

What is Architectural History and Criticism?

Worksheet

Architectural history and criticism combines chronological study of building styles and movements with critical analysis of a work's formal, functional, social and cultural qualities.

Questions

1. Which architect authored the 'Five Points of Architecture'?

- A) Frank Lloyd Wright
- B) Le Corbusier
- C) Antoni Gaud
- D) Mies van der Rohe

2. Flying buttresses are most associated with which style?

- A) Gothic
- B) Baroque
- C) Modernism
- D) Art Deco

3. Which best describes Postmodern architecture?

- A) Rejects all ornament
- B) Reintroduces historical reference and irony
- C) Uses only glass curtain walls
- D) Avoids color

4. What does 'form follows function' mean?

- A) Decoration must dominate
- B) A building's shape should derive from its purpose
- C) Symmetry is required
- D) History must be quoted

5. How would a critic evaluate Notre-Dame Cathedral using formal and historical analysis?

6. Critique Villa Savoye (Le Corbusier, 1931) against the 'Five Points of Architecture.'

7. Compare Frank Gehry's Guggenheim Bilbao to a Postmodernist reading.

8. Define: What is architectural criticism?

9. Define: Name the four classical orders.

10. Define: What defines Modernism in architecture?

Answer Key

1. B) Le Corbusier - Le Corbusier published the Five Points in 1927, defining core modernist principles.
2. A) Gothic - Flying buttresses transfer roof loads outward, letting Gothic walls open into glass.
3. B) Reintroduces historical reference and irony - Postmodernism reacted to modernist austerity by reviving historical quotation and color.
4. B) A building's shape should derive from its purpose - Coined by Louis Sullivan, it became a core Modernist principle.
5. Formal analysis: examine the pointed arches, ribbed vaults and flying buttresses that let walls open into stained glass
Historical context: place it within 12th-century Gothic innovation and Catholic liturgical needs
Cultural meaning: assess its role as a civic and spiritual symbol of Paris
Conclusion: Notre-Dame succeeds as both an engineering breakthrough and a cultural monument
6. Check pilotis: building is raised on slender columns, freeing the ground floor
Check free plan: non-load-bearing walls allow flexible interior layout
Check free facade: curtain walls are independent of structure
Check horizontal windows and roof garden: both present
Conclusion: Villa Savoye is a textbook realization of modernist principles
7. Identify formal traits: sculptural titanium curves, no historical ornament quoted
Check postmodern criteria: little symbolism or historical pastiche, so it reads as Deconstructivist, not strictly Postmodern
Evaluate context: it revitalized the city (the 'Bilbao Effect'), a key criterion in urban criticism
Conclusion: critics classify it as Deconstructivist while praising its urban impact
8. The evaluation of a building's formal, functional, social and cultural qualities using consistent methods.
9. Doric, Ionic, Corinthian (Greek) and Composite (Roman) - plus Tuscan.
10. 'Form follows function,' new materials (steel, glass, concrete) and rejection of applied ornament.

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