

INTRODUCING ART

INDIAN ARCHITECTURE THE TAJ MAHAL

1. The Taj Mahal is a tomb or burial place.
2. It stands in Agra, India and construction was began in 1633 and it took 22 years to finish.
3. The Shah or King of India married Mumtaz Mahal and when she died he had this built in her honor and she was buried there.
4. The building is built out of marble, alabaster and red sandstone. Jade and crystal were imported from China and turquoise was brought from Tibet and lapis lazuli from Afghanistan. Forty three types of gems were used to decorate the tomb.
5. When the Taj Mahal was built rare fish swam in the pond and peacocks strutted through the gardens.
6. The building is is symmetrical (the same on both sides if the structure were divided in half) and is made up of a main structure and then separate or detached minarets which are three stories high, (tall, slender towers) at each corner. It's style is based on Indo-Islamic architecture which is characterized by graceful bulbous domes, tall slender towers, and flowing, curvilinear, non-representational decoration. It has eight sides and the facade or outside, is covered with semi-precious stones and religious sayings from the Moslem Koran. The curvilinear intertwined lines of the designs are called arabesque decorations. It looks like a fantasy castle or building. It's shape has been copied for modern attractions like the Royal Pavilion in Brighton, England or Donald Trump's Taj Mahal Casino in Atlantic City, New Jersey.
7. The combination of slender minarets with the arabesque designs in the stone, the pointed arches, and geometric gardens all interact to produce this uniquely Islamic appearance. To many western observers, the look suggests weightlessness, fantasy, and the exotic unknown.
8. The Taj Mahal reminds us of our own Capitol Building and it's reflecting pool. The architects in both cases wanted to impart a sense of beauty, stability, order and quiet thoughtfulness or calm.

QUESTIONS

Describe what you see in this picture.

Where do you think this is located in the world? (Show India on the map)

When do you think this was built?

Why do you think this was built?

Count how many towers or minarets this building has.

Count how many domes you see.

Count how many arches you see. Are they all the same size?

Where on the building do you see the arch shape repeated?

When something is repeated it is called a pattern. Do you see other patterns on the building?

How many sides do you think the main building has?

Do you think this is a tall building and what in the picture makes you say that?(refer to the size of the people.)

What do you think they called the water in front of the Taj Mahal? (A reflecting pool)

Have any of you been to a public place like a store or museum or restaurant and seen pools like this one? What do they sometimes have in them? Do you think that these reflecting pools had anything in them? What animals do you think they had walking around the grounds?

What do you think you would see if you could climb to the top of the towers?