

Reading *Julia Morgan Built a Castle*

Reading Guide, page 1 of 3

SUMMARY

During this activity you and your child will actively read *Julia Morgan Built a Castle* using the suggested reading strategies.

FOCUS

Children's picture books can be great windows into how people have lived and worked in the past. This book tells the story of one of the first American women to become an architect.

TIME

- 30 minutes or more, depending on your child's interest and which reading strategies you choose

RECOMMENDED AGE GROUP

This activity will work best for children in kindergarten to 4th grade.

YOU NEED

- This reading guide
- *Julia Morgan Built a Castle* book, written by Celeste Davidson Mannis, illustrated by Miles Hyman
- *Step Back in Time* sheets (*attached*)

CHALLENGE WORDS (Definitions modified from Merriam Webster's WordCentral.com and LearnersDictionary.com)

- **architect:** a person who designs buildings and advises in their construction
- **commission:** an order to design a building
- **engineer:** a person who is trained in building and designing complicated products, machines, systems, or structures
- **entrance exam:** a test to decide if a person may enter a course of education or a job requiring special training
- **renderings:** representations using artistic means (such as a drawing that represents a plan)

Reading *Julia Morgan Built a Castle*

Reading Guide, page 2 of 3

PARENT PREPARATION

- If you have time, read *Julia Morgan Built a Castle* yourself before sharing it with your child. Also read the notes on the last pages of the book and the *Step Back in Time* sheets.
- If you have time, preview the reading suggestions below. Pick just a few suggestions that look interesting and fun for you.

BEFORE YOU READ

- Talk about buildings in your community. Do you have any buildings that are landmarks for you as you drive to different places in town? What are your favorite features of your house? How would you describe the shape of your school to someone who had never been there before?
- Most of this story takes place in California. Ms. Morgan also spends years in Paris, France to learn how to become an architect. Find both California and France on a map. Talk about what it might have been like to travel so far to go to school.

DURING READING

- Look out for things that the author compares buildings to. What do you think of the comparison? Does it make sense to you? Would you pick a different comparison?
 - While touring the construction site with her family, the author says, “Buildings were huge puzzles. Julia wanted to know how everything fit together.”
 - While studying French and exploring Paris, the author says “Every building told a story.”
- The author uses many words about buildings that may be new to you, but many of them are shown in the pictures of the book. Look closely in the pictures to figure out what the words might mean. Sometimes the sentence will also give a hint about the word’s meaning. Talk about the process you use to make a guess about the word, then consider looking the word up in a dictionary or children’s dictionary (such as Merriam Webster’s WordCentral.com).
- As you read, listen for all of the people who are involved in creating this work of art.

Reading *Julia Morgan Built a Castle*

Reading Guide, page 3 of 3

AFTER READING

- Did you see all of the math questions hidden in this book?
 - The trip from San Francisco to San Luis Obispo is about 250 miles along the coast of California. Julia Morgan traveled this trip 500 times. How many miles did she travel to work on William Hearst's castle? (Remember to count round trip!) (250 times 500 times 2)
 - Julia Morgan finished studying at the University of California in 1895, but didn't graduate from the Ecole des Beaux-Arts until 1902. How much time passed between her two graduations?

More information at <http://americanhistory.si.edu/ourstory/activities/architect/>.



Reading *Julia Morgan Built a Castle*

Step Back in Time, Page 1 of 2

For more information, visit the National Museum of American History website <http://americanhistory.si.edu/ourstory/activities/architect>.

Architects are people who design buildings. They study math, science, and art to help them design buildings that are strong, useful, and beautiful.

An architect thinks about the place where the building will stand to make sure it will survive the weather and will be sturdy in the ground. The architect also decides the exact measurements for each part of the building to make sure everything will fit together correctly and to decide how much of each building material to buy.



A sketch of the Supreme Court of the United States, by its architect Cass Gilbert [Archives Center, National Museum of American History]

A strong building is only part of the challenge for an architect. He or she will also make sure that the building will be conveniently arranged for the people who will live or work there. To make the building beautiful, the architect will also think about decorations, patterns, and materials that will look beautiful to the people who use the building and see it from outside.

