

# DESIGN AROUND TOWN

## AN ACTIVITY BOOK



**COOPER  
HEWITT**



Smithsonian Design Museum

This Book Belongs to \_\_\_\_\_

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## Welcome!

Design is all around us. From cars and buses on the street to your favorite T-shirt, the world is full of ideas that have been made into things. But how can we use design to create a better world? Join 13-year-old Sofia as she navigates her city with her neighbors, finding opportunities for design everywhere. Along the way, try it yourself!

This book is an interactive story that you can share with friends, classmates, and family members.





## Meet Sofia!

She loves to draw and explore her city.








**THE CITY I LIVE IN IS FULL OF  
THINGS THAT HAVE BEEN DESIGNED BY  
PEOPLE—FROM BUILDINGS TO BICYCLES,  
FROM THE SIGNS WE SEE TO THE  
CLOTHES WE WEAR.**

**CAN YOU FIND ANYTHING  
ELSE IN THIS PICTURE  
THAT IS DESIGNED?**

A grayscale illustration of a room. At the top, a string of lights with three visible bulbs hangs across the frame. In the center, a large, empty rectangular poster is pinned to the wall with four corner fasteners. To the left, a bed with a heart-shaped headboard and two pillows is partially visible. At the bottom, a white, curved object, likely a quilt, is shown. Three text boxes are overlaid on the image: one at the top left, one to the right of the poster, and one at the bottom center.

Sofia lives with her baby brother and her grandmother, whom she calls Abu. The room she shares with her brother is full of her favorite things.

Everything from her lamp and her desk to her favorite shirt has been designed.

Sofia likes to put posters on her wall.

**Can you design one for her?**

**Help Sofia design a pattern for her quilt.**



**I LOVE TO FIND DESIGN EVERYWHERE!  
CAN YOU FIND THREE THINGS AROUND YOU  
THAT HAVE BEEN DESIGNED?**

**1** \_\_\_\_\_

**2** \_\_\_\_\_

**3** \_\_\_\_\_

**Design a lampshade for Sofia.**

Sofia is wearing her favorite outfit today.

