

Mondays with MoMA



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Step 1 Look closely

Questions

1. What are the similarities and differences among these desks?
2. How do you think each desk is used?
3. In what kind of space do you think each desk might be located?
4. Which desk would *you* like to use?

Step 2 Learn more

Desks are an important part of school and work environments. Many of us sit at desks for several hours of the day, but some of us have other kinds of workspaces, such as a table, couch, or even the floor.

Designers consider the following criteria when designing desks and workspaces:

- Physical comfort. Will the desk be comfortable to sit, stand, or kneel at for a long period of time?
- Organization. Will the desk hold everything that its user needs, such as a computer, books, papers, writing utensils, etc.?
- Focus. Will the desk help the user focus on the tasks that need to be accomplished? Will there be any distractions?
- Interactions with others. Will the desk allow the user to see and talk to others, such as teachers, classmates, and coworkers?
- Aesthetics. Does the desk look good? Does the design of the desk complement its environment?

Step 3 Activity: Redesign your workspace

Materials: pencil and paper

1. For one day, observe the way you use your desk, workspace, or classroom. Take note of the following details:
 - a. Notice when you are comfortable and when you are not.
 - b. Think about where you keep everything and whether it is easily accessible to you.
 - c. What in your workspace helps you focus? What is distracting?
 - d. Can you easily see, hear, and talk to your classmates and teachers?
 - e. Are there parts of your workspace that you like and that reflect your personal taste?
2. Think like a designer. What can you change that might make you happier, more comfortable, and more efficient in your workspace? Make a drawing of these changes.
3. Optional: Share your design proposal with a teacher or parent and explain how it will enhance your experience with learning. See if you can work together to make these changes a reality.

Step 4 Share!

Share your ideas with classmates, teachers, or parents. Or you can email it to us at MoMA: schoolprograms@moma.org.



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Images: Frederick Markus, Paul Nocka. Prototype desk for the Bowditch School, Salem, MA. 1946. Markus & Nocka Inc. Wood. Gift of George R. Kravis II in honor of Henry Kravis; Frank Lloyd Wright. Desk. 1936-39. Manufacturer Metal Office Furniture Co. (presently Steelcase, Inc.), New York, NY. Wood and painted metal. Purchase. Lily Auchincloss Fund. © 2021 Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York; Arne Jacobsen. Munkegård school desk. c. 1955. Manufacturer Fritz Hansen. Chromed steel and plywood. Gift of Edgar Smith; Hector Guimard. Desk. c. 1899. Olive wood with ash panels. Gift of Madame Hector Guimard