them the following brief:

You are an architect who has been asked to design a house in an unpopulated landscape (examples may include under the sea, in space, in the desert, in the jungle or anywhere else the student can imagine). You will need to think about the kind of landscape you would like to design your house in and what features the house would need to work well in this environment. Think about all of the things you think would make a house a great place to live and incorporate them into your design.

Once the brief has been given the students can move to a desk and begin collaging their chosen landscape onto the A3 piece of card. Encourage them to reflect elements of the landscape they have chosen in their collage e.g. blues and greens with waves, fish and seaweed for under the sea or dark colours with stars, planets and spaceships for space. Once collages are finished, re-fold and sticky tape the edges to create a 3D environment in which they can place their house.

Students now move onto the building design phase. Using a black marker on the white piece of A4 card, each student draws their house design for their chosen landscape. Encourage them to address elements of the landscape such as the need for air, the need for access and the need for basic utilities such as bathrooms, kitchens and places to sleep or eat, in their design.

Once their drawing is complete ask them to neatly cut around the design and place it inside their collaged landscape. Each student then presents back, either to the teacher individually or to the whole class on their design, its features and how it relates to the landscape they created.



Have you considered?

You may wish to begin the exercise by reading a story based on the themes of architecture and placemaking such as [Iggy Peck Architect](#) by Andrea Beaty, [The Three Little Pigs: An Architectural Tale](#) by Steven Guarnaccia, [If You Lived Here: Houses of the World](#) by Giles Laroche or [Architecture According to Pigeons](#) by Stella Gurney.

If you don't have access to these books, YouTube has a great video of *Iggy Peck Architect* being told (youtube.com/watch?v=hRj4FBX6pHw) and another of *Architecture According to Pigeons* (youtube.com/watch?v=xNcJwmimobQ).

Older students may enjoy this as an introduction or as a consolidation of their learning after the activity has been completed.

Little Architects

Cont.

REFLECTION

Students present back to the teacher in the role of the architect individually or to the class as a whole on their building design and how it works.

Prompts for reflection:

- What landscape did they choose and why?
- How did their house fit in this landscape and what features did it include that related to the landscape?

DOCUMENTATION

Photograph students constructing their landscape and drawing their building design, as well as the final presented models. Older students could write a description of their landscape and final design to accompany photos of their house models.

IMAGES

Images courtesy of the Asia Pacific Design Library.

