

What Is Rhythm and Repetition in Architecture?

Worksheet

Rhythm is the patterned recurrence of elements like columns or windows that creates visual movement across a building; repetition is repeating identical elements at set intervals, one of the simplest ways to generate rhythm.

Questions

1. Rhythm in architecture is best described as...
 - A) A random arrangement of forms
 - B) The organized recurrence of elements creating visual movement
 - C) The sound a building makes
 - D) A type of building material
2. What creates regular rhythm?
 - A) Elements repeated at equal intervals
 - B) Elements placed randomly
 - C) One single unrepeatable element
 - D) Removing all ornamentation
3. The Empire State Building's setbacks are an example of...
 - A) regular rhythm
 - B) progressive rhythm
 - C) no rhythm
 - D) symmetry only
4. Repetition is best defined as...
 - A) Using a different material on every floor
 - B) Repeating identical elements at set intervals
 - C) Avoiding all patterns
 - D) Randomizing window placement
5. How do the columns of the Parthenon create regular rhythm?
6. How does the Empire State Building use progressive rhythm?
7. How does a row of identical townhouses create rhythm through repetition?
8. Define: What is rhythm in architecture?
9. Define: What is repetition in architecture?
10. Define: What is regular rhythm?

Answer Key

1. B) The organized recurrence of elements creating visual movement - Rhythm is the organized, patterned recurrence of elements.
2. A) Elements repeated at equal intervals - Regular rhythm comes from equal, predictable spacing.
3. B) progressive rhythm - The setbacks repeat while gradually shrinking, defining progressive rhythm.
4. B) Repeating identical elements at set intervals - Repetition literally repeats identical elements at intervals.
5. Columns are spaced at nearly equal intervals along the facade Each column has the same height, diameter and fluting pattern The eye moves steadily from one column to the next at a constant beat Result: a calm, ordered regular rhythm
6. Floor plates repeat but shrink in size as the tower rises Setbacks occur at intervals, each one slightly smaller than the last The repeating-but-changing pattern pulls the eye upward Result: a progressive rhythm that emphasizes verticality
7. Each townhouse repeats the same window size, door position and roofline The repeated unit is set at a constant width along the street This literal repetition produces a steady rhythmic facade line Result: a unified streetscape built from repetition
8. The organized recurrence of elements that creates visual movement across a facade.
9. Repeating identical elements at set intervals, a basic way to create rhythm.
10. Elements repeated at equal, predictable intervals.

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