

Romanesque



VS



Gothic

Title of the Teaching Unit

Romanesque vs Gothic

Level

CEFR: B1

Grade, type of school and course

2th year of a secondary school specialising in scientific subjects

Objectives

Intended knowledge and competence outcomes:

- be aware of the connection between the language used and the content in the target subject, that is Art
- approaching the analysis of a painting/work of art on the basis of the historical background, the main features of the artistic period and the main techniques adopted by the artist.
- be able to recognise the main features of the impressionistic period, impressionistic paintings and techniques, and adopt the proper art vocabulary to describe them.
- be able to compare the main features and traits of the landscapes genre and of the impressionistic themes.

Interdisciplinary links

Art, English, History.

Pre-requisites

The students are familiar with:

- the basic structures and verb tenses of the English language
- various exercise typologies such as fill in the gaps, scrambled texts, matching, clozes, reading and listening comprehensions, videos, etc..
- collaborative tasks such as group and pair work

Target class

24 students aged 15/16
Mixed ability class with no special needs students

Teaching Approach

Communicative. The students will be engaged in different kinds of activities specifically meant to encourage their participation and use of the target language in the classroom.

Duration

3/4 hours

Teaching Aids

IWB, blackboard, copies made from books, images and videos taken from the Internet so as to match the students' different learning styles.

Class dynamics

Individual, pair and group - work, dialogic teacher to student interaction.

Lesson n. 1

glossary

Artworks

Furniture = mobilio

Manuscript = manoscritto

Pulpit = pulpito

Reliquary = reliquario

Statuary = statuaria

Tomb = tomba

Architecture

Archivolt = archivolto

Chapel = cappella

Clerestory = claristorio

Flying buttress = arco rampante

Height = altezza

Opening = apertura

Pillar = pilastro

Pinnacle = pinnacolo

Pointed arch = arco acuto

Porch = portico

Portal = portale

Rose window = rosone

Secular = laico

glossary

Side aisle = navata laterale

Spire = pinnacolo

to consecrate = consacrare

To enlarge = ampliare

To sustain = sostenere

Trefoil window = trifora

Triforium = triforio

Miniature = miniatura

Stained glass = pittura su vetro

Efficiency = efficacia

Mystical = mistico

Persuasive = persuasivo

Shading = ombreggiature

Shape = forma

Solidity = solidità

to borrow = attingere

To derive = derivare

To exemplify = esemplificare

To experiment = sperimentare

To merge = fondersi

To stress = evidenziare

glossary

Austere (Figures)= severo
Crammed = stipato
Drapery = drappeggio
Earthly = terreno
Ethereal = etereo
Graceful = aggraziato
Naturalness = naturalezza
Protruding = sporgente
Slender = slanciato
Suffering = sofferente
Weightless = privo di peso

PAIR WORK: After reading the passage, underline the main characteristics of the Romanesque church. Then we can check all together on the blackboard.

Building the Romanesque cathedral

Romanesque churches were not only more numerous if compared to those built in the earlier Middle Ages, but were also larger and structurally more complex. They were built of cut local stone, as the Romans did, so their naves had stone vaults in place of wooden roofs.

The entrance was expressively located along the west side, so that the assembly faced east toward Jerusalem.

Moreover, new elements were added such as towers or domes placed above the intersection of nave and transept; ambulatories began to encircle the apse and allow the transit of processions; side aisles were separated by a sequence of massive pillars from the central nave.

Actually, the main innovation was constituted by ribbed vaults that were fireproof and improved acoustics. On the other hand, they proved extremely heavy, requiring massive external buttresses and strong supporting walls. As a consequence, windows had to be small to prevent walls from weakening.

Both the exterior and interior were characterized by semicircular arches, again inspired by Roman architecture.



20 minutes

- FOTOCOPIA DA « ART WITH A VIEW »

- Listen and complete with the missing word.



10 minutes

After reading the passage, underline with the students the main characteristics of the gothic church.