**What colors or patterns can you add?**

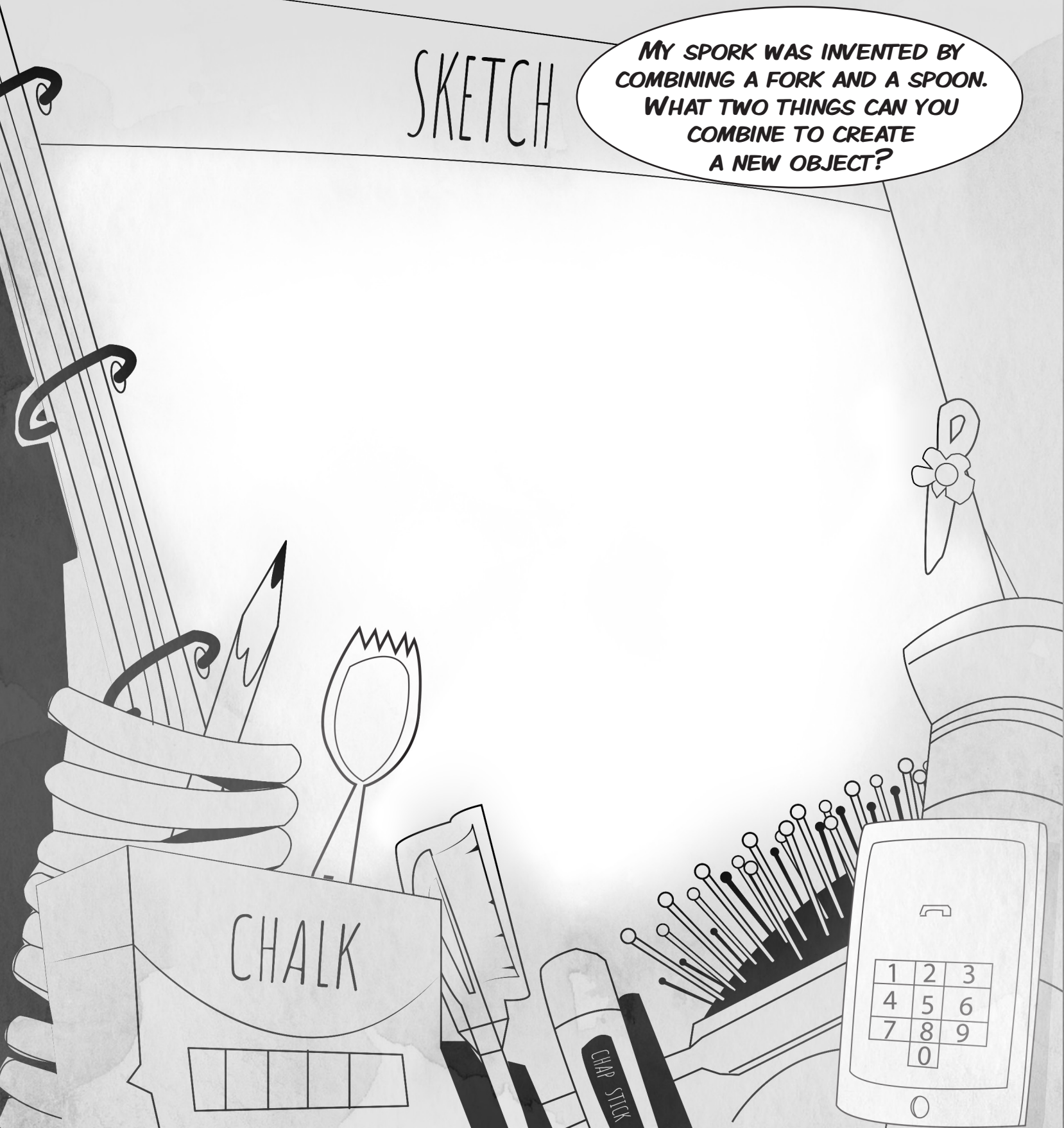


**Brainstorming** means coming up with lots of new ideas.  
Sometimes we can brainstorm by combining different ideas.

**On this page, brainstorm a new tool for Sofia by combining  
some of the objects in her backpack.**

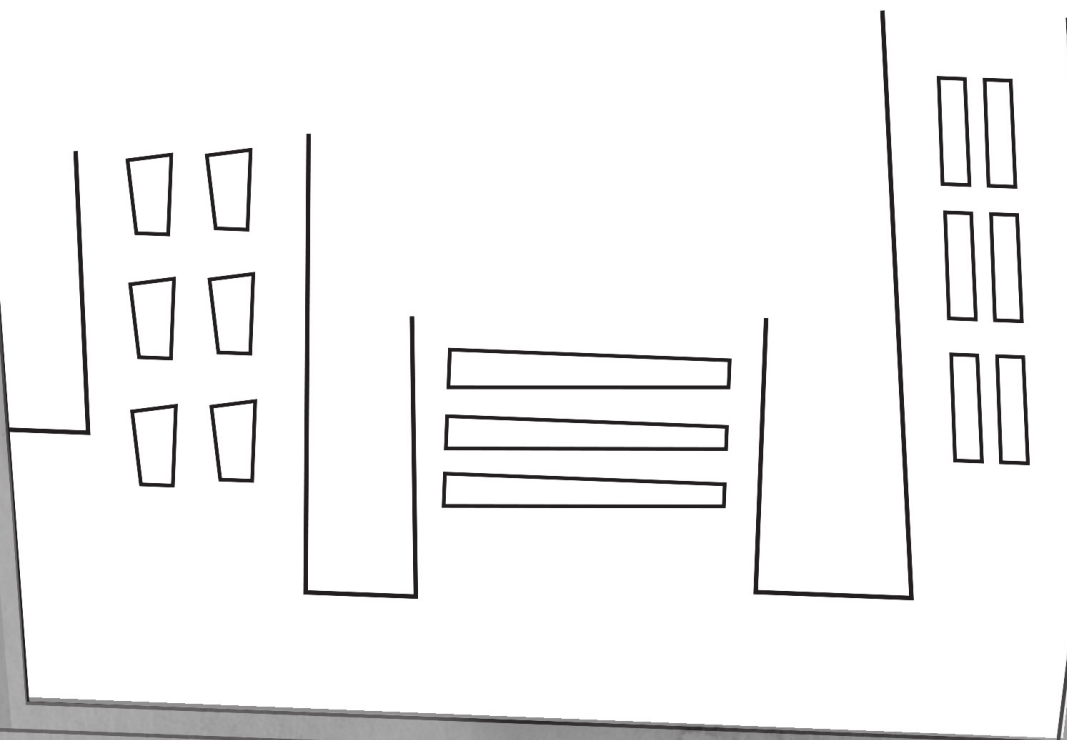
SKETCH

MY SPORK WAS INVENTED BY  
COMBINING A FORK AND A SPOON.  
WHAT TWO THINGS CAN YOU  
COMBINE TO CREATE  
