

Classical Architecture for Socials 8

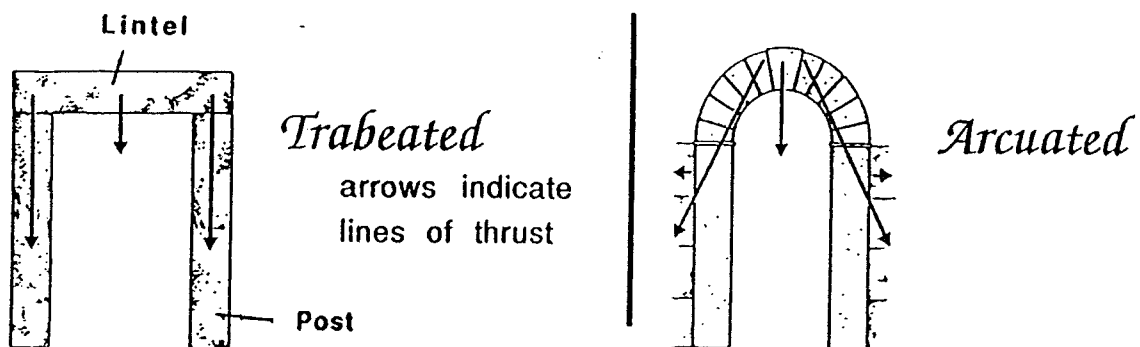
- developed by G. Galbraith, 1993

The term **Classical Era** or **Classical Age** is given to the time when Greece and Rome greatly influenced the western world - 500 B.C. to A.D. 500. Therefore, any time you see or hear Classical Age you know it refers to _____. Another term for this time period is the "Age of Antiquity" or just "Antiquity".

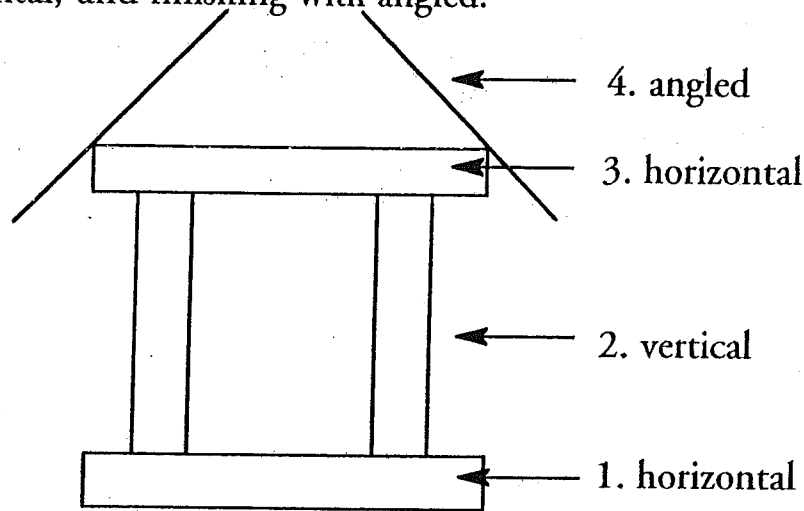
The word classical is obviously derived from the root word **classic** which means "excellence or first class". In short, classical architecture has come to mean the beautifully balanced and harmoniously simple architecture of the Greeks and Romans. This style of architecture is so admired throughout the developed world that every major city uses its form in some manner. Vancouver is blessed with numerous classical structures that you will easily identify after studying this unit.

The history of classical architecture is simple: the Greeks developed the classical forms, the Romans adapted it to their needs (they were, possibly, history's greatest engineers), the Italians of the Renaissance rediscovered it after one thousand years of slow progress known as the Middle Ages, and the architects since have continued to copy it.

The best examples of classical architecture are Greek temples. All Greek architects used the **post-and-lintel** style and preferred to work in marble, as it is noted for its beauty, flexibility and durability. The latins called the post-and-lintel style **trabeated** from the root word **trabes** meaning a "beam". The Romans copied the trabeated format but also loved the **arcuated** (arch) style, a form the Greeks didn't particularly like.



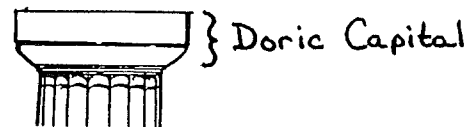
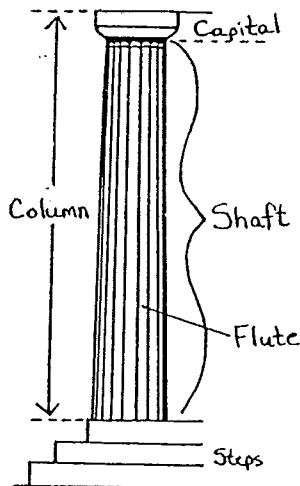
There are three basic classical orders of architecture: **Doric, Ionic and Corinthian (DIC)**. To determine which of the three orders the structure belongs simply locate the **capital** of the column. It is here that you can figure out whether it is a corinthian temple or whatever. After you have decide the order you begin to analyze the structure from the bottom upwards. The four sections are easy to understand as each run in different directions. At the bottom it is horizontal, followed by vertical, back to horizontal, and finishing with angled.



1. The bottom horizontal section is the **Steps**. The earliest Greek temples usually had three steps, but as time went on more steps were used, especially by the Romans.

2. The next section is vertical and is called the **Column**. Most columns have a **base** at the bottom, followed by the **shaft**, and finally the **capital**. The only classical order that does not use a base is the doric. You will notice that the shaft can be plain or **fluted** (vertical grooves). As mentioned earlier, the capital is the element used to identify the order:

- The oldest and simplest order is the **Doric**. Imagine the entire column to be a pencil with the eraser as the capital. If the eraser had to bear all the weight of the roof directly, then it would probably be "squished" downward and bulge outward to resemble a doric capital.



