



Edible Landforms

Authors Cary Simmons and Jessica Wolff

Summary

The Edible Landforms exercise is intended to teach students how to design outdoor spaces using topography.

Educational Goals

The exercise involves team work, using scales to measure model pieces, designing with topography, and studying the role of landform in citing buildings.

Time

2 hours

Materials

Each team of 3-4 students should receive the following materials:

- 1 box graham crackers
- 1 box of Teddy Graham cookies (or 1 bag of Gummi bear candies)
- 1 canister of icing
- Exacto blades and plastic knives (for cutting graham crackers)
- Scaled site plans with topography lines
- Examples of landscape architecture projects showing topographical changes
- Architectural / engineering scales.

Procedure

Provide a brief summary of the profession of landscape architecture, focusing on the use of landform in outdoor environmental design.





Show the students examples of plans and sections (both illustrative and technical) which depict how a landform affects a site. At this time, describe the process behind “scaled” drawings and how to use scales to measure and create technical drawings.

Open a box of Graham crackers, and explain that each cracker represents one unit of topography—measure the depth of one cracker at a scale appropriate to the example scaled site plans so that one cracker yields a 1', 2', or 5' contour (or other appropriate unit).

Identify simple topographical features on the scaled site plans (each group of students can be assigned a different landform) to replicate with graham crackers, and cut crackers to shape with Exacto knives and plastic knives. Stack graham cracker “contours” to create edible, three-dimensional landforms (mounds, hills, swales, bluffs, etc.), securing each contour to the next with icing.

Place Teddy Graham crackers (or Gummi bears) on the landforms to illustrate scale relationships between landforms and “people.” (Teddy Grahams can be cut down to an appropriate 6' scale).

Discuss the different graham cracker landforms, comparing each to the two-dimensional site plans, and give examples of how each landform might appear in the natural or man-made landscape. Additionally, give examples of how each landform could relate to built objects in the landscape (buildings, walls, paths) as well as natural objects (rivers, bluffs, mountains, plains, etc.).