

Design your own chair
Lesson Plan – Key Stages 3-5

Skills that you'll use

- You will learn about key designs and key designers.
- You will learn about user focused design.



Materials needed

- Pencil or pen
- Some paper
- Colouring pens or pencils (optional)



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Activity plan

Introduction (5mins)

Marcel Breuer set out to make a chair that made the user look like they were sitting on air. It had to be ultra-modern and be unlike anything that came before.

Marcel, inspired by bicycle construction, used tube steel and looked to plumbing techniques including pipe bending to make his Wassily chair. Marcel wanted the steel tube to be only one line to make the entire chair. This naked frame made the user look like they were sitting on nothing.

A new material, called eisengarn, was used around the steel frame. Eisengarn is a waxed cotton thread weave quite often known as 'Iron Yarn'. A small amount of this material could support a person as they sat in the minimalist chair.

Marcel had made a chair with minimal parts that made a massive impact in the world of design. But does it still look modern?

Watch Rolf Fehlbaum, son of furniture company Vitra founders Willi and Erika Fehlbaum, talk about the Marcel Breuer's Wassily chair in the Design Museum's film.



Activity plan

Discuss (5-10mins)

- How many chairs do you have in your home?
- Are any of them stackable?
- Are any being used for something other than sitting on (maybe for clothes or as a stool)?
- What makes a chair a chair?
- If you sit on a table does it become a chair?
- Is there anywhere in your home that you can easily sit on that isn't intended as a chair?

Research (10 mins)

- Look at the types of chair that you have around your home.
- Make a list of the types of chair and then put the task that they are used for next to each chair.
For example: a dining table chair may be used to sit for eating or working.
- What type of chair do you have the most of in your home?
- How many people live in your home and how many chairs do you have?



Activity plan

Activity (30 mins)

Design a new chair that can be used for work during the day, comfort in the evening and also be used for other things like eating lunch and dinner.

- What sort of things would someone need during their day?
- What would the chair need to provide throughout the day?
- Would it need to make sure that the user took breaks or had snacks easily to hand?

Draw your design on a piece of paper, label your drawing with annotations to show what materials you've made it out of and show any moving parts etc. Add some colour to your design and give it a name.

Now that you've completed your design why not share it with the Design Museum on social media using **#DesignFromHome?**

