

Amazing Architecture





A house designed by Frank Lloyd Wright has its own waterfall.

What Is Architecture?

Every building was designed by someone. People who design buildings and other structures are called architects. Architects create office buildings, houses, schools, factories, hospitals, theaters, and other structures. The art and science of designing buildings is called architecture.

Architects think about a building carefully before construction begins. They envision how the building will look. Appearance is important because people like to live in attractive places. Architects also think about how the building will be used. An office must be a place where people can work comfortably. A school should be designed so that students can easily find their classrooms. In addition, architects envision how people will take care of the structure. A building should last a long time without needing expensive repairs.

In the United States, there are many kinds of architecture, from American Indian buildings that are hundreds of years old to modern homes and sports stadiums. These are just three examples of the architecture in our world.

Key Notes:

What do architects do?



Ladders connected rooms in pueblos.

Pueblo Dwellings

Hundreds of years ago, several groups of American Indians created a new style of architecture with buildings that were several stories high. Spanish people who came to the American Southwest named the people after pueblo, a Spanish word that means “town.” Today, this word refers to both American Indians and their dwellings. Though the Pueblo Indians represent different American Indian groups, all built similar dwellings.

Pueblo dwellings had many rooms. Some were made of earth mixed with straw and water. This mixture was often made into bricks that were dried in the sun. Logs helped support the roof, which was made by laying smaller pieces of wood side by side on the logs and covering them with dirt.

The pueblos often had many stories. The Pueblo Indians used ladders to reach the different levels. If a pueblo was attacked people pulled the ladders up. Today, pueblos can be seen in Arizona, Colorado and New Mexico.

Key Notes:

What kind of dwellings did Pueblo Indians build?



Dome houses are built on circular frames.

Modern Homes

When architects design homes, they often consult with the people who will live in them. They consult so they know what kind of house the people want. Architects also create unusual homes they think people might like. Two of these designs-A-frames and domes-have become popular.

A-frame houses are shaped like a big A. They are usually erected in the country and are often used as vacation homes. A-frames have a lot of room at the bottom, which might be one big open space. The top of the house has less room because the house comes to a point.

Another unusual home design is the dome. A modern dome house is built on a circular frame divided into many small sections. The frame is covered, and the finished house looks like half of a soccer ball. Dome houses are easy to build, do not require much space, and are not expensive. They are also most commonly erected in the country.

Key Notes:

What kinds of unusual modern homes have architects designed?



Stadiums with retractable roofs are used for sports and events.

Sports Stadium

Architects also design new stadiums, or places where sports and other big events take place. Most stadiums are either outdoor or indoor stadiums. However, in 1989, a new kind of stadium, the SkyDome, opened in Canada.

The SkyDome is both an outdoor and an indoor stadium because it has a retractable roof. When the roof is open, it's an outdoor stadium. When the roof is closed, it's an indoor stadium. The Skydome was also new in another way-inside the stadium is a hotel with 348 rooms. In 2005, the SkyDome was renamed the Rogers Centre.

Today, stadiums with retractable roofs are common. They can be used all year, in any weather. Many are used for more than one sport.

Retractable roofs for huge stadiums were a challenge for architects, because stadium roofs weigh many tons and have no poles to support them. Each time architects meet such a challenge, it's a reminder of how amazing architecture can be.

Key Notes:

How are new sports stadiums different from older stadiums?

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