

DESCRIBING DECO

Activity One Lesson Plan

Purpose

- Introduce participants to Art Deco architecture
- Explore the context and history of Art Deco architecture in New York City and around the world
- Examine the Art Deco aesthetic in other areas of design

Implementation Notes

As it is likely most of the participants will not have any working knowledge of the Art Deco era, nor the features of Art Deco architecture, decoration or fashion, these lessons are designed to provide a basic knowledge, basic Art Deco vocabulary, and tools to recognize some of the most identifiable features of Art Deco architecture and design.

Background Knowledge and Materials

Art Deco is an aesthetic style that became popular after World War 1, and flourished throughout the 1920s and 1930s. While the style extended to many elements of design (clothing, graphics, jewelry, advertising, etc.), it was also a popular architectural style that produced many famous buildings in New York City during its heyday. It is a style that combined the arts with technology, blending modern and avant-garde aesthetics with ancient and exoticized decorative elements from many global cultures. Art Deco was also known for its use of luxurious materials and aesthetics, including new metals and plastics.

Presentation Notes

Guide participants through the presentation, taking note of the following:

- Added information and context are present throughout the presentation in the notes below each relevant slide.
- During warm-up questions, leave presentation on the question slide and take note of their answers.
- Allow time for participants to ask questions between slides, and provide additional context or information about images when relevant.
- While discussing famous Art Deco skyscrapers in New York City, instructors can take time to discuss how important the style was for the city and the historical context of its era.
- Participants should fill out their vocabulary worksheets during the presentation; during this section, allow additional time for them to finish their work before moving to the next term.
- While discussing Deco's global influences, emphasize that while the design style was very influential in New York City, it also has a large presence in cities and countries throughout the world.
- Throughout the presentation, note that key terms and vocabulary featured on the accompanying worksheet are highlighted in red.

Adaptations

Consider the following optional adaptations when adjusting lessons for time, age level, and participant interest.

- Remove or add more example slides to demonstrate common design motifs, influences, or international examples.
- Require older participants to fill out 2 of the 3 boxes in the vocabulary worksheet, instead of just 1.
- Ask participants to use ADSNY's Art Deco Registry and Map to find local examples of Art Deco architecture as a homework assignment.

Presentation Steps

Warm-Up

Open with introductory questions for participants: what do architects do? What kinds of factors do they need to consider when designing a new building? Keep a list of participant responses on a whiteboard, smartboard, etc.

Instruction

Instructor will use the PowerPoint to guide participants through the history of Art Deco architecture, its features and aesthetic components, global examples, and its presence in other design areas. Note that the presentation coordinates with participant worksheets, so allow time for writing and questions throughout.

Activity

Throughout instruction, participants will follow along on their guided vocabulary worksheets, filling in basic definitions and examples as prompted. These worksheets contain three boxes for each new term; these are labeled "definition," "example," and "picture." Participants will fill in at least one box for each term, choosing the method which helps them understand each concept the best.

Wrap-Up

Allow participants time to finish their guided vocabulary worksheets and ask any remaining questions after concluding the primary sections of the PowerPoint. Conclude lesson with the final slides, which demonstrate other examples of the design. Invite student discussion into the familiarity of such examples, and ask them to share other examples from their memory and knowledge.

Materials

Instructor materials available at ArtDeco.org/Learn:

- PowerPoint presentation
- Guided vocabulary worksheets
- Pencils/pens

Name: _____ Date: _____

VOCABULARY OF ART DECO ARCHITECTURE

Throughout today’s presentation, follow along with the following Art Deco vocabulary words. Each term contains a box for a definition, an example, or a picture. Complete at least one box for each term.

	Definition	Example	Picture
Architecture			
Architect			
Massing			
Vertical Accentuation			
Parapet			
Sculptural Relief			
Spandrels			
Terracotta			
Avant-Garde			