

# What Is Balance and Symmetry in Architecture?

## Worksheet

Balance is the even visual distribution of a building's mass and details; symmetry achieves it by mirroring identical elements on either side of a central axis, while asymmetrical balance uses unequal but visually equivalent elements.

## Questions

1. Which best defines balance in architecture?

- A) The cost of construction materials
- B) The even visual distribution of mass and detail
- C) The height of a building
- D) The number of floors

2. What defines symmetrical balance?

- A) Random placement of windows
- B) Mirrored elements on either side of a central axis
- C) Only using curved forms
- D) Removing all ornamentation

3. Which building is a classic example of symmetrical balance?

- A) Fallingwater
- B) Sydney Opera House
- C) The Taj Mahal
- D) Guggenheim Bilbao

4. Asymmetrical balance is achieved by...

- A) making both sides identical
- B) using unequal elements with equal visual weight
- C) avoiding all balance
- D) using only one material

5. Explain how the Taj Mahal achieves symmetrical balance.

6. How does Fallingwater by Frank Lloyd Wright achieve asymmetrical balance?

7. Why do government buildings like the White House usually use symmetry?

8. Define: What is balance in architecture?

9. Define: What is symmetrical balance?

10. Define: What is asymmetrical balance?

## Answer Key

1. B) The even visual distribution of mass and detail - Balance refers to how visual weight is distributed across a design, not cost or height.
2. B) Mirrored elements on either side of a central axis - Symmetrical balance mirrors identical elements across a central axis.
3. C) The Taj Mahal - The Taj Mahal mirrors identical elements around a central axis.
4. B) using unequal elements with equal visual weight - Asymmetrical balance uses unequal elements arranged to feel equally weighted.
5. The main dome sits on the central axis Four minarets are placed at equal distance from the center, one at each corner The garden, reflecting pool and gateway are mirrored left-to-right Result: a perfectly symmetrical, formal composition
6. Large cantilevered concrete terraces extend to one side over the waterfall A tall stone chimney mass anchors the opposite side The terraces' visual 'lightness' is balanced by the chimney's visual 'weight' Result: an asymmetrical composition that still feels stable
7. A central portico marks the main axis Windows and wings repeat identically on the left and right Symmetry visually signals order, authority and stability Result: a formal, trustworthy public image
8. The even visual distribution of a building's mass, form and details around an axis.
9. Balance achieved by mirroring identical elements on either side of a central axis.
10. Balance achieved with unequal elements arranged to carry equal visual weight.

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