



TOOLKIT FOR TEACHERS, K-12

There are many ways you can bring Olmsted into your classroom! Parks are living laboratories where students can view life cycles, study how accessible greenspace contributes to public health and democracy, learn how nature can inspire art, and view landscape design through the lens of history.

[RESOURCES AND ACTIVITIES](#)

Good Neighbors Program

The Good Neighbors Program is the award-winning education program created by the Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site in conjunction with the National Association for Olmsted Parks. Rangers facilitate students' understanding of urban design and community building. It is a hands-on, whole-child curricular unit provided to third graders in the greater Boston area. The program can be adapted to local circumstances. [Read more!](#)



Big Head Fred

Big Head Fred can visit your school! The 7-foot tall caricature of FLO was born from the combined talents of illustrator David Lee Csicsko and puppet-maker Randy Carfagno for the Olmsted Bicentennial. If you'd like to request Big Head Fred for an event, please reach out to us at info@olmsted.org for more information.

Coloring Page

Get creative! Here's one for students K-4— or the young at heart! Introduce your younger students to Olmsted through coloring pages. Chicago artist David Lee Csicsko is responsible for the charming depiction. Download a black and white version of this iconic portrait and have your students color their own FLO. [Download now!](#)

Design Your Perfect Park

Frederick Law Olmsted designed some of our nation's best-known and most-loved parks and

green spaces. Have your students imagine their own perfect park: Explore the most important things a park needs to be enjoyed by everyone—and why. Then design!



Park in a Box

Have students make their own mini park in a box! All that is needed is a shoebox, paper, glue, paints, paintbrushes, Scotch tape and any other materials you think will help bring the park to life. Have students paint the park onto the back of the inside of the shoebox and then fill it with other elements, like cardboard cut-outs of kids playing or leaves.

Field Trips

Who doesn't love a trip to the park? For younger learners, the opportunity to get outdoors and run around may be a great experience in itself. Older students will benefit from an assignment, such as cataloging flora or fauna or noting what role the park plays in the city or town's life. Can't make the trip? There are many virtual tours of parks that make for a perfect virtual field trip experience. The National Park Service has word games, matching pictures and more Junior Ranger Activities you can find online, too.

- [National Park Foundation Virtual Visits](#)
- [NPS Parks Through Your Screen](#)

Scavenger Hunt

As part of a field trip, consider a scavenger hunt! Provide younger students with a running list of flora and fauna to identify. Older students can identify the Seven S's of Olmsted Design. Remember, take only memories and leave only footprints.

Blueprinting

With so many Olmsted firm designers working on the same projects, there was a need for multiple copies. The Olmsted firm embraced the latest technology— blueprints. Have students learn how blueprints work and make their own with these instructions. [Learn more!](#)

Landscape Watercolors

The Olmsted firm's draftsmen often created watercolor paintings to show clients what the completed landscape would look like. Invite your students to create landscapes with watercolors. [Learn more!](#)

Organize a Park Clean-up

This is a terrific opportunity for students to give back to their communities. Contact a local park superintendent to see how you might help.

Essay Challenge

Frederick Law Olmsted's life and career produced a meaningful legacy. For over 100 years, he and his successor firms completed thousands of landscape projects across America. Olmsted also viewed parks as a way to advance equity and inclusion. Have your students read and learn about Olmsted and write an essay answering the question, "How should the life, legacy, and values of Frederick Law Olmsted inform 21st challenges?" Submit exceptional essays to info@olmsted.org for a chance to be featured on our Shared Spaces blog.

#FLOChallenge

Have your students research different Olmsted parks across the country. Have any students visited an Olmsted park? Which parks would they like to visit and why?

Books & Films

Check out your local library or bookstore for these great reads about FLO! Find more advanced book recommendations under our Research tab.

- Parks for the People: How Frederick Law Olmsted Designed America. Elizabeth Partridge. 2022.
- A Green Place to Be: The Creation of Central Park. Ashley Benham Yazdani. 2019.
- The Man Who Made Parks: The Story of Parkbuilder Frederick Law Olmsted. Frieda Wishinsky. 2009.
- Parks for the People: A Story about Frederick Law Olmsted. Julie Dunlap. 1994.

Films can also add to your classroom learning.

- [Olmsted's 'Parks for the People'](#)
- [Squire Boone Caverns and Louisville's Olmsted Parks](#)
- [Frederick Law Olmsted: Designing Western New York](#)
- [The Best Planned City in the World](#)
- [Buffalo's Richardson Olmsted Complex](#)
- [Olmsted and Chicago](#)
- [Changes and Challenges in Olmsted Parks](#)
- [The Campaign to Save the Olmsted Linear Park in Atlanta](#)
- [Louisville: From Olmsted to the 21st Century](#)
- [The Fall and Rise of Central Park](#)
- [Richardson Olmsted Campus History](#)
- [Photography and Design in Olmsted's Boston Parks](#)
- [Outside for All: Investing in Parks to Build Community Power](#)
- [Frederick Law Olmsted: Designing America](#)
- [Olmsted & America's Urban Parks](#)

SOME POSSIBLE LESSON PLANS

Elementary: The U.S. National Parks Movement— Maureen Onofrio.

This unit introduces children to the history of America’s National Parks. Find the details for this unit [here](#).

Middle & High: Boston's Arnold Arboretum: A Place for Study and Recreation – NPS. Discover how the first arboretum in the United States became part of the burgeoning urban park movement in the second half of the 19th century. Find the details for this unit [here](#).

Middle & High: The Emerald Necklace: Boston's Green Connection— NPS.

Learn about Frederick Law Olmsted and the series of parks— the Emerald Necklace— that transformed Boston from a dirty urban environment to a green oasis linking citizens through nature. Find the details for this unit [here](#).

Middle & High: The Olmsted Vision— C3 Teachers.

This inquiry leads students through an investigation of what parks do for us and where they may fall short. The unit asks an interesting question: “Should parks make us better people?” Find the details for this unit [here](#).