



Job Shadow Experience

Reviewed by Jim Coffman

Summary

This Career Discovery activity introduces a student to the career of landscape architecture and the wide array of skills it involves and services it provides. A student spends a half-day at your workplace touring your site and shadowing one or more employees.

This experience can help a student discover the link between what they do now in school and what they can become in the future. It also provides an opportunity to witness first-hand the contributions that landscape architecture makes to a community.

Creating a job shadow experience at any point in the year would be valuable. However, April is an excellent time to implement this activity given that it is both World Landscape Architecture Month and the month when the “Take Our Daughters And Sons To Work Day®” event occurs. There may be young people in your community who need to be paired with an adult for this event.

Publicize and Document Your Activity

By taking the time to create and implement a WLAM Career Discovery activity, you achieve two great results—you promote the profession while teaching students about sustainability, ecological issues, and the technical aspects of landscape architecture.

Be sure to publicize your activity within your community and document it to share your experience with other ASLA chapters. Refer to the appendix for suggestions on publicizing and documenting your activity.

Grade Level: 8–12

Duration

Suggested timeframe is one-half day.

The timeframe could be extended to one full day if the experience includes a visit to a project site. A suggested one-day schedule is provided in the appendix.

Personnel

Typically, one student is paired with one landscape architect. However, it is possible for two or more people to participate as long as the experience is well coordinated.

Costs

Costs associated with this activity are minimal. Other than the time investment, the only costs would be for photocopying materials for the student(s) and any snack you provide.

Learning Objectives

Students will:

- Learn about landscape architecture as a career.
- Understand that landscape architecture is a multidisciplinary field that encompasses many subject areas including geography, math, and science.
- Learn how subjects they are studying in school relate to a career in landscape architecture.



Materials

PROFESSIONAL MATERIALS

- Images of landscape architecture projects
- Materials associated with any projects you plan to show the student
- Project materials your firm has produced; example models your firm has built/created
- Design magazines, product books
- Product samples
- A copy of the ASLA brochure *Your Path to Landscape Architecture* (obtained by contacting ASLA's public relations and communications coordinator JR Taylor at 202-216-2345 or jtaylor@asla.org).

EQUIPMENT

- Computer for independent study
- Tools used by landscape architects (GPS units, laser, tape measures, etc.)

SESSION HANDOUTS (SEE APPENDIX)

- *Landscape Architecture: Job Shadow Experience*
- *Learning About Landscape Architecture*
- *Landscape Architecture FAQs*
- *Site Mapping*

Preparation Checklist

At least one month in advance:

- Contact a school, Scout troop, or other organization to identify students to participate in the activity.
- Review the suggested plan for the job shadow experience.
- Meet with the adult supervisor (principal, teacher, Scout master, or parent) to review your plans for the job shadow experience.

One week prior:

- Touch base with the adult supervisor and/or the student to confirm the date, time, and meeting place.
- Decide which of your projects are most appropriate to share with the student.
- Make sure you have a copy of the *Your Path to Landscape Architecture* brochure for the student and familiarize yourself with its contents.

The day before:

- Prepare materials for the activities.
- Make copies of handouts.

After the experience:

- Follow up with the student's adult supervisor.



Procedure

WHAT TO DO

WELCOME AND OVERVIEW

TIME: 35–40 MIN

1. Welcome the student and take a tour of your office.
 - Point out the location of the restrooms, water fountain, etc.
2. Find out about the student's expectations:
 - Ask what questions he or she has about landscape architecture.
 - Find out about the student's main areas of interest; this will help you tailor the experience.
3. Review the job shadow schedule.
 - Provide the student with a copy of the schedule. Use the handout *Landscape Architecture: Job Shadow Experience*. Customize it as needed.
 - Provide the student with the handout *Learning About Landscape Architecture*. Explain that by the end of the job shadow experience, the student should be able to answer all the questions.
4. Provide general information about the field of landscape architecture.
 - Background about the field: How has the field evolved—past, present, and looking into the future?
 - Provide the student with the handout *Landscape Architecture FAQs*.
5. Provide information about your personal experience as a landscape architect. Some points you might address are:
 - Roles and Responsibilities
 - What do you do?
 - Who do you work with?
 - What do you like best about your job?
 - Your Experience
 - What do you value and enjoy about your job or career?
 - How does job or career impact being a parent or family member?
 - Has the job or career helped you make a difference in your community? □
 - Personal Attributes
 - What kind of personal traits, interests, and styles match this job?