Building the gothic cathedral



As for Romanesque construction, Gothic architecture continued to express itself mostly in religious edifices. Gothic vocabulary included several entries: pointed arches, trefoils, spires and other architectural ornaments were adopted in the effort to achieve verticality, as if trying to reach toward heaven. A system of stone ribbed vaults now increased stability allowing distribution of the weight onto little columns and polystyle piers. At the same time, the use of pointed arches and flying buttresses shifted the thrust of the vault to a more vertical direction, making it possible to reduce the need for solid, thick walls and opening the walls to include monumental glass windows. Light features as a constant element inside Gothic churches, its internal diffusion being mainly favoured by the size of the windows.

Decorated with episodes from the Old and New Testament or the lives of saints and prophets, stained glass windows were central to the perception of the church as an embodiment of the Christian doctrine.

The façade of a Gothic cathedral has at least three portals, the main portal being often crowned by a rose window.

A host of figurative sculptures was also carved on all possible spaces such as portals, archivolt, tympanums, choir screens and foliage capitals.

This explains why Gothic cathedrals often acted as centres of artistic innovation.

20 minutes

PAIR WORK: Fill-in the gaps using the following words.

A SENSE OF UNITY

The Gothic style throughout the 13th and 14th centuries but survived in several areas the first half of the next century and later. However, a geographic definition is also necessary owing to the expanding nature of this style. In fact, it initially in the province of the Ile-de-France surroundig Paris, little by little Gothic art became an international that conquered almost every corner of Europe. This age a massive urbanization process with hundreds of people moving into towns from the countryside. As a consequence, cathedrals were rapidly as the religious as well as cultural and social centres of the community and monasteries as learning seats. The term “Gothic” was first intended to label the architectural of the period by Renaissance historians such as Vasari, in to the architecture that arose at the time of the barbarous Goths. Actually, it is in architecture that the of the style are fully expressed, although there has also been a Gothic sculpture and a Gothic painting. A sense of unity is what seems to sum up most effectively the general conveyed by Gothic architecture recognizable in the harmony existing between exterior and interior both from a structural and a decorative point of view. Function and style blend together into an organic symbolizing the unity between God and his creatures.

balanced
began
characteristics
developed
effect
identified

Output
reference
replaced
style
until
whole
witnessed



15 minutes

Using a bilingual dictionary, find the meaning of the following terms, then label each architectural elements on the Reims cathedral.

1. Tympanum
2. Rosa window
3. Pillar
4. Tower
5. Pinnacle
6. Niche
7. Portal
8. Arcade

h

g

f



a

b

c

d

e

10 minutes

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10 minutes

READ THIS PASSAGE: WHEN WINDOWS TELL A STORY

The central role of stained glass windows in Gothic churches was emphasised by Abbot Suger, although this technique had already been applied in Romanesque times. Since the execution of stained glass was necessarily related to the cathedral design and construction, the glass masters were frequently influenced by architectural sculpture.

Stained glass was above all appreciated for its glowing effect when light passes through it as well as for its flexibility in fitting the shapes required by the artist.

Stained glass derived its colours after a heating process which involved various metal oxides. First, a full-scale design was drawn on a board called cartoon, then cut pieces of glass corresponding to the drawn sections were placed over it.

Before mounting the entire window, shading and details were added with paint where required.

The golden season of stained glass coincided with the first half of the 13th century.

Shortly after, stained glass followed the decline in architectural activity and miniatures regained the former prestige.



10 minutes

ACTIVITY: PAIR WORK

Provide questions to the answers below

1. Abbot Suger had suggested the importance of stained glass in Gothic religious edifices.
2. The main advantages of stained glass were its brilliant colours and the possibility of obtaining every form needed by the designer.
3. Artists obtained the colours stained glass after a heating process which involved various metal oxides.
4. Painting could be used on stained glass to add shading and details.
5. In the second half of the 13th century stained glass followed the decline in architectural activity.