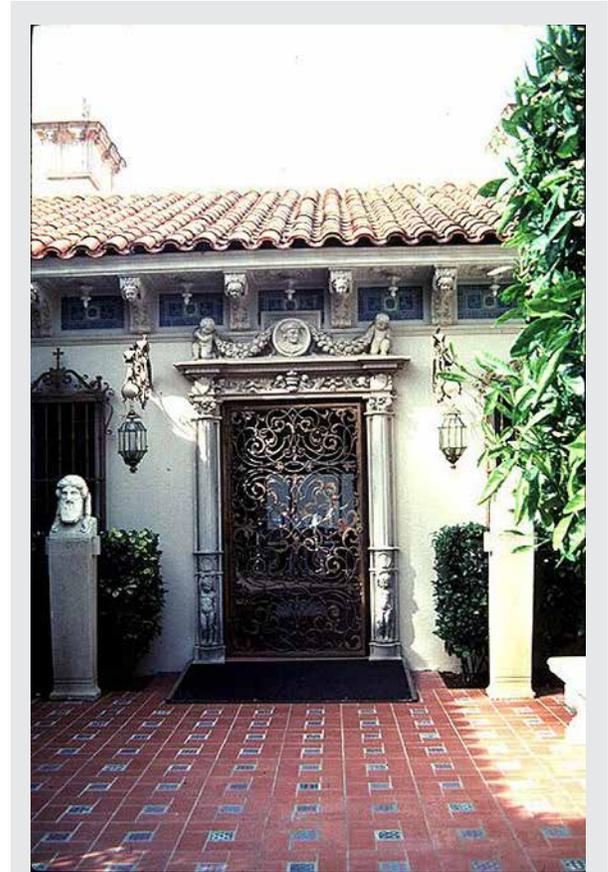
To share their plan for the building, architects make many drawings on paper and sometimes make small models out of cardboard. The architects will then show the papers and models to the people who will use the building. Sometimes architects redo their plans over and over again to make sure they are perfect, because construction workers use those paper plans to make the real building out of materials like stone, metal, wood, plaster, and glass.

Reading *Julia Morgan Built a Castle*

Step Back in Time, Page 2 of 2

About Julia Morgan:

Until around 1900, almost all architects were men. Women were not admitted to architectural school. However, Julia Morgan and other great women architects have helped change this tradition and now both women and men can become architects.



Photograph of one of the entrances to Hearst Castle, by Eleanor C. Weller [Archives of American Gardens, Smithsonian Institution]

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Reading *Julia Morgan Built a Castle*

Teacher Guide, page 1 of 2

See the “Reading Guide” sheets for specific reading tips.

OBJECTIVES

The students will be better able to:

- Read for understanding.
- Describe some aspects of architecture.

STUDENT PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

- Discussion exhibits understanding of story and historical details.
- Contributes appropriate ideas and listens to others.
- Asks questions and offers personal opinions.

STANDARDS

NCHS History Standards

K-4 Historical Thinking Standards

- 2H: Draw upon the visual data presented in photographs, paintings, cartoons, and architectural drawings.

K-4 History Content Standards

- 4C: The student understands historic figures who have exemplified values and principles of American democracy.

IRA/NCTE Language Arts Standards

1. Students read a wide range of print and nonprint texts to build an understanding of texts, of themselves, and of the cultures of the United States and the world; to acquire new information; to respond to the needs and demands of society and the workplace; and for personal fulfillment. Among these texts are fiction and nonfiction, classic and contemporary works.
3. Students apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts. They draw on their prior experience, their interactions with other readers and writers, their knowledge of word meaning and of other texts, their word identification strategies, and their understanding of textual features (e.g., sound-letter correspondence, sentence structure, context, graphics).

Reading *Julia Morgan Built a Castle*

Teacher Guide, page 2 of 2

Common Core Standards

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.4 Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.7 Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.

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