TeachersFirst READING TREKS

The World Is Not a Rectangle

Teacher Guide

Grade Level & Content Areas

Access Reading Trek Map

Ages: 5–10
Grades: K–5 (read-aloud), 3–5 (independent reading)
Reading Level: 4th grade
Lexile Measure: 760L
Guided Reading Level: O
Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA): 34–38

Content Areas: English/language arts, reading, informational text, biography, social studies (including culture, identity, geography, and global connections), visual arts, mathematics, engineering, and STEAM.

Synopsis of Book

The World Is Not a Rectangle: A Portrait of Architect Zaha Hadid, written and illustrated by Jeanette Winter, is a picture-book biography of the influential Iraqi architect. Zaha Hadid, a child growing up in Baghdad who loved to draw and imagine the curves and patterns of rivers, marshes, sand dunes, mountains, and ancient ruins. She later studied architecture in London and designed buildings whose flowing forms challenged conventional ideas about what structures could look like. Despite rejection and discrimination when people said her ideas were too different, she persisted and became one of the world's most influential architects. She showed the world that buildings don't have to be straight or flat. They can be beautiful, creative, and full of imagination.

Standards

Common Core State Standards for K–5

Reading: Informational Text

- Key Ideas and Details
- Craft and Structure
- Integration of Knowledge and Ideas
- Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity

Speaking and Listening

- Comprehension and Collaboration
- Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas

Writing

- Text Types and Purposes
- Research to Build and Present Knowledge

Common Core Mathematics

- Geometry
- Measurement and Data
- Model with Mathematics
- Use Appropriate Tools Strategically

National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies

- Theme 1: CULTURE
- Theme 2: TIME, CONTINUITY, AND CHANGE
- Theme 3: PEOPLE, PLACES, AND ENVIRONMENTS
- Theme 4: INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT AND IDENTITY
- Theme 9: GLOBAL CONNECTIONS

National Core Arts Standards for Visual Arts

- CREATING
- RESPONDING
- CONNECTING

Next Generation Science Standards

- Engineering Design

Social Justice Standards

- Identity
- Diversity
- Justice

Using a TeachersFirst® Reading Trek to Explore This Book

TeachersFirst Reading Treks create a virtual field trip of resources about a piece of literature or a text using the My Maps feature of Google Maps. To motivate and enrich student reading, teachers and students can reference this visual collection of web resources and images as they relate to the contents of a book.

TeachersFirst has done the hard work for you! Use the activities in this teacher guide and the accompanying Reading Trek map as you and your students explore this book. And, if you feel inspired, you (or your students) can create your own Reading Trek about this or another book!

Using This Reading Trek in Class

Below is a list of ideas for using this Reading Trek in your educational setting.

Working with the Map:

1. Introduce the book by displaying the Reading Trek map on an interactive an interactive whiteboard. Preview its layers and ask students to notice where Zaha lived, studied, and designed buildings.
2. For each map location, discuss what you would need to pack if you took a trip to each location. Students can draw or cut out pictures of appropriate clothing, gear, or supplies for different climates and activities at each stop.
3. Choose one location from the map and create a digital postcard from that destination. Their postcard should identify the building and its location, describe its shapes, lines, colors, and surroundings, and explain what makes it different from buildings in their own community. Students can combine writing, drawings, images, and audio narration in Book Creator (TeachersFirst review).
4. Imagine standing outside one of Hadid's buildings. Write a sensory description of the experience. What might you see, hear, or feel? Sentence starters could include: "From where I am standing, I notice…," "The building reminds me of…," and "The surrounding environment…"
5. Select a favorite map pin and explain your choice. Identify specific features of the building and describe how its design reflects Hadid's use of curves, movement, or forms inspired by nature. Students should post their responses on Padlet (TeachersFirst review).
6. After exploring all the locations shared on the Padlet (TeachersFirst review), students will vote on their favorite place from the trip by using Padlet's voting feature. You can also have students vote using Vevox (TeachersFirst review). Students can also create a class graph or chart showing which locations were most popular and discuss why students chose them.

Extension Activities:

1. Have students choose one building location from the map and identify a natural feature associated with that place. They can sketch a building inspired by the feature and label the curves, lines, patterns, or shapes incorporated into their design.
2. Students can use LEGO bricks, Play-Doh, or recycled materials to reconstruct a model inspired by one of Hadid's buildings. They can begin with a sketch, build the model, test its stability, and make at least one revision.
3. Discuss the challenges, rejection, and discrimination Zaha Hadid faced and how she kept going. Students can draw or write about a time they tried something new or challenging. Students can then share how it felt and what helped them keep going. Sentence starters**:** "I kept trying when…" "I was proud when…"
4. Use Kahoot (TeachersFirst review) to create a poll using emojis for each event in the story. As you reread parts of the story, students choose a face showing how Zaha might have felt. (excited, nervous, amazed, tired).
5. Students can create a digital travel journal using Book Creator (TeachersFirst review). Include drawings, reflections, or what they learned during the trip.

6. Have students use Google Drawings (TeachersFirst review) to design a building that emphasizes curves, flowing lines, and nature-inspired shapes. They can add labels to explain their choices.
7. Have students compare one of Hadid's buildings with a familiar building in their community. They can identify similarities and differences in shape, purpose, materials, setting, and design. For a digital option, try Canva's Venn Diagram Creator (TeachersFirst review).
8. Take students outside or use nature objects in the classroom. Prompt them to look closely at shapes and patterns in nature — waves, leaves, rocks, hills — just like Zaha did. Students can sketch one natural object and write or dictate a response to the question, "How might this shape inspire a building? For a digital option, students can use Write Reader (TeachersFirst review).

Helpful Resources

From TeachersFirst:

- TeachersFirst CurriConnects Book List - Maps
- TeachersFirst Review of Google My Maps
- OK2Ask: Engage & Inspire with Reading Treks
- OK2Ask: No Passport Required: Cross-Curricular Learning Journeys with Google My Maps

Other Resources:

- The World Is Not a Rectangle Resources