Architectural Styles

A-Frame
This style is made up of triangular and tee-pee shaped homes.

Triangular and tee-pee shaped homes named for the distinctive shape of its roofline. The steep slope of the A-frame roof is designed to help heavy snow to slide to the ground, instead of remaining on top of the house and weighing it down. At the same time, the sloped roof provides two other benefits. It creates a half floor at the top of the house which can be used for lofts or storage space, and, since the roof extends down to the ground and doesn't need to painted, it minimizes the amount of exterior maintenance required on the house. Defining characteristics are; triangular shape, steeply sloping roof that extends to the ground on two sides, front and rear gables, deep-set eaves, 1 ½ or 2 ½ stories, many large windows on front and rear facades, small living space, and few vertical wall surfaces.

Art Deco
A vertically oriented design includes flat roofs and metal window casements.

Geometric decorative elements and a vertically oriented design. This distinctly urban style was never widely used in residential buildings; it was more widespread in public and commercial buildings of the period.

Flat roofs, metal window casements, and smooth stucco walls with rectangular cut-outs mark the exteriors of Art Deco homes. Facades are typically flush with zigzags and other stylized floral, geometric, and "sunrise" motifs. By 1940 the Art Deco style had evolved into "Art Moderne," which features curved corners, rectangular glass-block windows, and a boat-like appearance.
**Art Nouveau**
Art Nouveau homes are asymmetrical shapes and utilize arches and curved forms extensively.

Characteristics include; Curved glass, curving, plant-like embellishments, mosaics, stained glass, asymmetrical shapes and arches and curved forms.

**Arts & Crafts/Craftsman**
Full- or partial-width porches are framed by tapered columns and overhanging eaves.

The Arts & Crafts or Craftsman homes: Low, broad proportions and absolute lack of ornamentation gives it a character so natural and unaffected that it seems to... blend with any landscape. Featuring overhanging eaves, a low-slung gabled roof, and wide front porches framed by pedestal-like tapered columns. Material often included stone, rough-hewn wood, and stucco. Many homes have wide front porches across part of the front, supported by columns.

**Bi-Level**
Typically a one story house plan that has been raised up and another level of living provided on the ground floor or raised basement floor.

Bi-level house plans are typically a one story house plan that has been raised up and another level of living provided on the ground floor or raised basement floor. Bi-level house plans are also referred to as high ranch or split entry house plans, referring to the front door location mid-way between the two floors. Bi-level house plans are typically economical to build.
**Bungalow**

A forerunner of the craftsman style, you'll find rustic exteriors and sheltered-feeling interiors.

Narrow, rectangular one and one-half story houses. Bungalows have low-pitched gabled or hipped roofs and small covered porches at the entry. The name "bungalow" had its origins in India, where it indicated a small, thatched home.

**Cape Cod**

A true classic, Cape Cod homes have gabled roofs and unornamented fronts. Cape Cod homes are square or rectangular with one or one-and-a-half stories and steeply pitched, gabled roofs. It may have dormers and shutters. The siding is usually clapboard or brick.

**Chalet**

Chalets have the characteristic Alpine look.

Constructed of rustic rough-cut wood, Chalet building plans often feature wide exterior galleries and balconies to view the countryside, large windows, a steeply overhanging roof, and elaborately cut decorative woodwork that gives this home its characteristic Alpine look.
**Chateau**
A Chateau is a stately residence.

A Chateau is known as a castle or fortress, a stately residence imitating a distinctively French castle.

**Colonial**
An offshoot of the Cape Cod style, it features a rectangular design and second-floor bedrooms.

Colonial style homes are often are referred to as rectangular, symmetrical homes with bedrooms on the second floor. The double-hung windows usually have many small, equally sized square panes.

**Contemporary**
Unmistakably modern, this style has odd-sized windows and little ornamentation.

You know them by their odd-sized and often tall windows, their lack of ornamentation, and their unusual mixtures of wall materials—stone, brick, and wood, for instance.
Creole
A front wall recedes to form a first-story porch and a second-story balcony.

The homes are distinguished by a front wall that recedes to form a first-story porch and second-story balcony that stretch across the entire front of the structure. Full-length windows open into the balconies, and lacy ironwork characteristically runs across the second-story level. These two- and three-story homes are symmetrical in design with front entrances placed at the center.

Dutch Colonial
German settlers originated this style, which features a broad, barn-like roof.

A hallmark of the style is a broad gambrel roof with flaring eaves that extend over the porches, creating a barn-like effect. End walls are generally of stone, and the chimney is usually located on one or both ends. Double-hung sash windows with outward swinging wood casements, dormers with shed-like overhangs, and a central Dutch double doorway are also common.