20 minutes

HOMWORK

Stained glass



Scenes from The Legend of Saint Vincent of Saragossa and the History of His Relics

The Abbey of Saint-Germain-des-Prés was founded by the Merovingian King Childebert to house the tunic of Saint Vincent. Childebert had been given the relic by the Bishop of Zaragoza when he had freed the city from the muslims. The first abbey and church were dedicated to Saint Vincent by the Bishop of Paris Germain.

In 1014 the church was rebuilt and in 1163 it was rededicated to Bishop Germain who, in the meanwhile, had become a saint. The Benedictine monks of Saint-Germain-des-Prés were responsible for the preservation of not only the relics, but also for the place of burial for the Merovingian Kings.

The stained glass windows from the church narrate the story of Saint Vincent and his tunic. The window in The Cloisters is a composite made up of scenes taken from a larger original window. The scenes can be read starting from the bottom.

The famous stained glass windows of Sainte-Chapelle are contemporaries of these from Saint-Germain-des-Prés. They are an indication of the quality and style of glass paintings from the Parisian glass schools of the 13th century The art of stained glass is an ancient one. Roman artisans used coloured glass to form window frames and paint mosaic patterns on walls.

The concept of light piercing through coloured glass was a basic premise of Gothic cathedrals.

The art of stained glass windows continued to develop and was vigorously used as a form of expression from about 1150 through the 1500s.

Stained glass was made by combining sand and wood ash (potash-lime-silica) and melting it into a liquid to which powdered metals or specific types of wood ash were burned to give colour.

The molten glass could be blown into an oblong shape, slit along the side and flattened. It could also be wrapped around a pontil iron and made into a round sheet of glass often called a crown.

To create a picture the different coloured pieces of glass were placed over a design board on which the proposed drawing was already prepared.

If the artist wanted to include shadows or finer lines he would paint them on the glass by using brown or black paint. Some colours were painted on when the glass cooled.

Traditionally strips of H shaped lead (comes) were used to hold the glass pieces together. Putty was inserted between the glass and lead to waterproof the design. The completed glass design was then secured into an iron frame to support the weight of the glass and lead and put into a window frame.