A NEW OBJECT?



When Sofia looks out her window, she sees all kinds of buildings and their rooftops! Some rooftops were designed with sloped sides, so rain and snow can slide off. Some rooftops were designed flat, so neighbors can use them as outdoor space. The design of buildings is called **architecture**.

Can you design the rooftops of these buildings?



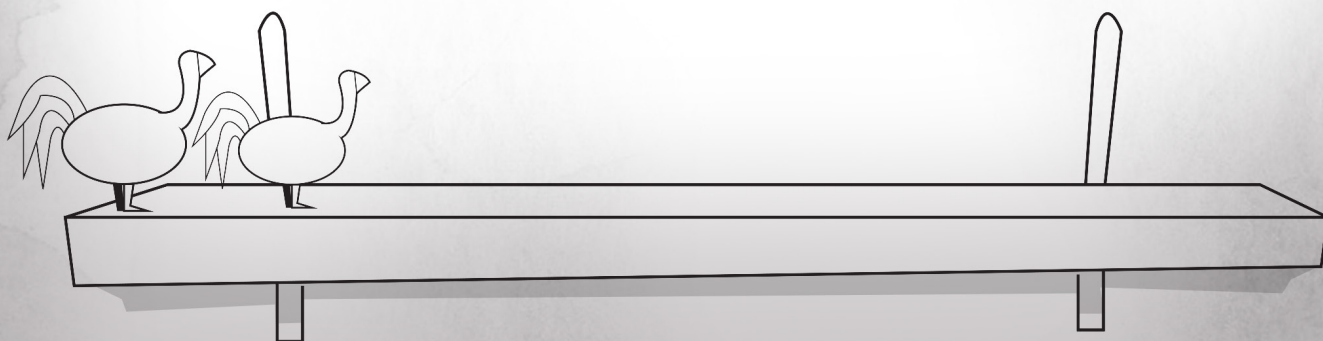
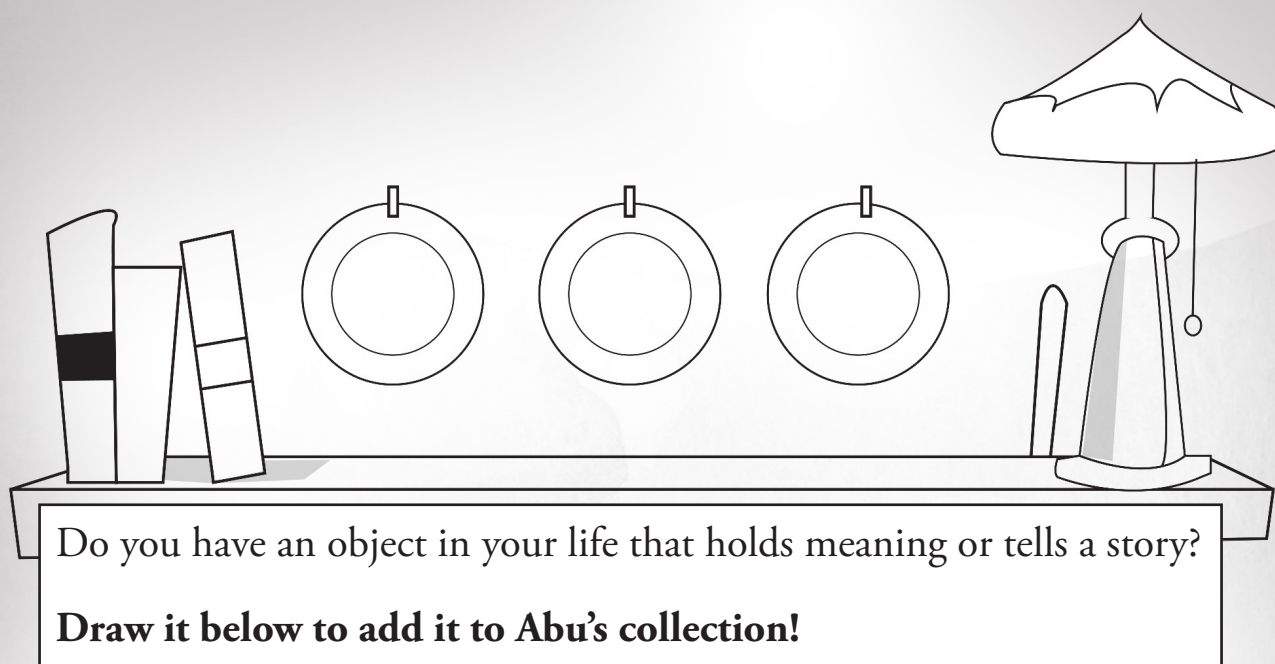


