

Engaging Language Learners with Biography-Based Lessons, Units, and Courses

As office mates for many years, we had numerous conversations about teaching strategies, materials design, and students' interests. Over time, we noticed a phenomenon that often occurred after our classes ended: our students huddled in small groups, chatting (and possibly gossiping) about family and friends, pop culture and entertainment, or local and global news, and at the center of it all were ... people. We resolved to find a way to bring our students' inherent interest in people into our English-language classrooms more often than we could with the occasional textbook reading passages that happened to center on the lives of people. These passages—and our discussions—led us to find ways to exploit biographical texts for more than just reading practice.

It did not take long for us to discover why biographies are naturally suited for language learning. First and foremost, biographies are a form of story, and storytelling is a universal human activity. Stories may be fact or fiction, historical or futuristic, serious or whimsical. No matter the story, people (or characters) and their lives are at the center, and they teach, inspire, provoke, and entertain readers and listeners of all ages and in all places. Besides their ability to engage students, biographies are typically organized in transparent sections that deal with birth and childhood, education, young adulthood, overcoming obstacles, career path, personal life, and legacy. Readers exert little cognitive

energy to understand the organization of a biographical text, so they can devote more attention to its content and language (Rasinski 2002). In addition, each new experience with a biographical text provides a vehicle for recycling high-frequency expressions associated with life stories as well as introducing content-specific vocabulary and discourse patterns. The result is both language-focused learning and fluency development.

This article shows how stand-alone biographies, like those found in English-language textbooks, can be enhanced with integrated-skills practice. The article details how to build content-based units

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of instruction around biographies, and it describes courses developed around a series of biography-focused units. Sample activities and resource materials are shared as well.

ENHANCING BIOGRAPHICAL READINGS IN TEXTBOOKS

English language teaching (ELT) textbooks, especially reading textbooks, often include biographical reading passages (Tomas, Kostka, and Mott-Smith 2013) with accompanying pre-reading questions, post-reading comprehension questions, vocabulary exercises, and prompts for writing or discussion. Teachers often begin reading lessons by providing background information, vocabulary instruction, and pre-reading activities. Students then read the textbook passage and answer comprehension questions. Unfortunately, lessons built solely on these routines frequently resemble reading-comprehension test-preparation activities. With relatively little effort on the part of the teacher, however, biography-based reading lessons can become more engaging, foster deeper understanding of the text, and provide valuable language practice with speaking, listening, and writing—in addition to reading.

USING SPEAKING AND LISTENING ACTIVITIES TO INTERACT WITH BIOGRAPHICAL TEXTS

Using one of the following speaking/listening activities prior to reading a biography-based text allows students to approach the subject in an interactive way. These activities also provide a low-risk environment in which students can negotiate meaning, wrestle with ideas, and work together. Teachers can explain to students that the selected activity will help them develop an understanding of the reading and give them the opportunity to ask questions. While students are doing the activity, the teacher should circulate, encouraging them to ask about unknown vocabulary or challenging content. By the time students finish the activity, they will be

prepared to read the biography in its entirety because they have already encountered key vocabulary and become familiar with the story. At the same time, the teacher will have an idea of whether follow-up explanation may be needed.

Students find this approach to a reading lesson interesting. It is also pedagogically sound in that it addresses Nation's four strands (1996). By hearing and talking about the content, students receive aural as well as visual meaning-focused input and produce meaningful output. In addition, they engage in language-focused study, previewing new vocabulary and concepts as they work to accomplish the task, and they build fluency by recycling language from the biography-based lesson. These multiple encounters with the biographical text provide spaced repetition (Kang 2016), improving the chances that students will also retain information for the long term.

SAMPLE TEXT-BASED SPEAKING AND LISTENING ACTIVITIES

Activity 1: Mini-Lecture

Level: High Beginner to Advanced

Time: Varies depending on the length of the biography and the number of repetitions

Procedure:

- 1.** Preview the passage so you can present the main ideas as a mini-lecture.
- 2.** Have students label three columns in their notebook as Date, Event, and Importance.
- 3.** Give the lecture. For beginners, give the lecture three times, so students can listen for different information each time. With intermediate or advanced levels, simulate an academic lecture, telling students they will hear the lecture only once but can ask for repetition or clarification as needed.

4. Have students compare their notes to check comprehension and focus on key ideas.
5. Ask students to read the biography and compare their notes with it.
6. Discuss any questions students have.

