

Brief History of Art and design

20th-21st century

01 BAUHAUS

(1919–1960)

KEY

for English lesson

BAUHAUS



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MĀKSLAS un DIZAINA
VIDUSSKOLA



SUPŠ:UH



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LISTENING

KEY

Answer Key for Vocabulary Preparation

Matching Words to Definitions:

1. Heyday → e. The most successful or popular period of something.
2. Cradle → l. The place or environment where something begins or is nurtured.
3. Entirely → d. Completely, wholly.
4. Experimental → j. A period of trying new and innovative things or ideas.
5. Proximity → f. Close distance to something or someone.
6. Secular → h. Relating to something that is not religious.
7. Magnetic → a. When something or someone has a powerful and attractive influence.
8. Veil → k. An external covering that hides something.
9. Enema → o. A medical procedure used to clean the colon.
10. Conflicts → m. Serious disagreements or fights.
11. Relieved → b. To be removed from a position or responsibility.
12. Notorious → g. Known for something bad or undesirable.
13. Outrageous → n. Shocking or very unusual in a bad way.
14. Functionalism → i. Designed to be practical and useful, rather than attractive.
15. Tremendous → c. Extremely large in amount, strength, or impact.

Task 2: Fill in the Blanks

1. The Bauhaus was known for its experimental ideas, constantly pushing the boundaries of design.
2. During its heyday, the school attracted some of the most influential artists of the 20th century.
3. Bauhaus had a notorious reputation for its wild parties and unconventional teaching methods.
4. The students and teachers worked in close proximity to each other, sharing ideas and experiences.
5. Gropius's goal was to design furniture that focused on functionalism, ensuring that it was both useful and beautiful.

Listening Comprehension Answers

1. The main focus of the Bauhaus during its heyday was to unify art, craftsmanship, and technology to create functional and aesthetically pleasing designs.
2. The Bauhaus was founded by Walter Gropius, who was an architect.
3. Walter Gropius changed the structure of education by breaking traditional divisions between fine arts and applied arts, encouraging interdisciplinary learning.
6. He wanted to create a collaborative and experimental community where students and teachers worked together as equals.
4. Some people compared the Bauhaus to a secular cult or sect because of its communal lifestyle, radical educational methods, and charismatic teachers like Johannes Itten.
5. Johannes Itten and his followers engaged in fasting, breathing exercises, and wearing robes, inspired by Mazdaznan beliefs.
6. Johannes Itten was forced to leave because his spiritual teachings clashed with Gropius's vision of a more rational, technology-driven approach to design.
7. Bauhaus parties reflected the school's experimental and creative spirit through elaborate costumes, performances, and immersive environments that blended different art forms.
8. Oskar Schlemmer played a key role in organizing Bauhaus parties and was known for his work in theatre and performance art, particularly the Triadic Ballet.
9. The Triadic Ballet was significant because it showcased the Bauhaus emphasis on geometric forms, movement, and interdisciplinary art.
10. The Wassily Chair, designed by Marcel Breuer, was renamed in honour of Wassily Kandinsky, who admired its design.
11. Marianne Brandt was known for her modernist metalwork designs, including teapots and lamps, characterized by their sleek, functional aesthetic.
12. Walter Gropius envisioned a synthesis of arts, where architecture, design, and crafts worked together harmoniously.
13. The major architectural project designed by Gropius in Dessau was the Bauhaus Building, which embodied Bauhaus design principles.
14. The Bauhaus was eventually closed due to political pressure from the Nazi party, which saw it as promoting leftist and "degenerate" art.

READING

KEY

A.

1. utilitarian
2. efficiency
3. accessibility
4. architecture
5. innovation
6. graphic
7. composition
8. communication
9. practicality
10. tuition
11. architecture
12. persecution
13. ideologies
14. ornamentation
15. functionality

