

# **Redesign Your Own Kitchen**

## **Lesson Plan – GCSE and above**

# Skills that you'll use

- You will explore the idea of designing for the needs of the end user.
- You will learn more about a key designer and their design.



# Materials needed

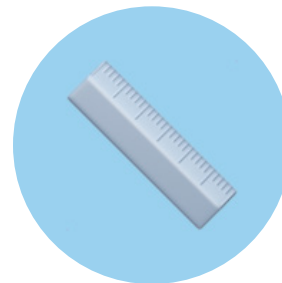
- Pencil or pen
- Some paper
- Something to measure with: a tape measure is great but you can use a ruler or even a piece of string to help you measure with.



+



+



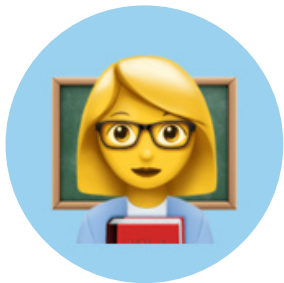
# Activity plan

## Introduction (5mins)

Margarete Schütte-Lihotzky, known as Grete, was born in Vienna in 1897 and lived until 2000 when she was an incredible 102 years old. Grete lived an amazing life; she trained as an architect, becoming the first female student of the University of Applied Arts Vienna. In fact, when celebrating her 100th birthday in 1997 she thought back to how amazing her life was; 'in 1916 no one would have conceived of a woman being commissioned to build a house - not even myself,' she said.

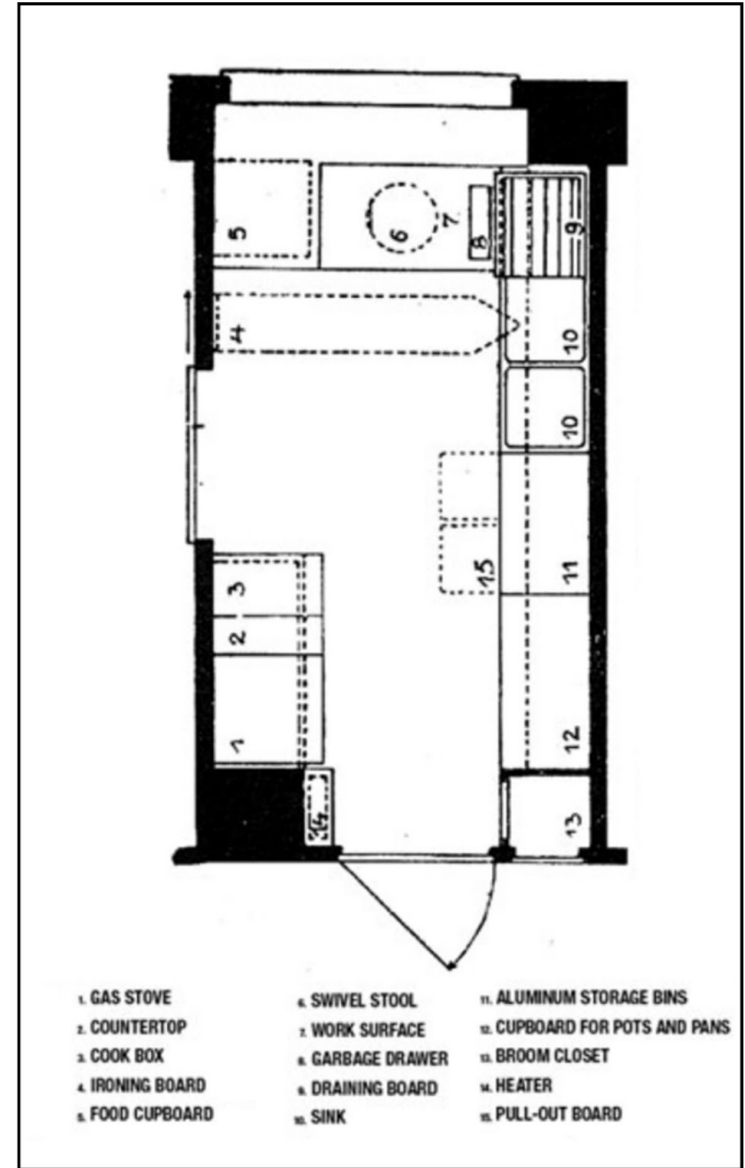
Her first big challenge came as part of the New Frankfurt Project in 1926, which was a programme to design and build affordable housing that could be cheap for people to buy. The homes; flats in small blocks, had to utilise the limited amount of space available. Grete's task was to design the kitchen that would be in every flat.

