The Center for Architecture Foundation’s K-12 programs help students explore the built environment through neighborhood walks, hands-on projects and design challenges. Students learn about scale, structure, history, design, architecture, and planning and use this information to create their own design proposals.

Take this guide with you to see what they have learned and what you might discover too!
Take a close look at one of the projects. What shapes did the designer use?

These projects show how architects can make complex designs by combining simple shapes.

Can you rearrange them into a new design?
A bridge’s structure must support the weight of traffic over its span. Each part of the bridge is important to making the overall structure work.

Sketch one of these bridges designed and built by 2nd graders.

Can you name any of the parts of the bridge?
Sometimes architects get their design ideas from nature. Compare these skyscrapers and the tree houses next to them.

How are they similar?

How are they different?
Which type of design work do you like best?

Drawings and models give shape to an architect’s design ideas and show other people what the building will look like. Like the examples here, they can be 2-D drawings, 3-D models or created on a computer.
We can learn a lot about another culture by studying its architecture. These projects show a mosque and marketplace of a traditional Islamic town in the Middle East, where religion is an important part of daily life.

How do the design and location of the mosque show that it is an important building?

What parts of the buildings might help people stay cool in this hot, desert climate?
How big would a person be in these models? Draw yourself to fit using these scale rulers.

School Model @ 1/16 inch scale

6 FT
4 FT
2 FT
0 FT

1/16” in the model = 1 foot in real life

Architects create scale models to show their building at a size that is easy to manage. Like a dollhouse, real measurements are scaled down so everything looks realistic, just smaller.

House Model @ 1/4 inch scale

5 FT
4 FT
3 FT
2 FT
1 FT
0 FT

1/4” in the model = 1 foot in real life
A neighborhood is made up of many different types of buildings, such as residential (places to live), commercial (places to work/shop) and institutional (schools, museums, etc.).

What building types did these 1st grade students include in their model neighborhood?

What else would you add to complete the neighborhood?
Which model shows the oldest NYC building? What are your clues?

A building’s size and materials can tell us a lot about when and how it was built. These models show how buildings in NYC have changed over time.

Which is the newest? What are your clues?
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