

ROBERTO THE INSECT ARCHITECT

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by Nina Laden

Grades: K - 4

Themes: Architecture, insects, careers, goals, feelings

Running Time: 11 minutes

SUMMARY

Roberto has dreamed of being an architect since he was a child. As a young termite, he played incessantly with his "food," using it to design castles and skyscrapers. Finally, he moves to the big city to pursue his dream. Once there, he is influenced by the great architects such as Hank Floyd Mite and Fleas Van der Rohe. As Roberto adjusts to life in the city, he finds ways both to help his community and use his talents. This witty and humorous story will take young viewers along for the ride on Roberto's quest to make his dreams come true.

OBJECTIVES

- Students will learn about the architecture profession.
- Students will discuss making goals and reaching them.
- Students will design and make functional structures using a variety of materials.

BEFORE VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Discuss goals with students. Guiding questions:

- What job do you want to do when you grow up?
- Why do you want that job?
- What do you need to do to get the job that you want?
- What do you want to work on this year?
- How will you improve this year?

After the discussion, have students make a list of short and long-term goals. Students should draw a self-portrait (this is a fun activity to do, using small, personal mirrors) and attach their lists of 3-5 goals next to their drawings. Display these in the classroom. Encourage students to read each other's goals and to support each other in reaching those goals.

Have students do a short research project on the career of their choice. If you have a computer lab with internet access, this can be an on-line project. Have students read 1-2 articles about the career, using the search engine: Yahoo!igans.com. As they read, the students should take notes on note cards. Then, when their research is completed, students should create a poster that shows the different aspects of the careers they researched. They should use their notes to write captions for their self-portraits.

AFTER VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Take a walking field trip in the neighborhoods around your school. As you walk, notice and discuss with students the designs of the buildings and homes that you see. Guiding questions:

- What does a building's design tell you about how it is used?
- What designs do you like? What don't you like? Why?
- Notice the similarities between buildings. Do you think that any of these buildings were designed and/or built by the same person? Why do you think so?

After returning to the school, have students design a building that serves a certain purpose, for example, a home that could accommodate two 4-person families. First, have the students draw their plans on graph paper. Show them models of floor plans, but do not insist that the students follow that style. Have the students present their plans to the class, explaining how the plan meets the purpose of the building.

Supply students with materials such as craft sticks, corks, toothpicks, cardboard, and glue. Challenge them to work in teams of two to create a structure. Tell them that they will need to present the structure to the class and explain how they made it and what purpose the structure serves. This can be done as an extension of the activity described above, or it can be done independently.

Invite a local architect or builder to come and talk to the class. Prepare the class by working together to generate a list of questions to ask the visitor. Have the students practice asking the questions aloud before the visitor comes.

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