Earth Home
Earth Sheltered homes are homes that lie mostly beneath the ground surface.

Earth sheltered, or underground, houses lie mostly beneath the ground surface. The surrounding soil provides natural insulation, making these houses inexpensive to heat and cool. The best location for an earth sheltered house is on a well-drained hillside. Windows facing the south or an overhead skylight will fill the interior with sunshine.
English/Tudor
English and Tudor style homes have half-timbering on bay windows and upper floors, and steep cross gables.

The defining characteristics are half-timbering on bay windows and upper floors, and facades that are dominated by one or more steeply pitched cross gables. Patterned brick or stone walls are common, as are rounded doorways, multi-paned casement windows, and large stone chimneys.

Federal
This style arose amid a renewed interest in Greek and Roman culture.

This style resembles Georgian, but is more delicate and more formal. Many Federal-style homes have an arched Palladian window on the second story above the front door. The front door usually has sidelights and a semicircular fanlight.

French
Balance and symmetry define the French Provincial style, which has a steep hip roof.

Balance and symmetry are the ruling characteristics of this formal style. Homes are often brick with detailing in copper or slate. Windows and chimneys are symmetrical and perfectly balanced, at least in original versions of the style. Defining features include a steep, high, hip roof; balcony and porch balustrades; rectangle doors set in arched openings; and double French windows with shutters. Second-story windows usually have a curved head that breaks through the cornice.
Georgian
With paired chimneys and a decorative crown, this style was named after English royalty.

Georgian homes are refined and symmetrical with paired chimneys and a decorative crown over the front door. Most Georgians sport side-gabled roofs, are two to three stories high, and are constructed in brick. Georgian homes almost always feature an orderly row of five windows across the second story.

Gothic Revival
English romanticism influenced this style, marked by Gothic windows and vaulted roofs.

These picturesque structures are marked by "Gothic" windows with distinctive pointed arches; exposed framing timbers; and steep, vaulted roofs with cross-gables. Extravagant features may include towers and verandas. Ornate wooden detailing is generously applied as gable, window, and door trim.

Greek Revival
Entryway columns and a front door surrounded by rectangular windows are characteristic.

Identify this style by its entry, full-height, or full-building width porches, entryway columns sized in scale to the porch type, and a front door surrounded by narrow rectangular windows. Roofs are generally gabled or hipped. Roof cornices sport a wide trim. The front-gable found in one subtype became a common feature in Midwestern and Northeastern residential architecture well into the 20th century.
**Historic**
A historic house can be a stately home, the birthplace of a famous person, or a house with an interesting history.

A historic house can be a stately home, the birthplace of a famous person, or a house with an interesting history. Houses were first thought of as historic rather than just old or interesting, during the early nineteenth century. Government protection was first given during the late nineteenth century.

**International**
The International style exposes functional building elements, including elevator shafts.

This is the style that introduced the idea of exposed functional building elements, such as elevator shafts, ground-to-ceiling plate glass windows, and smooth facades.

The style was molded from modern materials—concrete, glass, and steel—and is characterized by an absence of decoration. A steel skeleton typically supports these homes. Meanwhile, interior and exterior walls merely act as design and layout elements, and often feature dramatic, but non-supporting, projecting beams and columns.

**Italianate**
This style has symmetrical bay windows in front, small chimneys, and tall windows.
Italianate homes can be quite ornate despite their solid square shape. Features include symmetrical bay windows in front; small chimneys set in irregular locations; tall, narrow, windows; and towers, in some cases. The elaborate window designs reappear in the supports, columns, and door frames.

**Log**

A house made from logs.

A log home (or log house) is technically the same thing as a log cabin, a house made from logs that have not been milled into conventional lumber. The term log home is contemporary and preferred by most, while log cabin indicates a smaller, more rustic, log house.

**Manufactured**

A manufactured home is one type of factory-built prefab housing. These homes are typically less expensive than homes that are built on site.

A manufactured home is one that is constructed almost entirely in a factory. The house is placed on a steel chassis and transported to the building site. The wheels can be removed but the chassis stays in place. A manufactured home can come in many different sizes and shapes. It may be a simple one-story "mobile home," or it can be so large and complex that you might not guess that it was constructed off site.