Sofia loves exploring Abu's collection of objects and hearing her tell stories about them. Some are gifts from faraway places, and others have been in the family for generations! Some objects are for decoration, while others we use every day.

**Can you circle three useful objects and color in three decorative objects?**



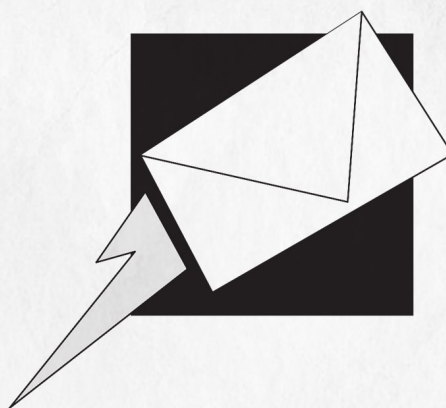
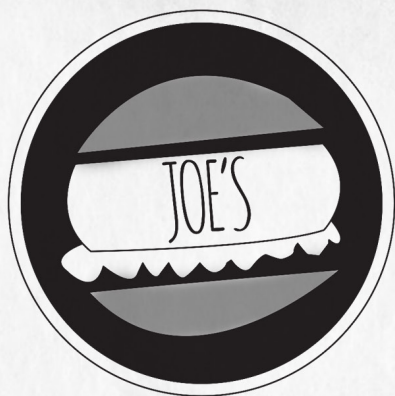




When Sofia goes outside, she sees lots of signs! A **logo** is a symbol or other design that we can use to identify a place, group, or business.

**Can you match the logos to the place they belong?**

*LOGO DESIGN CAN HELP US KNOW  
WHAT THINGS ARE AND HOW TO  
GET AROUND!*



Skate Park

Post Office

Sandwich Shop



The corner market sells fresh produce. The owner, Marie, needs help designing the store's logo.

**Create a logo for Marie that will give customers an idea of what she sells!**

OPEN



\$2.00 SALE

**MY TIPS FOR  
DESIGNING A LOGO:**

- **THINK ABOUT COLORS AND SHAPES.**
- **KEEP IT SIMPLE.**
- **CAN PEOPLE SEE YOUR LOGO FROM FAR AWAY?**

Marie is selling fresh fruit salad today for \$2.00.