ACTIVITY 1: REVIEW A COMPLETED PROJECT

TIME: 30 MIN

6. Review a project you recently completed in your community.
 - Explain the process used to complete the project— assess/design/build. Show any relevant project-related materials that are available.
 - Highlight issues that arose and how you went about problem-solving them. Explain what the issues were and how they were resolved.
 - Ask if the student has any questions about the project, about your work on the project, or about landscape architecture in general.

BREAK

TIME: 15 MIN

At some point, take a break to give the student time to reflect as well as to use the restroom. Consider providing a snack.

TAKE A TOUR

TIME: 30 MIN

7. Introduce the student to other employees and their roles in your organization. Explain their contributions to the recently completed project.
8. Point out and demonstrate (if feasible) any technology you use. Explain how you used technology in the recently completed project.
9. Following the tour, have a discussion with the student about landscape architecture as a career. Discussion points might include:
 - Career Ladder□
 - What does the career ladder in your field look like from entry jobs to professional levels?
 - Education Requirements and Opportunities□
 - What is the basic education and training required for entry to professional levels?
 - What education or training is needed or available to advance and grow in the field?
 - Technology□
 - How does technology impact and serve as a tool in your job and in the field in general?
10. Explain the differences between a landscape architect and a horticulturist; a landscape contractor; an architect; an urban planner; a civil engineer.
 - Give an example of the work each might do that is unique to that vocation.



Job Shadow Experience

- Explain how these professions might work with a landscape architect.

INDEPENDENT STUDY

TIME: 30 MIN

This portion of the job shadow experience provides the student with some time to reflect on what he or she has learned. It also gives you some time to take care of any business you may need to attend to.

Be sure the time is well spent by providing structured activities for the student. Some suggestions are provided below.

- Provide issues of *Landscape Architecture Magazine* with articles marked for the student to read. Select articles that relate to the projects you are covering with the student or that focus on issues that you can discuss with the student.
- Provide the student with the *Site Mapping* handout from the ASLA Career Discovery *Reading Garden* activity. Provide any introduction needed and then have the student complete the handout.
- Set the student up to review ASLA's Your Path to Landscape Architecture webpage (<https://www.asla.org/yourpath/index.html>).
- The student may also view a career discovery video: Meet two landscape architects who tell the story of competing against top firms in the world to win the opportunity to design a one-of-a kind botanical garden for the city of Chicago: the Lurie Garden at Millennium Park. Running time 6:45 minutes.
<http://thefutureschannel.com/videogallery/landscape-architects/>
- Give the student the *Your Path to Landscape Architecture* brochure to read.
- Have the student review one of the student projects that won an award of excellence (particularly if it's from a nearby school or is a project that relates to the student's interest and/or your community).
<https://www.asla.org/IndividualAward.aspx?id=5060>

Spend time with the student to debrief before moving on to the next activity.



REVIEW A PROJECT IN PROCESS

TIME: 30 MIN

11. Review a project you are currently working on.

- Explain where you are in the process (assess/design/build).
- Explain who in your office and outside your office is involved in the project.
- Show any relevant project-related materials that are available.
- Highlight project-related issues and describe how you are problem-solving them.
- Ask if the student has any questions about the project, about your work on the project, or about landscape architecture in general.



A CAREER IN LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

TIME: 30 MIN

12. Show the student ASLA's Your Path to Landscape Architecture webpage.
<https://www.asla.org/yourpath/index.html>
 - Review parts of the site that are age appropriate for the student.
 - Accredited programs in landscape architecture (middle school/high school)
 - ACE Mentor program (high school)
13. Following the website review, have a discussion with the student about landscape architecture as a career. Discussion points might include:
 - Learning More About This Career
 - What volunteer or work experience would help the student learn more about landscape architecture?
 - What studies, classes, degrees, and training programs are suggested?
 - What hobbies, books, college visits, or company tours would be helpful?
 - Related Jobs and Careers
 - What other jobs and careers could the student go into?
 - What other industries or fields could the student work in?
 - Money Questions
 - Be ready to answer questions about how much money you make.
 - Some may want information on how you financed your education.
 - Personal Questions
 - Sometimes students ask other personal questions. Be ready to make a quick decision on what is okay to share and how to say something is not, in your mind, appropriate to share.

