

# Find a Seat

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## **Grades**

● 4–6

## **Teacher-In-Residence**

● Jennifer Perry

## **Subjects**

● Social Studies, Science,  
Art, English Language Arts

Carnegie  
Museum of Art

## Goals

- Students will complete a compiled classroom timeline of chairs including the artists name, the name of the artwork, the date of origin, and the materials used
- Students will examine and discuss purpose and functionality of various chairs and how this effects the design process
- Students will create their own prototype of their dream chair to be displayed in a classroom art gallery
- Students will use artworks and museum resources as a way to research how chairs have evolved over time
- Students will create a classroom art gallery with completed chairs displayed for people to walk through the exhibit
- Students will understand and discuss the relationship between different chairs and their uses in various situations such as social situations, job interviews, classrooms, and work environments

## Objectives

- Students will be able to create a classroom timeline of chairs using works from the personal collection at the Carnegie Museum of Art
- Students will explore how chairs have evolved through time and how specific chairs relate to specific time periods, function or social status
- Students will create a prototype of their dream chair using STEM materials of their choice to display in a classroom art gallery
- Students will respond to a series of prompts to encourage higher level thinking skills related to form, function, and purpose of chairs. This will be completed in the form of written responses, group discussions, and independent reflection

## Standards

- **CC.1.4.5.A** Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.
- **8.1.6.A** Explain continuity and change over time using sequential order and context of events.
- **3.4.6.A1** Identify how creative thinking and economic and cultural influences shape technological development.
- **3.4.5.C1** Explain how the design process is a purposeful method of planning practical solutions to problems.

## Materials

- Computers
- Noticings/wonderings chart
- Chart paper
- Chart markers
- Artwork ID tags
- Pencils
- Variety of STEM materials  
(toothpicks, cardboard, playdough,  
clay, straws, etc.)

## Vocabulary

- Design process
- Chronological
- Aesthetic
- Ergonomic
- Prototype

## Artworks



Joan Brown, *The Room, Part 1*, 1975, Purchase, gifts of Paul Chanin, Samuel Kootz, and Dr. and Mrs. Laibe A. Kessler, by exchange, 2018.15



Andrew McIntire, *Side Chair*, 1790, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. James A. Drain, 81.10.30



G. Fisseux, *Chair*, 1893, Berdan Memorial Trust Fund, 1999.9



Raw-Edges, *Endgrain Bench*, 2015, Alan G. and Jane A. Lehman Acquisition Fund and Richard L. Simmons Acquisition Fund, 2020.53

# Lesson

## 1. Introduction

Bring up the artwork *The Room, Part 1* by Joan Brown and have students write down their noticings and wonderings about what they see in the artwork. Give the students about 5 minutes to do this silently and independently at their seats.

After students have had time to notice and wonder independently they will have an opportunity to share out as a whole group. Teacher will record class observations and ideas on chart paper and facilitate discussion on the purpose and function of chairs in various settings and how these may look different in different spaces.

## 2. Transition

Teacher will pull up a picture of the side chair by Andrew McIntire from 1790 and discuss what they notice in the chair craftsmanship and design in comparison to things they see in chairs they are familiar with. Students and teacher will also compile a list of “What Makes a Chair?”

## 3. Main Activity

- Teacher and students will look at the list they created and think about how the parts of a chair relate to the

function of the chair. Is it used for relaxing? For work? Is it for someone of royalty?

- When we think of the purpose of a chair, it impacts the choice of the design we choose. Would you choose the above chair for a queen? What are the components of a chair for someone of royalty?

- Bring up a picture of the chair by G. Fisseux and discuss the different use of materials and design to represent a different vibe and feel. This chair was created 100 years later than the previous chair but it seems that it was created with a different buyer in mind.

- Discuss how chairs have changed over time and brainstorm how chairs have evolved in terms of functionality, purpose, luxury, and technological integration.

- Explain to students that technology is not just used in the function of chairs but it is also used in the design and building process of chairs as well. This technology dates back to 1984, when Macintosh computers allowed us to draw shapes on screen and view them in a virtual space.

## Lesson

- Show students *Endgrain Bench* by Raw-Edges to show and explain the use of this modern technology. Blocks are dyed with different pigments and are then glued together with the grains facing vertically to create three-dimensional patterns then shaped with a computer numerical control (CNC) machine. ‘Endgrain’ is therefore a process that starts very crafty and ends quite industrial.

- Students will visit the Carnegie Museum of Art website and type “chair” in the search bar. They will take some time for independent exploration and they will each choose a different chair from the collection. This could be a piece from architectural drawings, drawings and watercolors, furniture, models, photographs, prints, or sculpture. Each student will select a different piece from the website, they will print their piece out in color and they will complete the following information about their piece which they will obtain from the Carnegie Museum of Art website:

Title:

Creator:

Date:

Classification:

Medium:

- After the students have created their printouts and tags, teacher will hang these around the room in chronological order to create a classroom timeline called “The Evolution of Chairs” in the classroom.

## Assessment

The final assessment for this unit will be a project-based assessment. The students will use various STEM materials to create their own dream chair. To complete this project, the students will design a prototype by drawing their ideas on a sheet of paper. In their design, they will label each part, identify the materials they will need and write down if any of the parts have a specific function or mechanical operation. Once their prototypes are complete, they will begin constructing their models. These models will be small representations of what their full-sized products would look like. Their final projects will be presented and then displayed in a classroom art gallery for other classrooms to walk through. The students will be scored using the rubric on the following page (this can be changed to better suit your classroom needs).



# Assessment

Design Prototype	Creativity	Construction	Presentation
<b>1 Point</b>			
Drawing shows little to no effort and minimal detail	Chair design shows little originality	Construction of the model is unstable and does not have functioning parts	Presentation was unclear and did not explain the design, function, or craftsmanship of the chair
<b>2 Points</b>			
Drawing shows some effort and detail	Chair design shows some originality	Construction of the model is stable but does not have functioning parts	Presentation was somewhat clear and explained the design, function, or craftsmanship of the chair to an extent
<b>3 Points</b>			
Drawing shows much effort and many details	Chair design is original and unique	Construction of the model is stable and has functioning parts	Presentation was clear and explained the design, function, and craftsmanship of the chair

## Lesson Extensions

- Create a social skills lesson around different types of seating in a social setting and how chairs are used for socializing.
- Utilize the art lesson plan created by the Carnegie Museum of Art entitled “Chairs in Space Design”.

Noticings

Wonderings