

What are the Classical Orders?

Worksheet

The classical orders are standardized column-and-entablature systems from ancient Greece: Doric (plain, sturdy), Ionic (slender, scrolled capital), and Corinthian (slender, ornate leaf capital), later adopted and adapted by Rome.

Questions

1. Which classical order has no base and a plain cushion capital?
A) Doric
B) Ionic
C) Corinthian
D) Composite
2. A capital with two scroll-like volutes belongs to which order?
A) Doric
B) Ionic
C) Corinthian
D) Tuscan
3. Which order's capital is carved with acanthus leaves?
A) Doric
B) Ionic
C) Corinthian
D) Doric-Ionic hybrid
4. Which order generally has the thickest, sturdiest column proportions?
A) Corinthian
B) Ionic
C) Doric
D) They are all identical
5. The Parthenon in Athens (447-432 BCE) uses thick, unadorned columns with a plain cushion capital and no base. Which order is this?
6. A building has slender columns topped with capitals featuring two scroll-like spirals. Which order and roughly what shaft proportion?
7. A Roman portico shows tall, slender columns with capitals densely carved in overlapping leaf shapes. Identify the order.
8. Define: What are the three classical orders?
9. Define: How do you identify Doric?
10. Define: How do you identify Ionic?

Answer Key

1. A) Doric - Doric is defined by its bare shaft rising directly from the stylobate with a simple, unadorned capital.
2. B) Ionic - The paired volute is the signature feature of the Ionic capital.
3. C) Corinthian - Acanthus-leaf ornament is unique to the Corinthian capital.
4. C) Doric - Doric shafts are shortest relative to diameter (about 4-6 diameters), giving the sturdiest look.
5. No base + plain circular capital + thick fluted shaft = Doric order Doric shafts are typically only 4-6 diameters tall, giving a sturdy, masculine proportion This matches the Parthenon's Doric peristyle
6. Paired volutes (scrolls) at the capital = Ionic order Ionic shafts run about 8-9 diameters tall, more slender than Doric Example: the Erechtheion on the Athenian Acropolis
7. Acanthus-leaf capital carving = Corinthian order Corinthian is the slenderest and most decorative, shaft proportions around 9-10 diameters The Pantheon's portico in Rome uses Corinthian columns
8. Doric, Ionic, and Corinthian - Greek column-and-entablature systems, each with distinct proportions and capitals.
9. No base, plain rounded (cushion) capital, thick shaft - the sturdiest and simplest order.
10. A capital with two scroll-shaped volutes and a slender, molded-base shaft.

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