WRAP UP

TIME: 15 MIN

14. Ask the student for any questions about the projects you've reviewed or about landscape architecture as a career.
15. Give the student your business card. Consider writing the URL for the ASLA Your Path to Landscape Architecture webpage on the back of the card.
[asla.org/yourpath](https://www.asla.org/yourpath)
16. Arrange for the student to return to school or other location.



Appendix

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HANDOUTS

Job Shadow Experience

Learning About Landscape Architecture

Landscape Architecture FAQs

Site Mapping



Publicize and Document Your Activity

Don't let the effort you put into creating and implementing a Career Discovery activity go unnoticed!

Staff at ASLA National is always on hand to help promote your events to local media; feel free to contact them at anytime. If you would like to reach out to local media yourself, below are some tips to assure your name appears in print or online.

PUBLICIZE

For tips on reaching out to local media, refer to the PR Handbook, available as part of ASLA's Chapter Operations Workbook. It is online at:

<https://www.asla.org/ChapterOutreach.aspx>

You'll find tips like these:

- Pitching the story to the media
- Formatting the press release
- Appealing to the audience
- Making the story relevant
- Social media tips

TAKE PICTURES & VIDEO

Be sure to take lots and lots of pictures and video! ASLA National would love to share your activity online as inspiration for the other chapters.

Send us photos or video of your event featuring:

- Students interacting with professionals (we must have a signed photo release from parents to use the photos)
- Your presentation materials
- The activity in process
- The end result of your activity

DOCUMENT

Email public relations and communications coordinator JR Taylor—at jtaylor@asla.org—to report on the activity or activities that your chapter completes.



Extending the Activity

A suggestion for extending this activity to one full day is provided below.

VISIT A SITE

Take the student on a tour of a project you have completed or one currently in progress.

ADVANCE PREPARATION

- Gather any relevant documents about the project.
- Prepare a copy of the *Site Mapping* and the *Site Analysis* handouts (refer to appendix).

AT THE SITE

Discuss the project with the student, covering the following types of information.

PROJECT BACKGROUND

- Provide background information about the project.

SITE MAPPING

- Familiarize the students with the site and identify the site features.
- Ask the student:
 - What do you about the site (flat, sloped, shaded, sunny, quiet, noisy, big, small, etc.)
 - Why do you think this site was suited to its purpose?
- Discuss how a site is mapped.
 - Give the student the *Site Mapping* handout and walk through the questions.

SITE ANALYSIS

- Ask the student:
 - What kinds of conditions do landscape architects need to think about before they can plan a design for a space?
 - Discuss the site issues that arose on this project and explain how they were handled.

Landscape Architecture: Job Shadow Experience

Student's name _____

Landscape architect's name _____

ACTIVITY 1: REVIEW A COMPLETED PROJECT

30 MINUTES

MY NOTES

ACTIVITY 2: TAKE A TOUR

30 MINUTES

MY NOTES

ACTIVITY 3: INDEPENDENT STUDY

30 MINUTES

MY NOTES

ACTIVITY 4: REVIEW A PROJECT IN PROCESS

30 MINUTES

MY NOTES

ACTIVITY 5: A CAREER IN LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

30 MINUTES

MY NOTES

Learning About Landscape Architecture

1. How would you describe a landscape architect's daily work?
2. What types of projects do landscape architects work on?
3. What methods does a landscape architect use in developing a design?
4. What drawing tools and computer equipment does a landscape architect use?
5. What education must a professional landscape architect have?
6. What subjects are you studying in school that a landscape architect would need to use?

Landscape Architecture FAQs

Landscape architecture is a profession committed to the stewardship of the land while creating healthy, enjoyable, and secure places for the present and future. Landscape architecture combines art and science. It is the profession that designs, plans, and manages our land.

Landscape architecture has strong roots in the United States and early examples, such as Thomas Jefferson's Monticello, are still much admired. The actual term landscape architecture became common after 1863 when Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux designed New York's Central Park.

WHAT DOES A LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT DO ON THE JOB?

Landscape architects deal with the increasingly complex relationships between the built and natural environments. Landscape architects use sustainable design practices to plan and design traditional places such as parks, residential developments, campuses, gardens, cemeteries, commercial centers, resorts, transportation facilities, corporate and institutional centers, and waterfront developments. They also design and plan the restoration of natural places disturbed by humans such as wetlands, stream corridors, mined areas, and forested land. Their appreciation for historic landscapes and cultural resources enables landscape architects

to undertake preservation planning projects for national, regional, and local historic sites and areas.

