

DESIGN HUNT

A PRACTICE FOR FOSTERING THE MAKER CAPACITIES:
LOOKING CLOSELY, EXPLORING COMPLEXITY & FINDING OPPORTUNITY



Design is all around us. Go on a hunt for it: Explore an area with a careful eye towards designed objects or systems. You could hunt around your classroom, the school building, or the neighborhood. You might hunt for a specific type of object, or system, or just for design in general. Notice lots of design and make a list of items you notice on your hunt.

Then, focus in on one object or system, tag it, sketch it, or take a photo of it and ask:

- What is the object or system you're looking at?
- What do you notice about this object or system? What's interesting about it?
- What do you think the designer(s) thought about when creating this object or system?
- What are ways you might redesign the object or system? Why?

Design Hunts and Tags

This practice first encourages learners to observe the world around them and look for design, “in the wild,” taking a broad inventory of the designs they notice. Then it asks them to focus in on one object or system to consider the designer’s perspective or to propose redesign ideas.

When and How Can This Practice Be Used?

This practice can be used as a launch to notice design at the start of an inquiry, or at any time when it seems useful to draw or deepen learners’ attention to design. Design hunts can be done solo, in pairs, or in trios. Some educators have used a design hunt and tag activity at the start of the year to have students explore and get familiar with the physical design of their new classroom. Other educators have tweaked the practice to focus in on design related to a specific area of study like simple machines or circuits.

This practice can be used on its own or along with other Agency by Design thinking routines or practices. Here are some considerations for implementing this practice:

- The design tags and prompts provide an opportunity to make students’ thinking visible. Students may fill out the tags by writing, they can also respond to prompts through other means of documentation like drawing, taking photos, or recording responses through video or audio. Included in this packet is a template of design tags, feel free to try these or to create your own prompts to fit the needs of your learners and your course of study.
- Pair this practice with a thinking routine. For example, follow it with the *Parts, Purposes, Complexities* thinking routine as a way of further examining objects, or with the *Parts, People, Interactions* thinking routine as a way of further examining systems, or with the *Imagine if...* routine as a way of further envisioning a redesign of objects or systems.



What's the object or system you're looking at?

What do you notice about this object or system?
What's interesting about it?

What do you think the designer thought about
when creating this object or system?

What would you change if you could redesign the
object or system? Why?