

Brief History of Art and design

20th-21st century

# 07 POSTMODERNISM IN ART AND DESIGN

(1980–2000)

KEY

for English lesson



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SUPŠ:UH



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# LISTENING

## KEY

### EXERCISE 1: FILL IN THE BLANKS

1. Postmodernism began at precisely **3:32** pm, March 16th, 1972.
2. Modernists believed in forging a better world through science and universal **truths**.
3. To postmodernists, less was a **bore**.
4. Postmodernists embraced methods like **collage**, anarchy, and repetition.
5. The Las Vegas Strip is a great example of postmodernism's **eclecticism**.
6. Postmodernism was liberating, giving a dynamic, often **playful** voice.
7. Mass media helped postmodernism to **spread**.

### EXERCISE 2: TRUE OR FALSE?

1. Postmodernism began at 3 pm on March 16th, 1972. **(False)** – It was 3:32 pm.
2. Modernists believed that less was more. **(True)**
3. Postmodernists favoured simplicity and minimalism. **(False)** – They rejected minimalism.
4. The Las Vegas Strip is a prominent example of postmodern architecture. **(True)**
5. Postmodernists believed that art should follow a single method. **(False)** – They embraced multiple styles and methods.
6. Mass media played a small role in the rise of postmodernism. **(False)** – It played a huge role in spreading postmodern ideas.
7. Postmodernism rejected the idea of using past references in art. **(False)** – It often borrowed from the past.
8. Postmodernism was seen as liberating by many artists and creators. **(True)**

### EXERCISE 3: VOCABULARY MATCHING

1. **Postmodernism** → **(f)** A movement in art and culture that challenges traditional concepts.
2. **Modernism** → **(l)** A movement focused on progress, innovation, and breaking from traditional forms.
3. **Collage** → **(a)** The act of using existing works or materials to create a new piece.
4. **Anarchy** → **(c)** The principle of chaotic or disorderly absence of government.

5. **Repetition** → (e) The repeated use of elements in art to create emphasis or rhythm.
6. **Liberating** → (b) The state of being free and unrestricted in artistic expression.
7. **Blandness** → (o) Lacking in variety, dullness, or simplicity.
8. **Ornamentation** → (d) The use of decorative elements, often seen as excessive.
9. **Mass Media** → (n) Forms of communication (TV, radio, etc.) that reach large audiences.
10. **Eclecticism** → (m) The combination of elements from various sources or styles.
11. **Iconoclast** → (g) A person who attacks or criticizes beliefs or institutions.
12. **Deconstruction** → (h) Breaking down concepts and ideas to analyse their origins or meaning.
13. **Parody** → (i) An imitation of the style of a particular writer, artist, or genre with deliberate exaggeration.
14. **Whimsical** → (j) Playfully quaint or fanciful, often in a light-hearted or unusual way.
15. **Silliness** → (k) Behaviour or actions that are foolish or lacking seriousness.

# READING

## KEY

### PART 1: VOCABULARY MATCH

1. J, 2. B, 3. F, 4. D, 5. C, 6. I, 7. G, 8. E, 9. A, 10. H

### PART 2: TRUE OR FALSE

1. True
2. False
3. True
4. False
5. True
6. True
7. True
8. True

### PART 3: MULTIPLE CHOICE

1. **b)** To challenge traditional design with bold, playful, and unconventional pieces
2. **b)** Terrazzo
3. **b)** A reaction against modernist ideas, embracing eccentric and extravagant design
4. **c)** Use of exaggerated forms and vivid colours
5. **a)** The publication of "Learning from Las Vegas"
6. **b)** They used affordable materials like plastic and laminate, focusing on creativity over cost
7. **c)** Their style became mainstream and was embraced by collectors and museums
8. **b)** Because it reflected a rebellion against traditional, minimalist design in times of social change

# WRITING

## KEY

### SAMPLE ANSWERS:

#### 1. Design Critique: “Would You Live in a Postmodern Home?”

Postmodern architecture, known for its bold, eccentric, and playful approach, often combines unusual shapes, vibrant colours, and varied materials. A home designed in the Postmodern style is likely to have striking geometric shapes, bright colours like reds, yellows, and blues, and contrasting materials such as glass, steel, and wood. The Piramides building by Soeters van Eldonk Architecten in Amsterdam, for instance, features sharp angles and vibrant colour contrasts that epitomize Postmodernism.

While Postmodern designs can be visually captivating, they may not always be the most practical for everyday life. The use of unconventional shapes and bold elements may make furniture and space planning more challenging. For example, rounded walls or asymmetrical layouts could make it difficult to arrange functional furniture or create a sense of spatial flow.

Living in such a space would be an intriguing experience, but the eccentricity of the design might feel overwhelming at times. The space would constantly stimulate the senses, but it could also feel impractical for rest or relaxation.

If I had to change something, I might soften the intensity of the colours and shapes. While Postmodern homes are exciting, a bit more balance could make the space more comfortable and harmonious without losing its bold character.

#### 2. Creative Writing: “Interview with a Memphis Group Designer”

##### Introduction:

Hello, my name is Alex, and I'm a journalist working for a design magazine. Today, I'm lucky enough to be speaking with one of the visionary designers from the Memphis Group. This influential design collective emerged in the 1980s and shook the design world with its innovative approach to furniture and architecture. I'm excited to learn more about the ideas behind their bold and unconventional work.

##### Interview:

**Alex:** *Could you tell me a bit about your design philosophy and what drives your creativity?*

**Designer:** *Our philosophy is simple: break the rules! We were tired of the cold, functional designs of Modernism, so we embraced fun, chaos, and color. We wanted to make furniture and spaces that people could interact with emotionally. Functionality is important, but creativity should come first.*

**Alex:** *What inspired the use of bold colours and unusual shapes in Memphis designs?*

**Designer:** *Inspiration comes from everywhere! We love pop culture, comic books, and even architecture from different periods. Why should design be serious all the time? Bright colours and exaggerated shapes are a way to push boundaries and show that design can be playful and joyful.*

**Alex:** *How do you view modernism, and why did you choose to go in such a different direction?*

**Designer:** *Modernism is too rigid for us. It's all about clean lines and minimalism, but where's the personality? We want people to feel something when they look at our designs. Modernism might be efficient, but it lacks the energy and excitement we bring to the table.*

**Alex:** *What role does humour play in Memphis design?*

**Designer:** *Humour is essential! We want to create something that makes people smile or even laugh. When design is too serious, it becomes inaccessible. Humour invites people to engage with the space and see it as fun and full of possibilities.*

**Alex:** How do you envision the future of Postmodern design?

**Designer:** The future of Postmodernism is endless. The world is changing, and so should design. We're constantly evolving, breaking more rules, and finding new ways to be bold. There's no limit to how far we can push creativity.

**Conclusion:**

In speaking with the Memphis Group designer, I've learned that Postmodern design is about rejecting the norms of the past and embracing freedom, playfulness, and individuality. While it may not always be practical or functional, it creates a space where creativity thrives. Personally, I find this approach refreshing, as it brings excitement and energy to spaces that might otherwise feel dull or uninspired.

# VOCABULARY

## KEY

### ANSWERS:

1. **vivid**
2. **eclectic**
3. **surrealism**
4. **fragmentation**
5. **symbolism**
6. **geometric**
7. **contrast**
8. **exaggerated**
9. **collage**
10. **post-structuralism**