Architecture Vocabulary

**Arcade:** a succession of arches supported on columns. An arcade can be free-standing covered passage or attached to a wall, as seen on the right.

**Arch:** the curved support of a building or doorway. The tops of the arches can be curved, semicircular, pointed, etc.

**Architrave:** the lowest part of the entablature that sits directly on the capitals (tops) of the columns.

**Capital:** the top portion of a column. In classical architecture, the architectural order is usually identified by design of the capital (Doric, Ionic, or Corinthian).

**Classical:** of or pertaining to Classicism. See Classicism.

**Classicism:** a preference or regard for the principles of Greek and Roman art and architecture. Common classicizing architecture is a sense of balance, proportion, and "ideal" beauty.

**Column:** an upright post, usually square, round, or rectangular (an example can be seen on the left). It can be used as a support or attached to a wall for decoration. In classical architecture, columns are composed of a capital, shaft, and a base (except in the Doric order).

**Cornice:** the rectangular band above the frieze, below the pediment.

**Dome:** a half-sphere curvature constructed on a circular base, as seen on the right.

**Entablature:** the upper portion of an order, it includes the architrave, frieze and cornice.

**Frieze:** the wide rectangular section on the entablature, above the architrave and below the cornice. In the Doric order, the frieze is often decorated with triglyphs (altering tablets of vertical groves) and the plain, rectangular bands spaced between the triglyphs (called metopes).

**Order:** an ancient style of architecture. The classical orders are Doric, Ionic, or Corinthian. An order consists of a column, with a distinctive capital, supporting the entablature and pediment.

**Pediment:** a classical element that forms a triangular shape above the entablature. The pediment is often decorated with statues and its sides can be curved or straight.

**Pronaos (pro-NAY-us):** the entrance hall of a temple.

**Vault:** an arched ceiling usually made of wood or stone, as seen on the right.