Activity 2: Building the Biography (adapted from Davis and Rinvolucris [1988, 68–69], *Piecing It Together*)

Level: Intermediate to Advanced

Time: 15–25 minutes, depending on the length of the biography and the number of repetitions

Procedure:

1. Read or orally summarize the biography two or three times, adapting as needed for the students' listening level. Successive summaries need not be exactly the same.
2. Give students a list of key words and phrases from the biography.
3. Ask students to work in pairs or groups to reconstruct as much of the biography as possible, using the word list. Encourage them to focus on content more than exact words.
4. Read the passage once again.
5. Give students a few minutes to do a final oral reconstruction.
6. Ask students to read the biography.
7. Discuss where their oral rendition of the biography did and did not match the original.

Activity 3: Piecing the Biography Together

Level: High Beginner to Advanced

Time: 25–35 minutes, depending on the length of the biography

Procedure:

1. Photocopy the text.
2. Divide it into sections based on periods in the subject's life, such as childhood, education, career, and legacy.
3. Divide the class into the same number of groups as there are text sections.
4. Give each group one section to read, discuss, and practice explaining.
5. In chronological order, have each group act as a panel and retell its information.
6. Listeners take notes and ask questions.
7. Continue until the entire biography is summarized.
8. Have students read the full text of the biography, which they are now prepared to do.

Activity 4: Experts and Researchers

Level: Low Intermediate to Advanced; this activity is especially appropriate for multilevel classes.

Time: 35–45 minutes

Procedure:

1. Divide the class into two groups. Have the groups sit on opposite sides of the room. Depending on the size of the class, you may have to divide each group into smaller ones.
2. Designate one group as *Experts*. Their role is to learn as much as possible from the biographical text you give them. Have them read the biographical text and discuss it together (quietly) to verify understanding.
3. Designate the other group as *Researchers*. Each researcher must interview an expert for research on the subject's

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life. Give students a list of key words, phrases, or events from the biographical passage in the order they appear—for example Birthdate, Birthplace, Early Education, and First Job. To prepare for the interview, the researchers need to create clear questions based on the list. Have them work together to draft their questions.

4. Form pairs consisting of one expert and one researcher to conduct the interviews.
5. When the interviews are finished, debrief the students. Have a researcher state a question asked and how it was answered. Did other researchers obtain the same information? Did any researchers ask follow-up questions? What important information do the experts feel was not shared during the interview? Continue asking probing questions to gain more insights into the subject's life.
6. Have students read the full text of the biography, which they are now prepared to do.

USING WRITING ACTIVITIES TO RESPOND TO BIOGRAPHICAL TEXTS

If writing activities are not provided in the textbook, teachers may want to include a writing assignment to review the biography and recycle target-language expressions. Writing prompts require students to think critically and, sometimes, creatively. Students may also need to reread the biography, take notes on relevant passages, and (if desired) conduct additional research. If students share their writing with one another, they will have yet another interaction with key content and language related to the biography.

Sample Text-Based Writing Prompts

Prompt 1: Write a letter to the subject of the biography. Be sure your comments and questions respond to the content of the biography.

Prompt 2: Find a picture of the subject of the biography. Write a physical description of that person. In a second paragraph, write a character description based on what you learned in the biographical reading passage.

Prompt 3: Write an essay about what you consider to be the subject's most admirable qualities or your interpretation of the subject's legacy. Give examples from the text to illustrate these qualities and/or support your interpretation of the legacy.

Prompt 4: Imagine that the subject of the biography is going to give a speech or receive an award, and you are asked to introduce this person. Write an introduction including this person's important background information and achievements.

BUILDING CONTENT-BASED UNITS OF INSTRUCTION AROUND BIOGRAPHIES

English teachers frequently find themselves in situations where they have to develop their own units of instruction. A biography is an excellent springboard for a content-based thematic unit. Activities can be structured around themes of particular interest to adult and adolescent English as a foreign language (EFL) learners, including reluctant learners in required English classes.

How to Begin

1. Use a biographical text from a course book, if available, or refer to one of the

sources given near the end of this article to find an appropriate starter text. Be sure to choose a person whose life story connects with your students' interests, academic majors, or needs, or with the course-learning outcomes.