Glossary

Composit: thing made up of several parts or elements

Oliphant: a hunter's horn made from an elephant's tusk

Pattern: a repeated decorative design

Pierce to cut or pass through with or as if with a sharp instrument

Lead: a soft, heavy, ductile bluishgrey metal

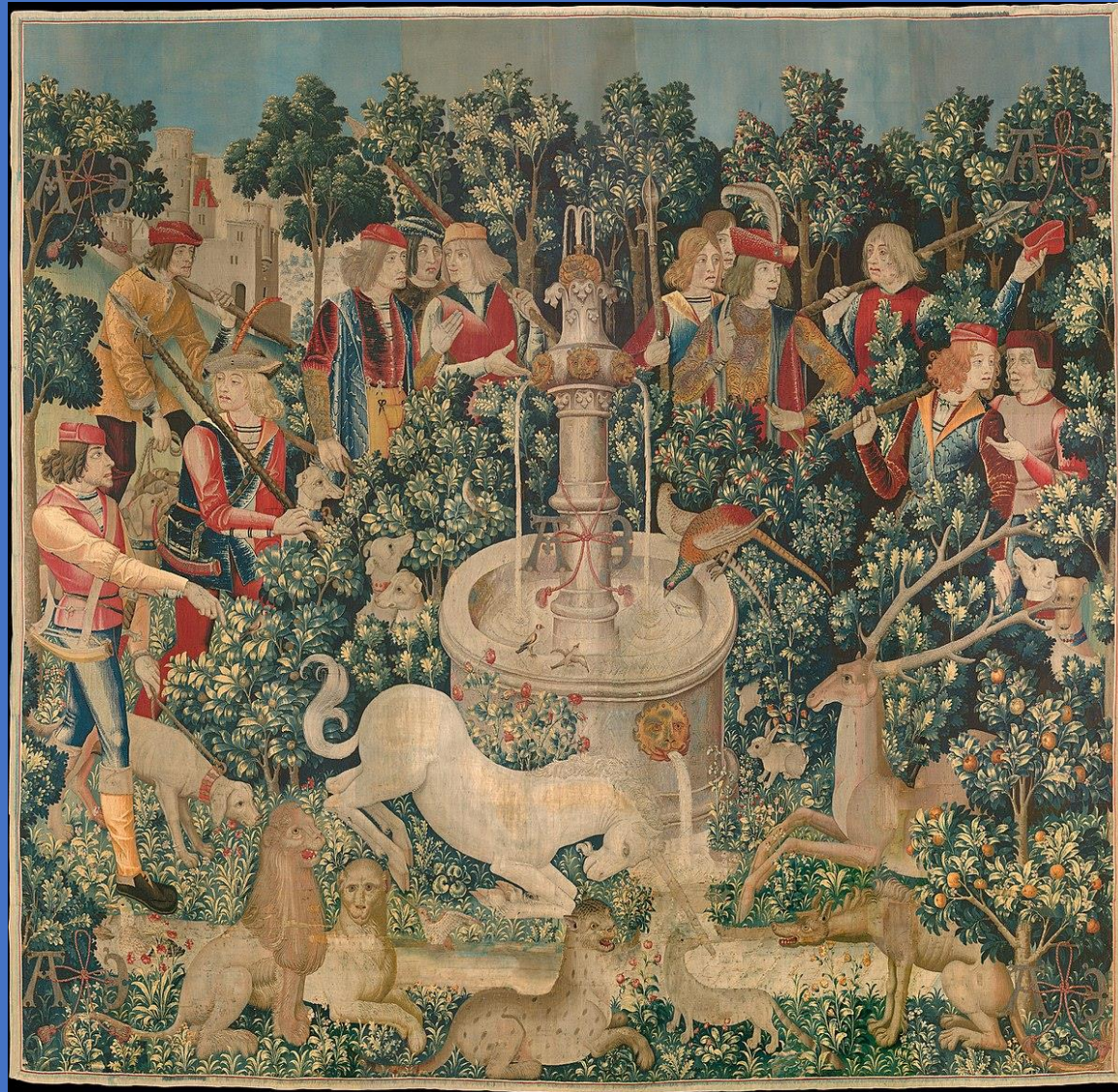
Putty: a soft, malleable reddishyellow paste, made from ground chalk and raw linseed oil

PAIR WORK

Provide the information required:

1. Provenance of this stained glass window
2. Subject represented
3. Who used coloured glass in the past
4. Period in which art of stained glass windows developed
5. First manual on glass making
6. Materials used to make stained glass
7. The process of creating a picture

The Unicorn tapestries



Read this passage with your teacher: The Unicorn tapestries

The tapestry series “The Hunt of the Unicorn” dates from about 1495 to 1505. It is one of the most precious tapestry series to have come down to us from the Middle Ages. Tapestries are considered textiles woven on a loom with what is called weft-faced and the warp threads are hidden. They were made by copying drawings or paintings which were placed either behind or above the loom for the weavers to follow the designs and patterns. The materials used on the Unicorn narratives were wool, metallic threads of gold, copper and silver as well as silk. The colours of the Unicorn Tapestries are vibrant even today.

Dyes such as yellow made from weld, red made from madder and blue made from woad have stayed strong and bright. The hangings were most likely made in either Brussels or Liege. Most tapestries were used to cover the walls of churches and the homes of the wealthy to decorate while keeping out drafts. Most tapestries narrate a story or celebrate the owner with emblems and symbols of families, allegiances, power and position. There is some question as to who ordered the works, but the dates of their creation are more than likely correct.

