

Democratic Design

Welcome to a workshop about life at home and Democratic Design. It's about how IKEA designs for a more sustainable and circular world for the many people.

Workshops at IKEA Museum are always based on the Swedish Curriculum for Compulsory School (Lgr 11) and syllabus. We have used the latest updated versions (which come into force in 2022). This description contains:

- An outline of the purpose of the workshop.
- Which compulsory school subjects it can be linked to and why, according to the curriculum and syllabus.

Purpose and content

- To provide knowledge about how the vision, *'To create a better everyday life for the many people'*, permeates everything IKEA does, and how this contributes to more sustainable enterprise that protects people and the environment.
- To communicate what IKEA means by Democratic Design, and its foundation in people's everyday needs. Creating a better life at home always starts with IKEA caring about 'life at home'.
- In a playful way, to allow students to create their own prototype of a product that solves a challenge in their own lives at home, where everyday life perhaps doesn't work optimally. Through active creation, students can experience a design process from idea to finished prototype, strengthening their ability to understand how design can take different aspects of people's lives into consideration.
- Our starting point is the history of Småland and Sweden, and the story of IKEA. In this way we convey information and insight about how the needs of society and people's homes have changed over the years. We also automatically look at how historical events can influence enterprise and products.
- With examples from the historical development of IKEA, we want to help boost knowledge about the value of working together and learning from your mistakes, to achieve everything from good results to a better environment.

Concrete links to subjects and syllabuses in compulsory school

Home and Consumer Studies

Years 1–6:

The learning provides knowledge and stimulates curiosity about recycling and the environment for the older students. The workshop also prompts thinking around how choices and actions in the home and everyday life generally can impact on health, finances, sustainability and the environment.

Years 7–9:

The learning provides knowledge of and stimulates curiosity about the way different people live, and opportunities and problems linked to globalisation, intercultural relations and digitalisation. The workshop also prompts thinking around how choices and actions in the home can impact on health, finances, sustainability and the environment.

Biology

Looking at the *Our Roots* exhibition at IKEA Museum, about IKEA and its history, we touch upon humankind's use and development of different materials through the ages.

Years 1–3:

In the workshop we show examples from IKEA, providing knowledge and creating insights into the choice of materials in different pieces made by IKEA. We also look at how different materials can be separated at source, and talk about circularity and renewable materials.

Years 4–6:

We look at the human dependence and impact on nature and its resources, and what this means for sustainable development. We also discuss the responsibilities that we all have – whether individuals or companies – when we utilise nature's resources.

Years 7–9:

Both the *Nature and Society* and *Body and Health* core content areas are relevant, since what IKEA calls Democratic Design is all about bolstering the opportunities that all consumers have to contribute to sustainable development. It is partly about contributing to better opportunities for a life at home that promotes mental and physical well-being, for example by helping to improve sleep and reduce stress in the home environment.

Geography

Years 1–3:

This workshop is relevant to the *Living Together* core content area, in that it looks at people's lives, in the past and now, in the family and in school. We also look at the effects of urbanisation and migration within and between nations. Participants

learn about these factors, and gain an understanding of the consequences they have when it comes to people's needs. In the workshop this is all linked to design and living.

Years 4–6:

The environment, people and sustainability are very much in focus during the workshop. We illustrate how choices and priorities in people's everyday lives can affect the landscape and the own living environment, and contribute to more sustainable development.

Years 7–9:

The change in people's purchasing patterns and ways of supporting a family is touched upon as part of the historical journey described in the *Our Roots* exhibition. This can be linked to the *Geography, its Methods, Concepts and Ways of Working* core content area, as it illustrates the consequences of changes in demographic patterns and population development, migration patterns and urbanisation.

History

The workshop has an underlying historical perspective, which gives the students tools to understand and change their own time.

Years 1–3:

The workshop provides an insight into people's living conditions in days gone by. We also look at causes and effects of altered living patterns and demographic development through the ages. In addition we discuss environmental issues based on personal everyday life and local environment, and spatial conditions in nature and the environment as regards population and the built environment.

Years 4–6 and 7–9:

Historical sources in our collections provide an insight into agricultural transformation in Sweden, providing a basis for discussion of the causes and effects of societal changes, and of people's living conditions and actions in days gone by. The older students will also learn more about the industrialisation, social transformation and ideas that have shaped many companies.

Crafts

Years 4–6:

In the historical section of IKEA Museum, students learn about how people throughout history have used crafts as a means of expressing themselves, and of making a livelihood. This creates insight into how important crafts have been to individuals and society.

We also discuss resource management, for example by repairing and reusing materials – a central aspect of Democratic Design and circularity within IKEA.

Years 7-9:

Students improve their learning about work processes in manufacturing, from idea to choice of material to finished piece. In the basic setup, the participants themselves get to design an object of their own creation using different materials, colours and shapes. Needless to say our workshops use recycled material, thus increasing understanding around circularity. If required, this workshop can be adapted to focus even more closely on knowledge related to design, and also focus more on fashion and trends in home furnishing, as well as different materials from the perspective of production and sustainability. Cotton and bamboo are typical examples, but IKEA is constantly working to develop new materials, and we can look at this more closely if required.

Civics

Years 1-3:

The workshop's guided tour provides knowledge about the importance of the local neighbourhood, such as local conditions in nature and the environment, as well as the locality's history, with an emphasis on what our everyday objects can tell us about people's living conditions, now and in the past.

Chemistry

The workshop does not overlap much at all with the field of chemistry, although it does touch upon it to a small degree. We look at issues relating to humankind's use of energy and natural resources, locally and globally, and what it means for sustainable development. Topical social issues relating to chemistry, such as production processes or forestry, can be included if required.

Technology

The subject of technology contains a range of core content areas that cannot be directly applied to the workshop on Democratic Design. Having said that, a lot can be related to the three core content areas of *Technology, Man, Society and the Environment*, *Technological Solutions*, and *Working Methods for Developing Technical Solutions*. We look for instance at scientific discoveries and technological development that enable and contribute to sustainable development. IKEA has really gone to the extreme in its desire to create technical solutions and production solutions that contribute to sustainable development, as well as prices that feel affordable to the many people. Subject to request and with some advance notice, we can highlight examples from IKEA relating for example to technology for energy saving, products for home use that enhance people's ability to lead a more healthy and sustainable everyday life, technologically sophisticated production methods and new design that facilitates recycling and reuse. Please feel free to ask!