2. Determine the reading level of the text by using an online site for measuring readability. You can find sites that measure readability by searching for “readability score.” Once you choose a site, you can paste in your text, and the site will generate the readability score. You might need to simplify the biography or write your own version.
3. Think about the themes and topics that appear in the biography and decide which ones you will focus on. According to Stoller and Grabe (1997), content-based units are organized around themes, and topics are the detailed points that comprise the theme. Some themes are obvious, but you can determine others by asking these questions:
 - Did the person overcome a childhood obstacle—illness, poverty, or family discord?
 - Did the person experience discrimination?
 - Does he or she support a charitable or philanthropic endeavor—and if so, which one and why?
 - Did he or she receive a special award—and if so, what qualities or achievements led to the award?
4. Guided by the theme and topics, formulate your linguistic and content objectives for the unit.
5. Besides the biography, decide which visuals, texts, and tasks you will use to develop the theme and provide skills

practice. Find, adapt, write, or create these materials.

6. Decide on the best sequence for the materials and work to make smooth transitions from one activity to another.

A Sample Unit Based on Frank Lloyd Wright

Frank Lloyd Wright was an architect whose work and influence are known around the world. We chose him as one of our biographical subjects because although he is famous among architects, generally he was not known to our students. After reading several online biographies of Wright, we wrote our own versions at our students' reading levels. (Two versions, at different readability levels, appear in the Appendix.) Wright's philosophy was that architecture should exist in harmony with its environment, and that philosophy became the theme of the unit. We drew additional topics from this theme, choosing the most suitable, relevant, or interesting for our various groups of students. For example, shapes and colors, rooms in a house, and types of buildings were appropriate for beginning-level classes, whereas building materials, architectural elements, architectural styles, and locally significant buildings or architects were more appropriate for intermediate and advanced levels.

These topics helped us plan a sequence of lessons with related tasks and activities. Typically, we introduced our unit by using one of the speaking/listening activities described earlier in this article. After students were introduced to Wright's life story and to key content-focused vocabulary, they completed activities and tasks related to the theme and topics. We chose the most relevant activities from our collection, building transitions between activities; as much as possible, we recycled and reviewed language and content from previous lessons and activities. Several of the activities designed especially for this unit are described here.

SAMPLE ACTIVITIES FOR THE FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT UNIT

Activity 1: Recognizing Types of Buildings (Any level)

Content Goal: To identify types of buildings according to function

Linguistic Goals:

- To recognize vocabulary for types of buildings and their functions—for example, *agricultural, commercial, residential, educational, governmental, industrial, military, parking, storage, and religious*
- To define, explain, and give examples of various building types
- To exchange information by using these structures:

A(n) _____ is used for _____.

_____ is an example of _____.

Procedure:

1. Ask students to scan Frank Lloyd Wright's biography to find the types of buildings he designed—such as homes, hotels, museums, and convention centers.
2. Have students work with a partner and brainstorm other types of buildings.
3. Write categories of buildings on the board (e.g., residential buildings).
4. Have students add examples from their lists (e.g., apartment, dormitory, house, condominium, cottage) for each category.
5. Clarify meaning where necessary.
6. In the next class, give pairs several types of buildings (the building types can be written on slips of paper for

students to select). Ask each pair to develop a definition or explanation and give a familiar local example of each building type.

7. Have students use their notes, circulate around the room, exchange information, and try to guess which building(s) their classmates have. For example, they might have a conversation like this:

A: Can you give me a hint about your building?

B: It's for housing.

A: So it's residential?

B: Right.

A: An apartment?

B: No, it's for students.

A: Oh! A dormitory?

B: Yes, dormitory or dorm.

Activity 2: Describing Buildings (High Beginner and above)

Content Goal: To recognize architectural elements

Linguistic Goals:

- To describe specific architectural features
- To recognize and use vocabulary for architectural elements, such as *arch, ceiling, column, courtyard, door, doorway, façade, fireplace, floor, foundation, fountain, furniture, gate, light fixture, roof, rooms, stairway, story, walls, and windows*

Procedure:

1. Ask students to recall features of Frank Lloyd Wright's buildings (e.g., open central area, low horizontal line).

2. Explain that these are architectural elements.
3. List several other architectural elements on the board, leaving space for drawings.
4. Ask students to explain or illustrate the elements and add others to the list.
5. Give pairs or groups of students a picture of a building that has several architectural elements. They should not let other students see their picture.
6. Ask students to practice describing the building orally within their groups in as much detail as possible, using their new vocabulary.
7. Collect all pictures, hang them on the board, and number them.
8. Ask each group to describe its picture to the class without identifying it.
9. Listeners should write the number of the picture being described.
10. Check answers.