There are seven tapestries which narrate the hunt of the unicorn. They are based on a Medieval legend which tells of how the unicorn, a mythical animal, could only be captured by a virgin. The legend was part of the zoological and botanical subjects of the late Medieval period. The hunt could be interpreted in two ways, either religious or secular. The hunt could be considered as the allegory of the Incarnation. In this interpretation the unicorn is Christ, the virgin is the Virgin Mary and the huntsman can be seen as the Archangel Gabriel. The hunt represents the life of Christ, the death of the unicorn his death and the unicorn alive again is the resurrection of Christ.

If interpreted in a pagan or mythological sense the meaning changes. The hunt is a reference to courtly love. The narrative relates to the different sequence of events in a courtship. The capture of the unicorn relates to marriage and its consummation. The unicorn content to be held within the fence shows the blessedness and content commitment to marriage. Both interpretations can be backed up by the various symbols, buildings, animals and flowers in each scene. For example the scene of The Unicorn in Captivity can be interpreted in both ways. Religious as the figure of Christ who willingly gave his life and came back from the dead to save mankind from sin. The unicorn can be seen as a pagan mystery or as the contentment of marriage. The unicorn is in an enclosure, but the leash on him is not tied. The height of the fence is too low to hold him and he has stains on his coat from the pomegranate tree above, a symbol of marriage, fertility and birth. The seven tapestries represent the following narrative.

One: the hunters, servants and dogs enter the woods to hunt.

Two: the unicorn dips his magical horn in the waters of the fountain of eternal life (the horn was thought to cure poisoned food and give eternal life).

Three: the unicorn tries to escape the hunters.

Four: the unicorn defends himself and stabs a hound.

Five: while damaged and in two pieces, these panels show a man in a tree blowing a horn and the virgin stopping and taming the unicorn as a dog licks his wounds. A hand presumably of the virgin caresses the lower part of the mane.

Six: shows the unicorn being killed above and below his being brought to the castle slung over a horse.

The seventh and last tapestry of the series shows the unicorn alive and content to be in an enclosure.

Glossary

Loom: an apparatus for making fabric by weaving yarn or thread

Weft: (in weaving) the cross wise threads on a loom that are passed over and under the warp threads to make cloth

Warp: (in weaving) the threads on a loom over and under which other threads (the weft) are passed to make cloth

Thread: a long, thin strand of cotton, wool, nylon or other fibres used in sewing or weaving

Dye: a substance used to colour material

Sweld: the yellow dye obtained from dyer's rocket (*Reseda luteola*)

Madder: an Eurasian plant red dye is obtained from the root

Woad: a yellow-flowered European plant of the cabbage family makes a blue dye

Hunt: pursue and kill (a wild animal) for sport or food

Find terms in the text which mean much the same as the following:

1. telaio
2. disegni
3. modelli, schemi
4. lana
5. tinture
6. correnti d'aria
7. caccia
8. racconto, storia

10 minutes



[/https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/renaissance-reformation/northern-renaissance1/reliquaries-manuscripts-tapestries/v/the-unicorn-in-captivity-1495-1505/](https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/renaissance-reformation/northern-renaissance1/reliquaries-manuscripts-tapestries/v/the-unicorn-in-captivity-1495-1505/)

Questions:

1. Dove è conservato l'arazzo?
2. A quale periodo appartiene?
3. Cosa rappresenta?
4. A quale albero è legato il soggetto rappresentato?
5. Quale significato allegorico può avere l'unicorno?
6. Quale significato può avere la vergine che può catturarlo?
7. Quel significato simbolico è attribuito all'albero di melograno?

30 minutes

Complete the following commentary with the correct information:

The Unicorn Tapestries, which rank among the most beautiful artworks of the Middle Ages date back to about 1)

The first step in making tapestries was 2)..... which were then placed behind or above the loom.

The materials used in this case are 3)

I would like you to notice that, even though this artwork dates back to many centuries ago, the colours are still 4).....

Tapestries served two basic functions: 5)The subject of this series of tapestries is 6)

The unicorn was considered 7).....

There are various interpretations of this hunt: 8)

The narrative of the seven tapestries can be summarised as follows: 9).....



15 minutes