Grade 8 Art (Form and Structure)

In this Edukit, Grade 8 students are presented with an illustrated overview of the development of architecture in Alberta. With this information, the students are asked a number of questions about the shape and form of buildings and naturally occurring geographic formations. Using the information, students will then produce illustrations and models that indicate their consideration of built spaces, the natural environment, and the experience of those who use these spaces.

Different Forms of Architecture in Alberta

Alberta architecture has a long history of looking to styles of construction around the world. As in many places around the world, large buildings are constructed during periods of prosperity and reflect periods of advancement and achievement.

Throughout Alberta’s history, architects have looked to other styles around the world and used these forms in the buildings they designed. Those buildings constructed before the Great Depression reflect technological development in large cities like New York and Chicago where reinforced concrete was being used to build the first three- to five-storey buildings.

The new moderne stucco style of the 1920s and the 1930s appeared in Alberta from the 1930s to the 1940s. Buildings that followed this style had rounded corners, flat roofs, and stucco finish on white-washed walls.

The prosperity that followed the 1947 discovery of oil at Leduc brought a long period of sustained development and construction. The International Style, based on Bauhaus ideals, became the model for many new building in the late 1940s to the early 1960s. Those building designed in this style featured internal steel structures with glass and concrete stripes on the faces of the buildings. These building did not have adornments of any kind.

New forms of architecture have been built in what has been called the postmodern period. The buildings constructed in this period include the geometric shapes of the Muttart Conservatory and Shaw Convention Centre and the naturalistic curving forms of Douglas J. Cardinal’s buildings such as the Grande Prairie Regional College and St. Mary’s Church in Red Deer.

Activity 1

Draw a building that is adapted to the natural environment. Use those examples from the Edukit photograph gallery that you think are effective. Consider why some postmodern buildings are considered to be more in harmony with the environment.
Explain why the building reflects the environment and how it functions for those who use it.

**Activity 2**

Make a model of a building that blends into the landscape. Consider the elements of the building that are artificial and those that are natural.

**Activity 3**

Draw or model a building that is environmentally friendly but that may not have any characteristics that reflect the environment. Explain why the building you have designed is environmental. Include an explanation about how effective and comfortable it would be for those who use the space.

**Activity 4**

Draw any natural environment that you like from the prairies, rolling hills, mountains, forest, or lakes. Once you have completed your drawing of the natural geography, consider what building could be placed in the picture that would be in harmony with the environment. Once you have sketched several possibilities, decide which one you like the best. Draw another picture that incorporates the environment and the building.

Write a short description of why your building is harmonious with the environment. Add details about how those who use the building will experience it. Answer the following questions once you are finished:

- What do you want those who use this building to feel?
- How effective is the design you have developed?
- Would it have a great impact on the environment?
- Would this building have a great impact on those who use it?
- What are you trying to achieve with the building you have designed?