



The World Is Not A Rectangle: A Portrait of Architect Zaha Hadid

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Grades 3-5

Date of Publication: 2017

ISBN: 978-1481446693



Discussion Questions

Before Reading

- What types of buildings do you see on the cover? Have you seen buildings shaped like this before? Why do you think they were created this way?
- Zaha Hadid was an architect. What do you think an architect does? What is she holding in her hands?

During Reading

- What do you think cities looked like thousands of years ago? Do you think they looked similar to what you see today? Why or why not?
- What does Zaha mean when she says, "The world is not a rectangle?"
- Why does Zaha create buildings for simple places where people can feel good? What are some places where you feel good? Why do you feel good in those places?

After Reading

- What reasons do people give for believing that Zaha's designs are impossible to build? What does Zaha do when they tell her no?
- Which one of Zaha's designs did you like best?
- Zaha was inspired by the landscape of Iraq, the country she grew up in. The buildings she designed reflect this. Do any buildings in your city resemble elements of nature? What do you think inspired the architects to design the buildings in your neighborhood?
- How do the buildings where you live tell the story of your city?



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Suggested Vocabulary Words

Ancient: from the past and no longer around or living

Cocoon: a protective covering for an insect larva or an object

Dune: a hill of sand

Ruins: what is left of a building that is destroyed or decayed over time

Stalactite: a calcium deposit that resembles an icicle and hangs from the roof of a cave

Activity Ideas

Nature's Design

Have students design a building of their own using inspiration from Zaha's designs!

- Take students outside and have them make observations about the nature they're surrounded by. Remind students that natural elements can include landscape features, such as hills, mountains, or rivers, as well plants, animals, weather, and the sun, moon, and stars. If going outside is not an option, in the classroom brainstorm a list of natural elements that may be found in the neighborhood, or from around the world or other cities.
- Provide students with paper to sketch their design. Let them brainstorm what the building may be used for or who the building may be built for. Tell them to think about what type of buildings might be helpful for their neighborhood.
- Before students begin, recap the elements that they observed or those that were discussed in class.
- Once their drawings are complete, tell students to write a short paragraph about what inspired their building design, and/or to share their design with the class.

Design Challenge

Early on in Zaha's career many people thought building her designs would be impossible. She persevered, and found people who believed in her ideas. In this engineering design challenge, students will be tasked to create an unconventional structure using only recyclable materials (collected 2-3 weeks prior).

- The structure must be at least two feet tall and use a limited amount of tape. The less tape that is provided, the more challenging the activity will be!
- For an added challenge, tell students they have a certain amount of time to create their structures in.
- Structures must be free standing.
- Bonus points will be given for the use of curves and creativity.