Local building codes do not apply to manufactured homes; instead, these houses are built according to specialized guidelines (Federal HUD regulations in the United States) for manufactured housing. Manufactured homes are not permitted in some communities.
Mid-Century

Mid-Century is an architectural, interior and product design form that generally describes mid-20th century developments in modern design, architecture, and urban development from roughly 1933 – 1965. Mid-Century style is characterized by simplicity, democratic design and natural shapes and this architecture was frequently employed in residential structures with the goal of bringing modernism into America’s post-war suburbs. This style emphasized creating structures with ample windows and open floor-plans with the intention of opening up interior spaces and bringing the outdoors in. Many Mid-Century houses utilized then-groundbreaking post and beam architectural design that eliminated bulky support walls in favor of walls seemingly made of glass. Function was as important as form in Mid-Century designs, with an emphasis placed specifically on targeting the needs of the average American family.

Mission

This style home was inspired by the Spanish mission churches of colonial America.

Detailed characteristics of a Mission style home are stucco walls, arches, and other details inspired by the Spanish mission churches.

Modular

Modular homes are factory-built, but, unlike manufactured homes, they do not rest on a steel chassis, they are assembled on a fixed foundation.

A modular home is constructed of pre-made parts and unit modules. A complete kitchen and bath may be pre-set in the house. Wall panels, trusses, and other pre-fabricated house parts are transported on a flatbed truck from the factory to the building site. You may even see an entire half-house moving along the highway. At the building site, these house sections are lifted onto the foundation where they are
permanently anchored. Unlike manufactured homes, modular homes must conform to the building codes for the locations where they are erected. Some housing subdivisions prohibit modular homes. Modular homes usually cost less to construct than stick built homes. For this reason, modular homes are popular choices in budget-conscious neighborhoods. Also, modular homes are often used for emergency housing after disasters.

**Monterey**
The Monterey style updates the New England Colonial style with an Adobe brick exterior.

The Monterey style updates the New England Colonial style with an Adobe Brick Exterior. In today’s Monterey’s, balcony railings are typically styled in iron or wood; roofs are low pitched or gabled and covered with shingles--variants sometimes feature tiles--and exterior walls are constructed in stucco, brick, or wood.

**Multi-Level**
This style is made of staggered floor plans, giving the home a multi-dimensional look.

Multi-level house plans boast a unique look both inside and out. Staggered floor plans give the home a multi-dimensional, open-yet-sectioned feel inside, while varied rooflines often accentuate the exterior. The main entrance area usually adjoins another area that accesses an upper and lower level. Often, the bedrooms reside in the upper area with a family or recreation room in the lower level. The main levels commonly include the kitchen and living room, along with a sunken living or dining room.

**National**
Rooted in Native American dwellings, the National style is rectangular with side-gabled roofs.
National-style homes remain unadorned and utilitarian. The style is characterized by rectangular shapes with (insert link side gabled roofs) or square layouts with pyramidal roofs. The gabled-front-and-wing style pictured here is the most prevalent type with a side-gabled wing attached at a right angle to the gabled front. Two subsets of the National style, known as "hall-and-parlor family" and "I-house," are characterized by layouts that are two rooms wide and one room deep. Massed plan styles, recognized by a layout more than one room deep, often sport side gables and shed-roofed porches.

**Neoclassical**
Neoclassical homes exist in incarnations from one-story cottages to multilevel manses.

Its identifying Ionic or Corinthian columned porches often extend the full height of the house. Also typical: symmetrical facades, elaborate, decorative designs above and around doorways, and roof-line balustrades (low parapet walls).

**Prairie**
Originated by Frank Lloyd Wright, this style can be boxy or low-slung. Prairie houses come in two styles--boxy and symmetrical or low-slung and asymmetrical. Roofs are low-pitched, with wide eaves. Brick and clapboard are the most common building materials. Other details: rows of casement windows; one-story porches with massive square supports; and stylized floral and circular geometric terra-cotta or masonry ornamentation around doors, windows, and cornices.

**Pueblo**
Flat roofs, straight-edge window frames, and earth-colored walls typify Pueblos.

The style is characterized by flat roofs, parapet walls with round edges, earth-colored stucco or adobe-brick walls, straight-edge window frames, and roof beams that project through the wall. The interior typically features corner fireplaces, unpainted wood columns, and tile or brick floors.
Queen Anne
Emerging in the Victorian era, the style features inventive floor plans and decorative chimneys.

Queen Anne is a collection of coquettish detailing and eclectic materials. Steep cross-gabled roofs, towers, and vertical windows are all typical of a Queen Anne home. Inventive, multistory floor plans often include projecting wings, several porches and balconies, and multiple chimneys with decorative chimney pots.

Wooden "gingerbread" trim in scrolled and rounded "fish-scale" patterns frequently graces gables and porches. Massive cut stone foundations are typical of period houses.