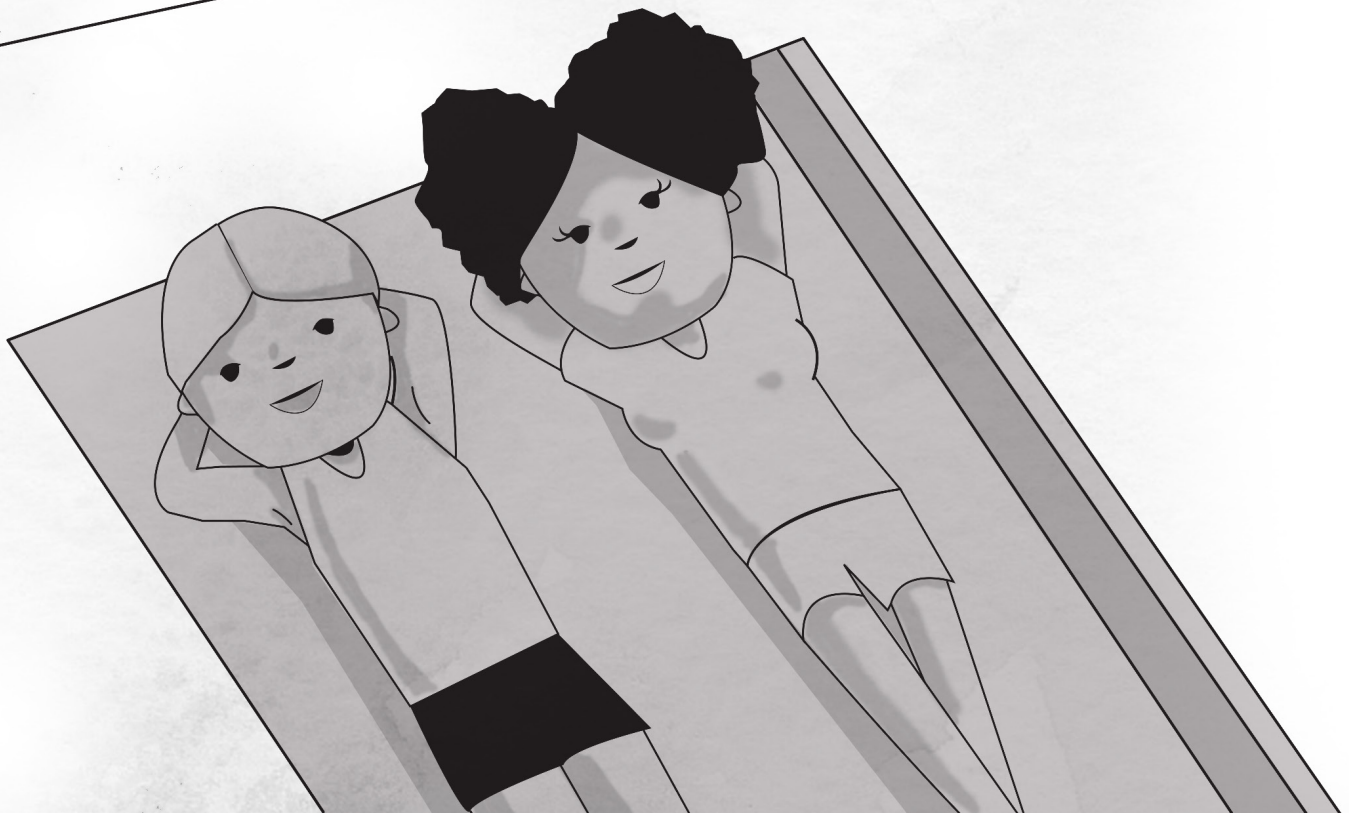
**Can you help her make a sign that will attract customers?**




**LOTS OF PEOPLE ARE OUT ENJOYING A DAY  
AT THE PARK! CAN YOU HELP OUR NEIGHBORS BY  
DESIGNING SOMETHING FOR THEM?**

José and Tiffany want to enjoy the weather,  
but not get too hot.

**Design something that will help them stay cool.**





Yasmin and Amira are at the playground.  
Amira is a wheelchair user and likes to go  
fast. Yasmin likes to climb up high.

