Glossary of Art and Architectural Terms

Abstraction  A system in art and design where forms are represented by simplified shapes and patterns.

Arch  A structure forming a curved, pointed, or flat edge to an open space; arches are often curved and support a wall above. See picture below.

Architect  A person whose work is to design and draw plans for a building.

Architecture  The science, art or profession of designing and planning buildings.

Asymmetric  Having unlike forms on either side of a central line.

Axis  The direction of emphasis in a building (vertical or horizontal).

Barrel vault  An arched ceiling that resembles the inside of a barrel.

Beam  A piece of steel or wood lying in a horizontal position and supported at each end. Can also be called post and lintel.
Bracket  A triangle or "L"-shaped piece supporting a projecting roof or floor.

Cantilever  A horizontal projection with no visible means of support. A diving board or a balcony is a good example of a cantilever.

Capital  The top or crowning feature of a column. In the Classical order, a system of design that is based on ancient Greek architecture, there are three major orders and kinds of capitols:
- Doric: there is no decoration on the capital, and the column is thick;
- Ionic: the capital has a scroll design, and the column is sometimes ribbed;
- Corinthian: the capital has a leaf design, and the column is thin and ribbed.

Clerestory window  A window located in the upper part of a wall.

Decoration  Something added to a structure to make it more beautiful. Examples include brackets and dentils.

Dentil  One of a band of small, square, tooth-like blocks.

Eave  The edge and under part of a roof that projects over an outside wall.
Elevation  A drawing showing the details of one side of a building; an elevation does not use or show perspective.

Facade  The exterior of a building, often the front side.

Floor plan  A drawing that illustrates in simple terms the size and arrangement of rooms in a building.

Form  The shape of an object.

Foundation  The base on which a building stands and is supported.

Function  The reason and activity that a building is designed for. For example a school is designed

Froebel blocks  Geometric blocks, a part of the Froebel Gift play materials developed by German educator Friedrich Froebel, for child development. Frank Lloyd Wright said they were a great influence in his life.

Geometric shapes  The shapes made from points, lines, angles and planes in geometry. Examples include circles, triangles, squares, spheres and cubes. Natural forms may be considered as the opposite of geometric forms.
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<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Hand-crafted</strong></th>
<th>Made by hand rather than by machine.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Horizontal</strong></td>
<td>Flat and straight across.</td>
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<td><strong>Inglenook</strong></td>
<td>A small, room-like area around a fireplace, usually designed for sitting.</td>
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| **Keystone**     | The highest and central wedge-shaped piece in an arch.  
*See picture of arch.* |
| **Landmark**     | A place that has special cultural, aesthetic or historic value. |
| **Leaded glass** | Glass panels made of many small panes of glass separated by lead or zinc dividers (called cames); either colored or clear glass can be used. |
| **Logo**         | An identifying symbol used in addition to or in place of words. |
| **Materials**    | Anything of which an object is made.  
*Building materials include wood, brick, steel, glass and concrete.* |
| **Natural form** | A shape based on nature, which blends into its environment; not made by people; not artificial. |
| **Natural color**| A color found in nature, such as those in a landscape, often green or brown tones. |
| **Porch**        | A roofed structure with open walls connected to the exterior of a house. |
| **Plan**         | *See Floor Plan.* |
Prairie School The term describing the work originated by Frank Lloyd Wright and other architects around the beginning of the 20th century, which was designed to be a truly American form, free of European influences, and inspired by the environment. Characteristics include:

- two crossing axes of the floor plan;
- low, horizontal design that reflects the Midwestern prairie;
- geometric forms;
- windows grouped in a series—or band—known as light screens;
- limited exterior materials (wood, stone, brick, stucco), usually only one or two;
- built-in furniture;
- interior floor plan designed as one large room with small barriers creating adjacent spaces;
- wood banding or trim on walls.

Preservation Preventing further change or destruction to keep a building or object as it is.

Proportion The relationships of parts to a whole or parts to one another in an art work or building's design. Architects must be concerned with the relationships of size, space, volume, materials, site and use of a new building.

Renovation Adapting a building to modern functions, leaving as many original elements as possible while adding new ones as needed.

Restoration Taking a building back to exactly the way it looked at a certain time. The Robie House is being restored to the period of 1909.

Roof The outer covering on the top of a building. Different types include:

- Gable
- Gambrel
- Shed
- Mansard
- Hipped

Not pictured:
- Flat one horizontal plane
- Dome a spherical form
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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| **Sculpture** | 1) The art of carving, modeling or casting designs or figures.  
                        2) The 3 dimensional object created through this art. |
| **Shingle**  | A thin piece of wood or other material placed in overlapping rows on the roof or walls of a building. |
| **Site**     | The place or location of a building.                                       |
| **Stucco**   | Rough-textured cement or plaster used to coat the outside of a building.   |
| **Symmetrical** | Having identical forms on either side of a center line.                   |
| **Terrace**  | An outdoor space next to a house, often used for lounging and eating.     |
| **Transom**  | A window located above a door.                                            |
| **Turret**   | A tower-like structure rising from the upper floors of a building.        |
| **Vertical** | Straight up and down; upright.                                            |
| **Victorian** | A style of house popular in the mid-19th century. Main aspects of the style included a strong vertical direction; a steep roof; windows located randomly, providing one or two per room; and box-like rooms. Often the houses were colorful, decorative and with great amounts of applied detail. Opposite of Prairie Style. |
Window: An opening in a wall or roof that allows light, air and a view. Types of windows include:

- **Bay**: a group of windows that projects out from the wall;

- **Casement**: a window hinged on one side that opens like a door—the preferred window of the Prairie School;

- **Chicago**: a large, stationary window with movable windows on either side;

- **Double-hung**: a window with two sections which slide over each other vertically;

- **Gothic**: a window with a gracefully arched or pointed top;

- **Lunette**: a fan-shaped (semi-circular) window, often found above a door;

- **Palladian**: a window unit with a central arched window with rectangular windows on either side—named after the Renaissance architect Andrea Palladio;

- **Ribbon**: a series of windows separated only by frames, which forms a horizontal band; Wright and other Prairie school architects often used such groupings.