Ranch
Ranch homes are set apart by pitched-roof construction, built-in garages, and picture windows.

These homes are characterized by its one-story, pitched-roof construction, built-in garage, wood or brick exterior walls, sliding and picture windows, and sliding doors leading to patios.

Regency
The style borrows the Georgian's classic lines, yet eschews ornamentation.
Although they borrow from the Georgian's classic lines, Regency homes eschew ornamentation. They're symmetrical, two or three stories, and usually built in brick. Typically, they feature an octagonal window over the front door, one chimney at the side of the house, double-hung windows, and a hip roof.

**Rustic**

A Rustic style home is typically found in the country.

Rustic homes are pertaining to, or living in the country, as distinguished from towns or cities; rural. (simple or unsophisticated.)

**Saltbox**

Its sharply sloping gable roof resembles old-time boxes used for storing salt.

This New England Colonial style got its name because the sharply sloping gable roof that resembled the boxes used for storing salt. The roofline often plunges from two and one-half stories in front to a single story in the rear. These square or rectangular homes typically have a large central chimney and large, double-hung windows with shutters. Exterior walls are made of clapboard or shingles.

**Second Empire**

This Victorian style features mansard roofs with dormer windows.

Second empire homes feature windows, molded cornices, and decorative brackets under the eaves. One subtype sports a rectangular tower at the front and center of the structure.
Shed
A subset of the Modern style, Shed houses are asymmetric with sloping roofs.

A subset of the Modern style, the Shed homes feature multiple roofs sloping in different directions, which create multi-geometric shapes; wood shingle, board, or brick exterior cladding; recessed and downplayed front doorways; and small windows. There's virtually no symmetry to the style.

Shingle
An American style that echoes Queen Anne, it has unadorned doors and large porches.

Shingle homes borrow wide porches, shingles, and asymmetrical forms from the Queen Anne.

They're also characterized by unadorned doors, windows, porches, and cornices; continuous wood shingles; a steeply pitched roof line; and large porches. The style hints at towers, but they're usually just extensions of the roof line.

Shotgun
Tradition says that a shotgun blast can trace a straight path from the front to back door.

Tradition has it that if you fire a shotgun through the front doorway of this long, narrow home, the bullet will exit directly through the back door. The style is characterized by a single story with a gabled roof. Shotguns are usually only one room wide, with each room leading directly into the next. Exterior features include a vent on the front gable and a full front porch trimmed with gingerbread brackets and ornamentation.
Spanish
This style has details from many different styles.

The houses usually have low-pitched tiled roofs, white stucco walls, and rounded windows and doors. Other elements may include scalloped windows and balconies with elaborate grillwork, decorative tiles around doorways and windows, and a bell tower or two.

Stick
Decorative horizontal, vertical, or diagonal boards are typical of this Victorian style.

A member of the Victorian family, the Stick house boasts a lot of detailing. However, few Stick homes incorporate all the possible features. Typical characteristics include gabled, steeply pitched roofs with overhangs; wooden shingles covering the exterior walls and roof; horizontal, vertical, or diagonal boards—the "sticks" from which it takes its name—that decorate the cladding; and porches.

Traditional American
This style home combines several design elements of classic designs.

Typically feature simple rooflines comprised of front facing gables and combining several design elements of classic designs.
**Tri-Level**
A Tri-level style home usually has two stacked levels and a third level extending to one side.

A Tri-level house, usually with two stacked levels and a third level extending to one side, above the lowest but below the highest stacked level; interior usually arranged with living spaces on the "main" level, bedrooms on the upper stacked level, and extra rooms, recreation rooms, utility rooms, or garage on the lower stacked level.

**Two-Story**
A house with 2 floors/levels of equal or similar square footage.

One of the best things two-story house plans have going for them is their construction efficiency. Generally speaking, it's cheaper to build up than out. Square foot for square foot, a two-story house plan is less expensive to build than a one-story house plan. Two-story house plans, for the most part, are also not bound by style; unless a style is specifically defined by its levels (i.e., ranch home), that style can be applied to a two-story design. Two-story floor plans usually place the gathering rooms on the main floor; here, you'll often find the formal living and dining rooms (or a great room to replace them both), the family room, and the kitchen. The master bedroom can be located on either floor, but typically the upper floor becomes the children's domain.

**Victorian**
Built during the rise of the machine age, Victorian architecture incorporated decorative details such as patterned shingles.
The defining characteristics are ornamentation such as brackets, spindles, and patterned shingles. These homes combine modern materials with 19th century details, such as curved towers and spindled porches.

**Western**

A Western style home is defined as a house with western characteristics.