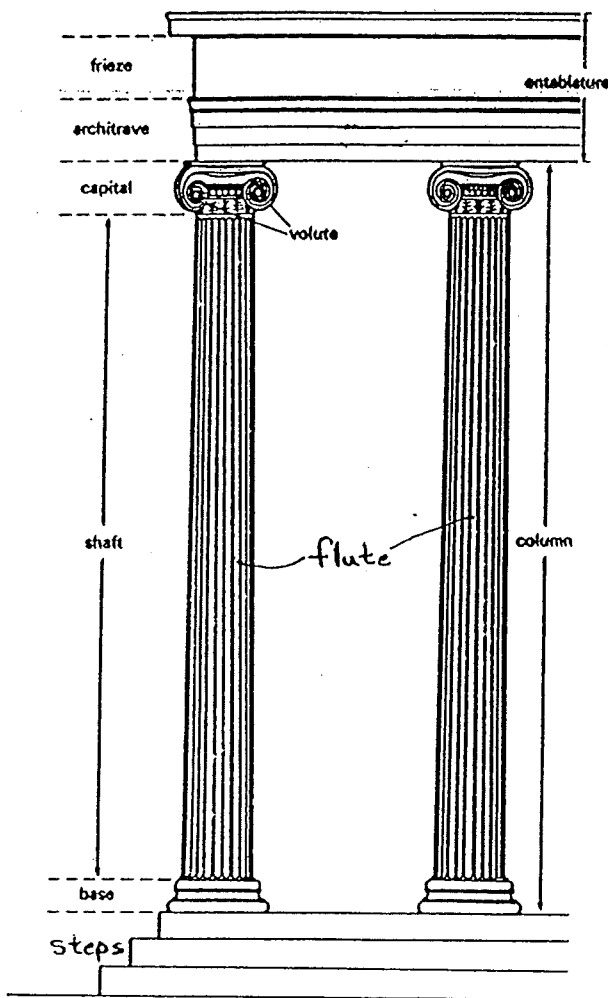


The next classical order is a bit more fancy. It has scroll-like **volute**s that resemble sea-shells or a ram's horn. The ionic column is slimmer and usually has a base and a fluted shaft.

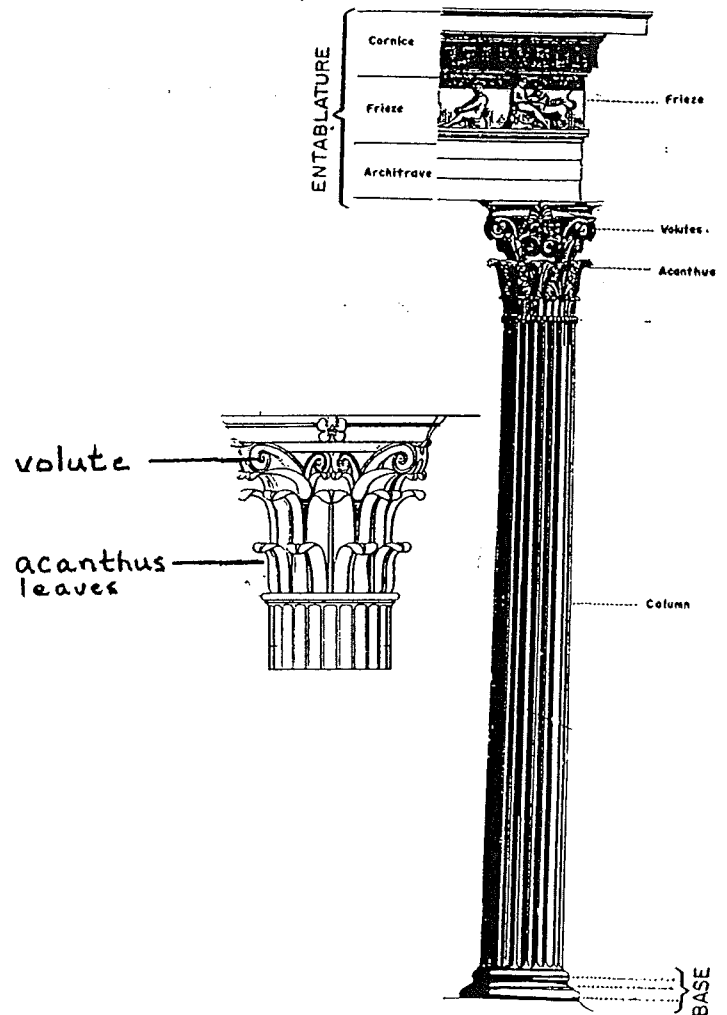


The last order is **Corinthian** and is by far the most decorative. You will notice the rows of foliage called **acanthus leaves**. You can usually find small volutes on this capital as well. Unlike the Greeks, the Romans were very fond of the corinthian order as the acanthus leaves grew throughout Italy.

Ionic



Corinthian



3. Above the column is another horizontal element called the **Entablature** or **Horizontal Entablature**. It is easy to remember this term by imagining the temple to be a table. The legs are the columns and the table top is the entablature. You will notice that the entablature is comprised of three horizontal sections: the **architrave**, the **frieze** (often sculptured), and the **horizontal cornice**. If you compare the entablatures of the three classical orders you will see that they differ in their decoration and dimensions.

4. The top section is angled and called the **Pediment**. In a sense, it resembles a sloping roof. It is triangular shaped with the **tympanum** (often sculptured) and a **sloping cornice**. Often located on the roof of the pediment are decorative features called **acroteria** (singular is **acroterion**) and **antefixes** (singular is **antefix**)

