

Building Zaha: The Story of Architect Zaha Hadid
Discussion Guide
Grades Pre-K – 3rd

Before Reading: to activate schema, build background knowledge, and set a purpose.

- With your students, explore the different pieces of work constructed by Zaha Hadid Architects: <https://www.zaha-hadid.com/archive>. Have discussions around what you see, think, or wonder.
- Read the following quote from Zaha Hadid: *“You really have to have a goal. The goal posts might shift, but you should have a goal.”* Have a discussion with your class around the meaning of this quote. Make predictions about Zaha’s character traits.
- Frontload vocabulary: *observe, determined, harmony, construct, architect, conventional, assumption, innovation, deter, criticism*

During Reading: to engage students, check for understanding, and make connections.

- What were some of Zaha’s interests? How did her interests inspire her dreams?
- How was Zaha able to impress her professors? How was she different than most women of her time?
- A line in the story reads, “Though Zaha had won, the goalpost had moved.” Ask: How does this line connect to the conversation we had prior to reading this story? What does this tell us about Zaha?
- What challenges does Zaha continue to face? How does she overcome them?
- How does “harmony” continue to show up in her work?

After Reading: to summarize, question, and reflect.

- Author Victoria Tentler-Krylov writes, *“Her ideas caught people’s attention. Not always in the way she wanted. Zaha’s critics insisted her designed couldn’t be built.”* **Think, Pair, Share:** Think of a time when someone doubted your abilities. How did that make you feel? What character traits allowed for you to prove them wrong? Be specific in your examples.
- Consider using RIF’s Historic Figures Activity Guides to allow for students to make connections and expand on what they have learned.

If your students enjoyed this book...

- Encourage them to continue to discuss it and refer to it in other lessons and conversations.
- Let them explore more about the topic by reading other books with similar themes, structure, characters, or content.