WHAT SKILLS DOES A LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT NEED?

- Sensitivity to landscape quality
- Understanding of the arts and a humanistic approach to design
- Ability to analyze problems in terms of design and physical form
- Technical competence to translate a design into a built work
- Skills in all aspects of professional practice including management and professional ethics

WHAT ARE THE EDUCATION AND LICENSING REQUIREMENTS?

A formal education is essential to gain the skills and knowledge to become a landscape architect. Professional education in landscape architecture can be obtained at the undergraduate or graduate level. There are two undergraduate professional degrees. These usually require four or five years of study in design, construction techniques, art, history, natural, and social sciences. There are generally three types of graduate degree programs. For more information visit ASLA's Career Discovery page: asla.org/yourpath

At present, all 50 states license (or register) landscape architects. Each state sets its own requirements for registration, but all require candidates to pass a national examination (the Landscape Architect Registration Examination, or LARE).

WHERE DO LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS FIND JOBS AFTER GRADUATION?

Landscape architects are employed in private, public, and academic organizations. Private sector opportunities are found within landscape architectural, engineering, architectural, and planning firms. Landscape architects may also work with other types of private corporations that have physical planning departments, or offer products and services related to land planning and development. Public sector employment opportunities are found within federal, state, regional, and municipal agencies involved in land planning, development, and preservation. Landscape architects in academic practice teach and conduct research in the professional programs offered by colleges and universities across the country.

WHAT IS A LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT'S SALARY?

Landscape architectural salaries vary depending on the years of experience, geographical location, and type of position. The average annual salary and bonuses for those in the landscape architecture field total \$78,600, according to the 2010-11 ASLA National Salary Survey.

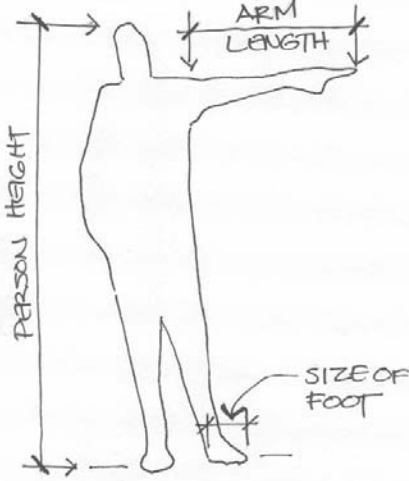
For more information about a career in landscape architecture, visit ASLA's Career Discovery page: asla.org/yourpath

Site Mapping

Name _____

Part 1 Measuring

How would you measure something you cannot reach: a tree, building, or light pole?
Landscape architects often use their bodies for measurements. For small objects, you could use your foot, hand, or arm.

| | |
|---|--|
|  | <p>What are 3 things that may change or make it difficult to use your body to measure objects?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• _____• _____• _____ |
|---|--|

Part 2 Paces

Paces are the equal length steps you take when you walk. You can use your pace to make reasonable measurements of spaces even when you don't have a measuring tape. Each person's pace will be different. Take turns to complete the following activity.

1. Calculate your average pace.

Stand with your toes touching the mark on the ground and take 10 steps forward.

Measure the distance with the tape measure. _____ inches

Divide by 10 to calculate your average pace in inches. _____ average pace

2. Using your pace, measure the width of the space marked between two pieces of tape.

Stand with your toes touching the mark on the ground and count the number of paces it takes for you to walk between the two marks. _____ paces

Multiply the number of paces by your average pace (in inches) to determine the distance between the two marks. _____ inches