B. Sample answers:

1. Bauhaus aimed to combine art, craftsmanship, and technology. How do you think this approach influenced modern design, and do you see any similar movements or schools of thought today?
2. The Bauhaus philosophy revolutionized modern design by emphasizing functionality, simplicity, and mass production. It laid the foundation for contemporary architecture, product design, and even user interface design. Today, movements like sustainable design, Scandinavian minimalism, and even tech-driven design schools, such as the MIT Media Lab, reflect Bauhaus principles by merging technology, practicality, and aesthetics.
3. Simplicity was a core principle of Bauhaus. In what ways do you think minimalism helps or hinders the emotional or functional aspects of design in our current society?
4. Minimalism helps by reducing visual clutter, improving efficiency, and fostering a sense of calm. It is widely used in architecture, fashion, and technology, where clean lines and functional design dominate. However, some argue that extreme minimalism can feel sterile or impersonal, lacking the warmth and individuality that human-centred design requires. Striking a balance between simplicity and emotional depth is key.
5. Bauhaus sought to create affordable, functional designs for post-war society. In what ways do you think modern architecture and design could address current societal challenges, such as sustainability and affordability?
6. Modern architecture and design are increasingly focused on sustainable materials, energy efficiency, and modular housing to address climate change and housing shortages. Concepts like 3D-printed homes, adaptive reuse of buildings, and circular design principles (where materials are reused rather than discarded) reflect Bauhaus's mission of making design both practical and accessible.
7. Many critics of Bauhaus felt its designs were cold and lacked warmth. How important is emotional resonance in design, and how can functionality and warmth be balanced in architecture or products?
8. Emotional resonance is crucial in design because spaces and objects impact human well-being. Warmth can be added through textures, colours, lighting, and natural materials, even in functional designs. For example, Scandinavian design combines minimalism with warm elements like wood and soft lighting, proving that aesthetics and function can coexist harmoniously.
9. Bauhaus had a significant influence on architecture, graphic design, and furniture. Why do you think its impact was less pronounced in fields like traditional fine arts and craft art?

10. Bauhaus prioritized practicality, mass production, and industrial design, which contrasted with the individuality and expressiveness of traditional fine arts and crafts. While it did encourage creativity, its focus was more on applied arts rather than personal artistic expression. Fine arts continued to evolve in other directions, such as Abstract Expressionism, which valued emotional depth over functional design.
11. Bauhaus was criticized for prioritizing industrial production over individual craftsmanship. Do you think mass production and artisanal craftsmanship can coexist in modern design? Why or why not?
12. Yes, they can coexist. Many brands combine mass production with handcrafted elements, such as high-end furniture brands that use traditional techniques alongside modern manufacturing. Digital fabrication, like 3D printing, also bridges the gap by allowing custom-made designs to be produced at scale, blending technology with craftsmanship.
13. Given that Bauhaus designs were criticized for lacking cultural context and being uniform, how important do you think it is for design to reflect local traditions and cultures in a globalized world?
14. While Bauhaus promoted universal design principles, modern design increasingly values cultural identity. In a globalized world, incorporating local materials, craftsmanship, and aesthetic traditions ensures that design remains meaningful and diverse. For example, architects today often integrate regional influences to create buildings that resonate with their cultural and environmental context.
15. Many Bauhaus designers fled Germany due to political pressure from the Nazi regime. How do you think political and social ideologies can impact art and design, and can art be truly separated from politics?
16. Political and social ideologies have always influenced art and design, from censorship to propaganda to activist movements. While some artists strive for neutrality, design often reflects the values and challenges of its time. For example, Bauhaus's focus on functionality and accessibility was partly a response to social needs. Today, art and design continue to engage with political themes, such as sustainability, social justice, and inclusivity.

WRITING

KEY

Sample essays:

1. Opinion Essay – The Influence of Bauhaus

Bauhaus was one of the most influential design movements of the 20th century, shaping architecture, furniture, and graphic design. Its emphasis on simplicity, functionality, and the combination of art and industry can still be seen in modern design.

One of the most obvious influences of Bauhaus is in contemporary architecture. Many modern buildings use clean lines, open spaces, and geometric shapes, similar to Bauhaus principles. For example, the minimalist style of many office buildings and homes today reflects Bauhaus ideals. Additionally, furniture design, such as the famous Barcelona chair by Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, is still widely appreciated for its elegant yet functional aesthetic.

Graphic design also owes a lot to Bauhaus. The use of sans-serif fonts, bold typography, and grid-based layouts in modern advertisements and websites reflects Bauhaus's belief in clarity and simplicity. Even major brands, like Apple, follow Bauhaus principles by creating sleek, user-friendly products that combine technology and design.

Overall, Bauhaus remains highly relevant today. Its ideas about combining art and technology continue to inspire designers. In an era where functionality and aesthetics must coexist, Bauhaus serves as a foundation for modern design thinking.

2. Descriptive Writing – A Bauhaus-Inspired Room

Walking into the room, you immediately notice its simplicity and balance. The walls are painted in neutral tones—mainly white and grey—allowing the furniture to stand out with bold primary colours like red, blue, and yellow. The space is well-lit, with large windows that let in natural sunlight, following Bauhaus's emphasis on openness.

The furniture is sleek and functional. A black leather chair with a tubular steel frame sits in the corner, its minimalist design ensuring both comfort and style. In the centre, a glass coffee table with a chrome base adds an industrial touch. A simple wooden desk, free of unnecessary decorations, holds a modern desk lamp with a geometric design.

On the wall, an abstract painting with bold lines and contrasting colours serves as the only decoration, reflecting Bauhaus's appreciation for simple yet striking art. The floor is covered with polished concrete, giving the room an industrial yet elegant look.