Activity 3: Designing a Harmonious House (Intermediate to Advanced)

Content Goal: To draw a house incorporating architectural elements that take the environment into consideration

Linguistic Goals:

- To describe a house by using vocabulary related to its design, architectural elements, and environment
- To practice using specific expressions to
 - o express opinions: I think/believe/feel that _____.
 - o In my opinion, _____.

- o negotiate meaning: I understand what you mean, but _____.
- o What if we _____ instead?

Procedure:

1. Find pictures of different environments and landscapes such as a desert scene, a tropical island, and a dense urban setting.
2. Review vocabulary and expressions for giving opinions and negotiating meaning as needed.
3. Tell the class that Frank Lloyd Wright founded an architectural school that provides scholarships for talented students. Explain that in order for students to receive a scholarship, they must show they can work as a team to design the exterior of a house that is in harmony with its environment.
4. Give each group a picture of a landscape and blank paper. Tell students to think about what type of house and what architectural elements would fit the environment in their picture. They should discuss their ideas, support their opinions, and reach a consensus before beginning to draw.
5. Have teams explain their designs to the class and answer questions.
6. Have students vote for the design (other than their own) that best fits its environment.

Activity 4: Architectural Marvels (Advanced)

Content Goal: To learn more about well-known buildings around the world

Linguistic Goals:

- To use specialized architectural vocabulary
- To describe a well-known building

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Procedure:

1. Give students a list of well-known buildings and ask each student to choose one. Alternatively, ask students to identify buildings they would like to research.
2. Provide or suggest suitable sources of information.
3. Ask students to read about their building and take notes on its name, date of completion, architect, function, style, and architectural elements. They can also read about other famous buildings designed by the same architect.
4. Ask students to find a picture of the building and write one paragraph describing the building and another paragraph expressing their opinion about it.
5. In a subsequent class, have students read as many of their classmates' reports as possible.
6. Conclude with a discussion of these well-known buildings and/or any locally significant buildings.

The activities presented here illustrate just a few examples of how teachers can work with a content-based biographical theme and identify related topics to build an entire unit of study. This unit could continue with group or individual projects on the

architectural heritage of a city, designers of other famous buildings, or urban planning. Developing a unit based on a biography generates a variety of activities or tasks limited only by the time available, the teacher's imagination, and the students' levels, needs, and interests. Seasoned teachers may prefer to use their own ideas for capitalizing on the content or the language in the starter biography, whereas novice teachers or teachers with limited time may prefer to use ready-made resources. Most teachers will be surprised by how many of those resources are freely available online.

DESIGNING A COURSE AROUND BIOGRAPHY-BASED UNITS

Entire courses have been successfully designed around biographies. In 1999, our university began offering intensive, one-month, noncredit courses for English language study. After initial experimentation with various themes, we decided to develop each course around a series of four week-long biography-based units. Biographies gave students rich language to talk or write about life, specific vocabulary related to certain professions, and themes and topics related to their experiences and cultures. They also provided authentic contexts for review and recycling of important vocabulary in each successive week. We chose biography subjects who were famous in their field—so that it was easy to find information—but whose life stories were not very familiar to our students—so the

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students were learning new information no matter what their background, level, or prior education had been. Some of the most successful units were created around the lives of Frank Lloyd Wright (architect), Wilma Rudolph (athlete), Estée Lauder (businessperson), and Milton Hershey (confectioner and philanthropist).

We wrote two biographies for each person, aiming one at the high-beginner/low-intermediate level and the other at intermediate and above. We also found, adapted, and wrote materials that would work with a range of proficiency levels. Where possible, we tried to draw comparisons or make connections with previously studied themes and topics. The students were engaged, and their language skills progressed. They also gave positive feedback about the course materials. We became convinced of the beauty of biographies.

