

History of Interior Design

History of Interior Design – Study Notes

1. Foundations & Early Influences

Period	Key Characteristics	Notable Examples
Pre-historic (c. 30,000 BC – 3000 BC)	Shelter design driven by function and climate; use of natural materials (stone, wood, animal skins).	Cave dwellings, nomadic tents.
Ancient Egypt (c. 3000 BC – 30 BC)	Symbolic layout, hierarchical spaces, rich ornamentation, use of gold, lapis lazuli, hieroglyphic motifs.	Tombs of the nobles, palatial rooms of Pharaohs.
Ancient Greece & Rome (c. 800 BC – 500 AD)	Emphasis on proportion (Golden Ratio), symmetry, column orders, frescoes, mosaics.	Greek villas, Roman domus (e.g., House of the Vettii).
Middle Ages (c. 500 – 1500)	Ecclesiastical focus, modest domestic interiors, heavy woodwork, tapestries for insulation and storytelling.	Gothic cathedrals, medieval manor houses.

2. Renaissance to Baroque (15th – 18th centuries)

Era	Design Philosophy	Signature Elements
Renaissance (15th – 16th c.)	Revival of classical order, human-centered spaces, perspective.	Symmetrical floor plans, frescoed ceilings, marble, ornamental plasterwork.
Mannerism (late 16th c.)	Playful distortion of classical rules, dramatic contrasts.	Asymmetrical compositions, exaggerated proportions.
Baroque (17th c.)	Opulence, theatricality, movement, emotional impact.	Grand staircases, gilded moldings, dramatic lighting, rich textiles.
Rococo (early 18th c.)	Lightness, pastel palette, curvilinear forms, intimate scale.	Delicate stucco, ornamental mirrors, asymmetrical motifs.
Neoclassicism (mid- to late 18th c.)	Return to Greco-Roman purity, rationalism.	Simple columns, muted colors, geometric patterns.

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3. 19th-Century Transformations

Movement	Socio-Cultural Context	Interior Features
Industrial Revolution	Mass production, new materials (iron, glass, steel).	Exposed brick, metal fixtures, large windows.
Victorian (1837-1901)	Moral propriety, eclectic historicism.	Heavy drapery, patterned wallpapers, ornate woodwork, dark palettes.
Arts & Crafts (c. 1860-1910)	Reaction against industrial excess; emphasis on craftsmanship.	Natural wood, simple forms, built-in furniture, earthy colors.
Art Nouveau (c. 1890-1910)	Organic lines, integration of art and architecture.	Curvilinear metalwork, stained glass, stylized botanical motifs.
Eclecticism	Global travel & colonialism introduced exotic motifs.	Mix of styles (e.g., Oriental rugs with European furniture).

4. Early 20th-Century Modernism

Style	Core Principles	Representative Designers
Art Deco (1920-1939)	Luxury, geometric abstraction, streamlined forms.	