This Bauhaus-inspired space is not just beautiful; it is practical. Every object has a purpose, proving that design can be both stylish and functional.

3. Compare and Contrast – Bauhaus vs. Art Deco

Bauhaus and Art Deco were two influential design movements of the early 20th century, but they had very different approaches to aesthetics and functionality. While Bauhaus focused on minimalism and practicality, Art Deco embraced luxury and ornamentation.

Bauhaus emphasized simplicity, geometric shapes, and industrial materials like steel, glass, and concrete. It aimed to create affordable, functional designs that could be mass-produced. In contrast, Art Deco was all about glamour, using expensive materials like gold, marble, and exotic woods to create decorative, intricate designs.

In terms of architecture, Bauhaus buildings were often plain, with flat roofs and large windows. An example is the Bauhaus school building in Dessau, Germany. Art Deco, on the other hand, featured bold colours, decorative elements, and symmetrical designs, as seen in the Chrysler Building in New York.

While both movements shaped modern design, Bauhaus had a more lasting impact on contemporary architecture and furniture. Art Deco, although still appreciated in fashion and interior design, is more associated with a historical period rather than an ongoing movement.

Ultimately, Bauhaus was about function, while Art Deco was about beauty and extravagance. Both styles continue to inspire designers today, each offering a unique perspective on how art and design should be expressed.

4. Argumentative Writing – Mass Production vs. Craftsmanship

In modern design, there is often a debate about whether mass production and artisanal craftsmanship can coexist. While some believe that mass production leads to lower quality and a loss of individuality, others argue that it makes design more accessible and affordable. I believe that both approaches can complement each other and should coexist in today's world.

Mass production has many advantages. It allows for the creation of affordable, high-quality designs that can reach a large audience. Many Bauhaus designers supported this idea, believing that good design should not be limited to the wealthy. Additionally, mass production ensures consistency and efficiency, making everyday products more available.

However, craftsmanship is equally important. Handmade objects have unique qualities that machines cannot replicate. Items like handwoven textiles, custom furniture, and ceramics carry a sense of authenticity and personal touch that mass-produced goods often lack. Craftsmanship also keeps cultural traditions alive, which is crucial in a world dominated by globalized design trends.

In today's world, many companies successfully combine these two approaches. For example, high-end furniture brands use machines for basic production but rely on artisans for finishing details. This balance ensures both efficiency and uniqueness.

Therefore, instead of choosing between mass production and craftsmanship, we should embrace both. Industrial design can benefit from artistic skills, and handmade products can incorporate technology. This way, we can have the best of both worlds: affordability, innovation, and individuality.

5. Creative Writing – A Letter from a Bauhaus Designer

Dessau, Germany

April 1926

Dear Franz,

I hope you are doing well! Life at the Bauhaus school has been an incredible experience so far. Every day, we challenge traditional ideas about art and design. Instead of focusing on decoration, we are learning how to create objects that are simple, functional, and beautiful. Our motto is “form follows function,” meaning that every design should have a clear purpose.

My favourite class is metalworking, where I am experimenting with tubular steel to create lightweight, modern furniture. I recently designed a chair that has no unnecessary decoration—just a strong steel frame and a comfortable seat. It may seem too simple, but that is exactly what makes it beautiful! Our teachers believe that good design should be available to everyone, not just the wealthy, which is why we focus on affordable materials.

You would love the atmosphere here. The workshops are full of creativity, and students from different backgrounds—painters, architects, sculptors—are all working together. The Bauhaus movement is not just about design; it is about shaping the future.

I can't wait to show you my latest work! Perhaps one day, you will sit on one of my chairs in your own home.

Warm regards,

Paul

VOCABULARY

KEY

Matching exercise 1.:

1. Founded - A
2. Vision - B
3. Craftsmanship - C
4. Affordable - D
5. Influential - E
6. Innovative - F
7. Simplicity - G
8. Collaboration - H
9. Transparency - I
10. Minimalist - J
11. Distinguished - K
12. Foster - L
13. Whimsical - M
14. Multiculturalism - N
15. Degenerate - O

Matching exercise 2.:

1. Ornamentation - A
2. Functional - B
3. Composition - C
4. Advocate - D
5. Efficiency - E
6. Usability - F
7. Craftsmanship - G
8. Communal - H
9. Progressive - I
10. Tuition - J
11. Prominent - K
12. Perception - L
13. Integration - M
14. Accessibility - N
15. Urban - O

Matching exercise 3.:

1. Practical - A
2. Aesthetically - B
3. Revolutionary - C
4. Preservation - D
5. Spatial - E
6. Proponent - F
7. Collaboration - G
8. Contemporary - H
9. Modular - I
10. Curriculum - J
11. Sustainability - K
12. Homogeneity - L
13. Industrial - M
14. Innovation - N
15. Prototype - O