Other teachers have also found biographical content to be an effective and engaging focus for a course. Wyle (2009) describes a course entitled *Exploring the English-Speaking World through the Biography*, developed for a university English class in Japan. The rationale for the course is to use methods and materials different from the typical grammar-and-four-skills instruction used in most English classes while acquainting students with a variety of international figures. Wolf (1994) describes revamping a world civilization course for a freshman university class in the United States by using biographies that he wrote. For each unit, he compares two figures whose stories depict the ideas and sociopolitical issues of a certain historical period. His goals were to make the course more engaging and relevant to the students while leading them to use higher-order thinking skills.

People are at the center of every field—from astronomy to zoology—and from every place—from Andorra to Zanzibar. Thus, content learning in nearly any subject can be introduced through biographies. Similarly, biographies provide an effective means to introduce both local and global themes in an English course.

FINDING BIOGRAPHIES AND BIOGRAPHY-BASED MATERIALS

Teachers who want to use biographical texts will find a wide range of resources, from free online materials to photocopiable teacher handbooks and collections of biographies available from reputable publishers including Cambridge, MacMillan, Oxford, Penguin, and Pro Lingua Associates. Teachers might also consider using quality books originally written for young or adolescent English speakers (Malu 2013). The moderate-length texts, simple narratives, concrete language, and compelling stories (Cho and Krashen 1994) found in such literature can serve as a bridge to more complex academic language for high school and adult EFL readers (Temple, Martinez, and Yokota 2011). Online biography collections provide useful background reading for teachers, inspiration for materials developers, and pleasure or self-study reading for individual learners. Examples are listed here, along with brief annotations based on our experience.

- **Biography.com** at <http://www.biography.com/> is affiliated with a television network, so it is commercialized. Nevertheless, there are dozens of biographies in print and mini-video formats about famous (and infamous) people throughout the ages and around the world. Print biographies are

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illustrated and include both a synopsis and a full text. They are not written with language learners in mind, but they could be used as a teacher resource or for self-study by advanced students. The mini-videos are action-packed and engaging, about two minutes in length, and perfect for introducing a subject of study or for closing class.

- **Biography Online** at <http://www.biographyonline.net> was created by Tejvan Pettinger, a developer of educational websites in the United Kingdom. His biography collection includes athletes, entrepreneurs, and scientists who are (or have been) influential, inspirational, or successful despite personal hardship. While not designed specifically for language learners, these biographies can be used to challenge intermediate-level learners, extend learning in students who have some background knowledge about a certain career or personality, and give teachers ideas about interesting biographical subjects.
- **Infoplease** at <http://www.infoplease.com/people.html> is an online encyclopedia. Its biography page contains links to over 30,000 entries categorized by occupation. This resource is useful for teachers or students who want to browse for names in a particular category. However, the entries themselves are probably too difficult for most EFL classroom use.
- **Stories About People** at <http://www.manythings.org/voa/people/> is a collection of over 250 biographies and accompanying MP3 files from the Voice of America series by the same name.

Stories are about two pages or 15 minutes in length.

CONCLUSION

The beauty of biographical texts is that they can serve as stand-alone lessons or provide the starting block for a thematically focused unit. They can also become the core of an entire course. At the outset of this article, we gave three reasons for using biographical texts in English classes: their universal, story-like appeal; their transparent organization; and their capacity for review. Teachers who use biographies in any or all of these three ways will discover that biographies are also ideal for differentiating instruction in multilevel language classes because biographical passages for the same subject are readily available on various levels. They foster both language-focused learning and fluency development. They lend themselves to integrated-skills practice with authentic or authentic-like texts. Finally, they provide repeated opportunities for noticing and reviewing target-language features in subsequent biography-based lessons. Biographies have all these benefits—and they provide pleasurable reading about people who are interesting and often inspiring to students and teachers alike.

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APPENDIX

Biographies of Frank Lloyd Wright for Upper-Level and Lower-Level Learners

1. Frank Lloyd Wright Biography (Upper Level)

Frank Lloyd Wright is one of the most famous American architects. His architectural designs can be seen in the United States and abroad.

Wright was born in Richland Center, Wisconsin, on June 8, 1867. His father was a preacher and musician, and his mother was a teacher. He had two younger sisters. Two experiences from his youth had a profound influence on Wright's philosophy of design. First, when he was a child, Wright's mother bought him geometrically shaped blocks to play with. Wright later said those blocks influenced his designs. Second, during his youth, Wright's family moved several times to different states, but he spent his summers in Spring Green, Wisconsin, his mother's hometown. He loved the Wisconsin landscape. Later in his life, he would say that the Wisconsin landscape influenced his theory of design, which he called "organic architecture." Organic buildings are designed for human use but should fit harmoniously into their environment.