Grete's approach was to take inspiration from the factory production line and to look at what the end user of her kitchen needed the most; where everything needed to be in the kitchen to make the things that are used the most to cook a meal easily within reach from the centre of the kitchen.





The Frankfurt Kitchen as it appeared in the 1920s



Frankfurt Kitchen floorplan

# Activity plan

## Discuss (10-20mins)

Stand in the middle of your kitchen.

- What things are closest to you?
  - Have things changed since Grete's day with new inventions such as microwaves, blenders, coffee makers and other kitchen gadgets all taking up kitchen space?
  - What is the bare minimum you can have in kitchen to cook your meals?
  - Where would you place everything in your idea of a minimal kitchen?
- Have a discussion and identify a few key answers.

## Research (30mins +)

Go online and find examples of kitchens in small spaces.

You might want to look at the emerging 'Tiny House' scene or look at camping home set ups to find examples of kitchens with extremely small space available.



# Activity plan

## Activity 1 (20 mins)

Grete's designs haven't changed much in almost 100 years since they were created. As Curator Alex says in the film; the Frankfurt Kitchen is 'so unchanged from what we would see if we were to go to Ikea or Homebase' to buy a fitted kitchen today. This is because Grete got a lot of things right the first-time around, but it's also because there hasn't really been much research since Grete's design revolutionised the kitchen back in 1926.

Go into your own kitchen and analyse the kitchen. Answer the following questions where possible;

- What materials can you find in the kitchen? What are the work surfaces made out of? What are the cupboards made out of?
- Get the main meal maker in your household to go and act out making a meal. Watch the path that they take around the kitchen. Could you rearrange things in the kitchen to be more suitably arranged to make this task easier for them?
- Now act out making a meal that you know how to make. Is the path different? Would the kitchen need rearranging now to suit your needs? Can you find anything in common with the previous meal maker?
- Measure the distance from you to the appliances that you need to use regularly such as the fridge, cooker etc. Write down how far the appliances are from you. If you don't have a tape measure or ruler then you can use a piece of string or a shoelace to measure the length of your arm from your elbow. You can then say roughly how far things are from you in arms.

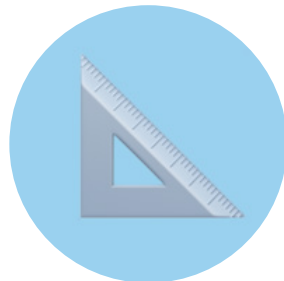
# Activity plan

## Activity 2 (20 mins)

Now go and draw out a rough plan of your kitchen. If you have a tape measure then you should do a scale drawing. For every metre then you can draw 10 centimetres on paper or use less depending on how big your kitchen is. Now redesign the kitchen around the user data that you've collected.

- Start by redrawing your kitchen with everything in better places that suit those making the meals in there.
- Now design in any time or space savers. Perhaps your most used pots and pans can be hung up for easy access or certain common utensils such as knives or spatulas etc. can be easily at hand.
- Remember your users; is anyone really young going to have access to your kitchen. If so, will things need to be secured away somewhere?
- What food will you be storing in your kitchen and what cupboards do you have to store it in? Could you rearrange the cupboard to be in a better place?

Share a picture of your finished illustration using **#DesignFromHome** and the Design Museum will repost the best creations!



# Optional tasks

## Extra

If you still have time then you can do some of the following tasks

- Find out about the life of Margarete Schütte-Lihotzky. She defied the Nazis, joined the resistance and was arrested by the Gestapo. Grete led an incredible life. Do an online search for her name and read more about this pioneer.
- Write about your design. Write one or two paragraphs about why you designed your kitchen the way that you did. What was interesting about watching someone use your current kitchen? What was interesting about using it yourself? What changes did you make and why did you make them?
- Show your new kitchen plan to the main meal maker in your family and get them to pretend to make the meal again. This time get them to pretend that they are using your new kitchen layout. Get their opinion; what things work better and what actually works worse?