**Can you design something fun to meet  
their needs?**

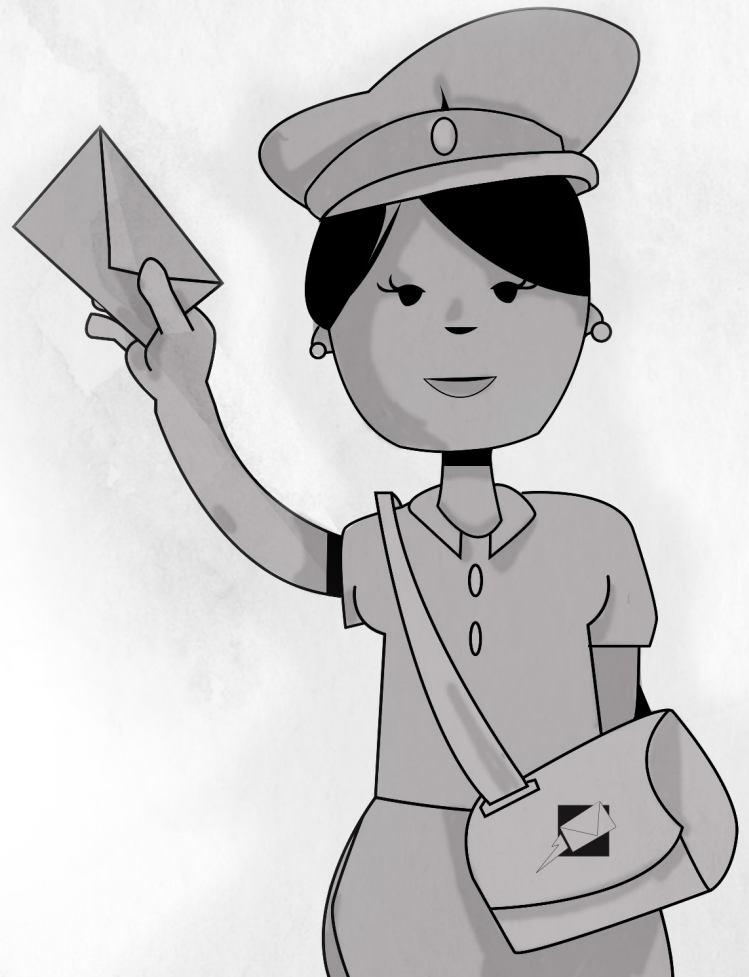
The mail carrier, Jesse, has a busy day today! They are looking for a new way to carry mail along their route.

**Can you design them a new way to travel with the mail?  
Their new mode of transportation needs:**

- to be able to travel through the snow and rain
- to have a comfortable seat
- to have room for the mail and packages



**WHAT MODES OF  
TRANSPORTATION DO YOU USE TO  
GET AROUND? HOW WOULD YOU  
MAKE THEM BETTER?**



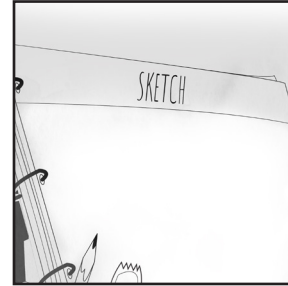


## Visual Vocabulary

**architecture**



**brainstorm**



**pattern**



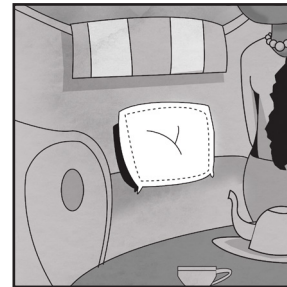
**poster**



**decorative object**



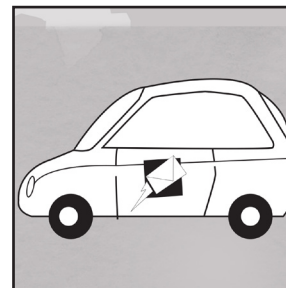
**useful object**



**logo**



**transportation design**



**Adults, keep the creativity flowing with these design exercises!**

**Logo Scavenger Hunt:** During your next walk through your neighborhood or community, take time to see how many logos you can find along the way. If you want, bring a sketchbook to record what you see. Which logo is your favorite, and why?

**Playground Redesign:** Head to a nearby park or playground with a friend. Ask them:

- What do you like to do most at this park?
- What do you wish was different?

Listen to what they have to say and take notes. Then, redesign the playground with them in mind. How did it change?

**Object Remix:** Find three objects you use every day. You can choose anything from a toothbrush to a pencil, a bicycle, etc. Design an object that combines at least two of them. Once you are done, see if you can keep going! How many wild ideas can you come up with?







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**Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum** welcomes everyone to discover the importance of design and its power to change the world.