3. Name 3 things on a site that could be measured with your pace.

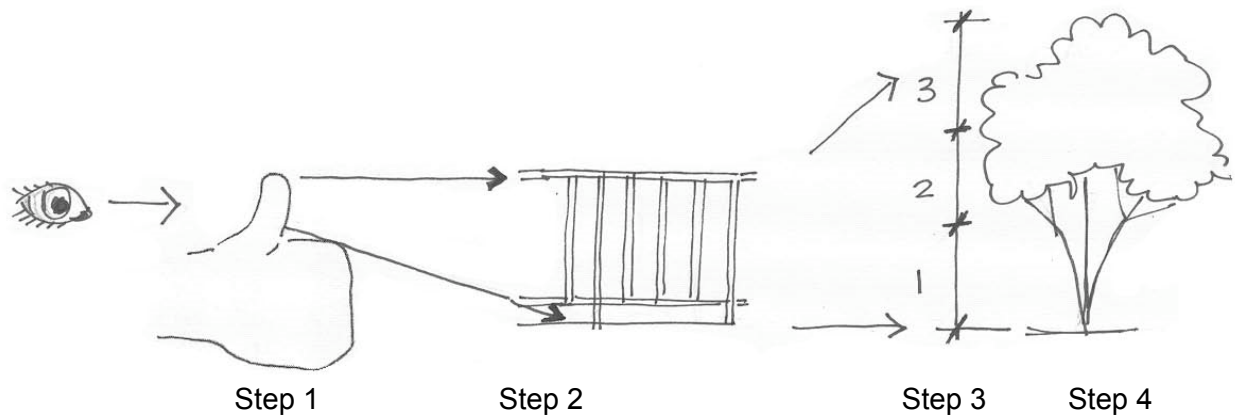
- _____
- _____
- _____

4. List 3 things that could make it difficult to use your pace to measure objects.

- _____
- _____
- _____

Part 3 Measuring with Paces

Sometimes the object is too big for you to measure by standing next to it or in a place you cannot reach. What then? Use a familiar object that is easy to measure by yourself with a yardstick or tape measure (fence in example).



Step 1. Hold your thumb with arm extended. Move back and forth until your thumb is the same height as the object. Then walk to the object you just measured counting your paces. What is the number of paces between you and the object? _____ paces

Step 2. Measure the object with a tape measure or yardstick. What is that measurement in inches? _____ inches

Step 3. Select a different object to measure that you cannot measure with a yardstick (tree in this example). Standing by the object, walk away from the object the same number of steps you recorded in Step 1.

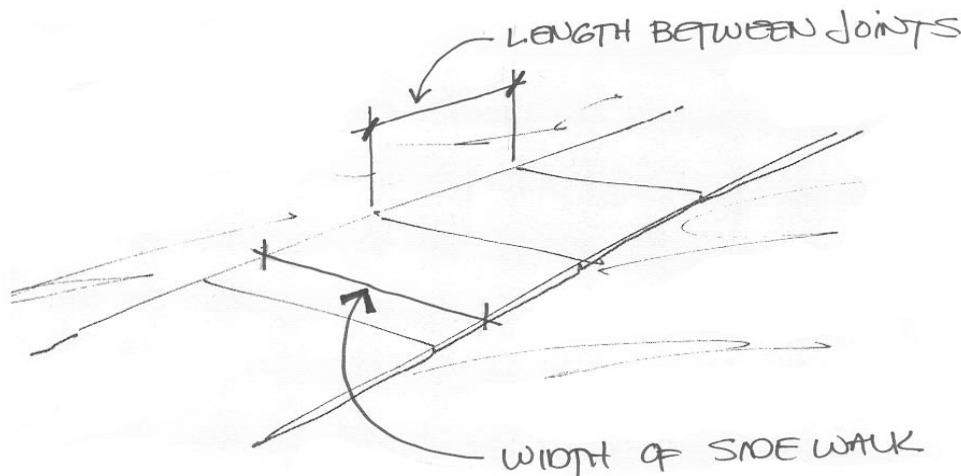
Step 4. Measure the new object with your thumb extended same as Step 1. Calculate the height of the object by multiplying the number of thumbs it takes to cover the object times the height of the object measure in step 2.

(_____ thumbs) x (_____ height of object measured in step 2) = _____ inches (height of new object)

Step 5. Convert height to feet and inches. _____ feet _____ inches

Part 4 Standard Distances

Sometimes there are existing objects that do the measuring for you in the built world. Sidewalks, pens and pencils, ceiling tiles, tables, and stairs are only a few things that are standard sizes. If you know these standard sizes, you can make good estimates of the size of things around you.



Sidewalks are often 4 feet, 5 feet, or 8 feet wide. It's easy to see the difference when you know what to look for. Joints in sidewalks are also standard distances.

What are 2 reasons sidewalks have standard widths and lengths?

- _____
- _____

Part 5 Everyday Objects

1. List 3 everyday objects in or around your house that you could measure with your thumb.

2. List 3 everyday objects too big to measure with a yardstick or tape measure that you could measure with your pace and thumb.

3. List 3 objects that are standard lengths or widths that you could use to measure. Try to think of everyday objects in your kitchen, bathroom, bedroom, classroom, etc.