Wright attended public high school in Madison, Wisconsin. Then he enrolled at the University of Wisconsin at Madison. By that time, his parents were divorced. In order to help support his mother and sisters and pay for his university tuition, Wright worked for the dean of the engineering department. In that job, he helped the famous architect Joseph Silsbee build the Unity Chapel. This experience convinced him to become an architect. He dropped out of school and went to Chicago to work for Silsbee.

A year later, Wright started an internship with another architect, Louis Sullivan. Sullivan's belief that "form follows function" greatly influenced Wright. In 1889, Wright married Catherine Tobin, with whom he had six children. Wright began designing private homes and left Sullivan's firm. He and his wife built a home in Oak Park, Illinois. This home is considered Wright's first masterpiece.

Wright continued to design private homes and public buildings. The homes were one-story, low, and horizontal, like the flat Midwest landscapes he loved. They were made of local materials. Wright did not use the traditional symmetrical design with rooms on each side of a hallway and a central staircase. Instead, the interiors of his homes had a lot of open space that flowed from a central area. They were examples of a movement in architecture called "Prairie School." Two of his most famous Prairie School buildings are the Robie House in Chicago and Unity Temple in Oak Park.

Wright eventually divorced his first wife. He moved to Germany for a time. When he returned to the United States in 1913, he built one of his most famous houses, Taliesin, in Spring Green, Wisconsin. But in 1914 an employee burned it down. The fire also killed Wright's partner at the time, Mamah Borthwick Cheney. Then, in 1915, the Emperor of Japan asked Wright to design the Imperial Hotel in Tokyo. When the Great Kanto Earthquake of 1923 struck, Wright's Imperial Hotel was the only large structure in the city not destroyed.

During the 1920s, Wright married two more times. The Great Depression in the early 1930s caused new construction projects to end, so Wright began to write and teach. He wrote two books that became important architectural literature. He also founded an architectural school based at Taliesin.

By 1935, Wright was back designing some of his greatest buildings. The residence called Fallingwater, which he designed for a family near Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, was original and beautiful. It is built on top of a waterfall and has balconies and terraces overlooking the water. He began to work on Taliesin West, a residence and school in Scottsdale, Arizona. Wright also constructed some less expensive homes called “Usonian Houses.” Their purpose was to provide comfort, convenience, and space.

During the last 16 years of Wright’s life, he continued to design buildings. He worked on plans for the Guggenheim Museum of modern and contemporary art in New York City, a building he designed in the shape of a seashell. He also designed a beautiful civic center for Madison, Wisconsin, but, because of a lack of funds, that project was not completed until 33 years after his death.

Frank Lloyd Wright died on April 9, 1959. During his lifetime, he designed 1,100 buildings. His buildings remind us of his guiding principle that buildings should look as if they are part of the nature around them and make the surrounding landscape even more beautiful.

2. Frank Lloyd Wright Biography (Lower Level)

Frank Lloyd Wright was a famous American architect. Most of his buildings are in the United States. However, his ideas about building design spread around the world.

Wright was born in 1867 in Wisconsin. His father was a church leader and musician. His mother was a teacher. He had two younger sisters. Childhood experiences were important to Wright. His mother gave him some building blocks to play with when he was young. His family moved often, but he spent his summers in Wisconsin. He loved the Wisconsin countryside. Those building blocks and the Wisconsin countryside helped Wright think about beautiful building design.

Wright attended high school and university in Madison, Wisconsin, but he did not graduate. During high school, his parents divorced, and his father left the family. Wright dropped out of school to work, help his family, and save money for college. In one job, he helped an architect build a small, beautiful church and decided to become an architect. In 1887, he moved to Chicago to look for work.

In 1893, Wright started his own architecture business. He designed private homes and public buildings. His home designs were low, like the flat Wisconsin countryside. They also had open space and a lot of light inside. One of Wright’s most famous buildings was the Imperial Hotel in Tokyo, Japan. It survived a terrible earthquake in 1923. Today, Wright’s most famous building may be an art museum in New York City. Wright was still designing buildings when he was 80 years old.

Frank Lloyd Wright died in 1959. He designed over 1,000 buildings. They fit into the nature around them. Today, young architects continue to study Wright’s ideas and his buildings.