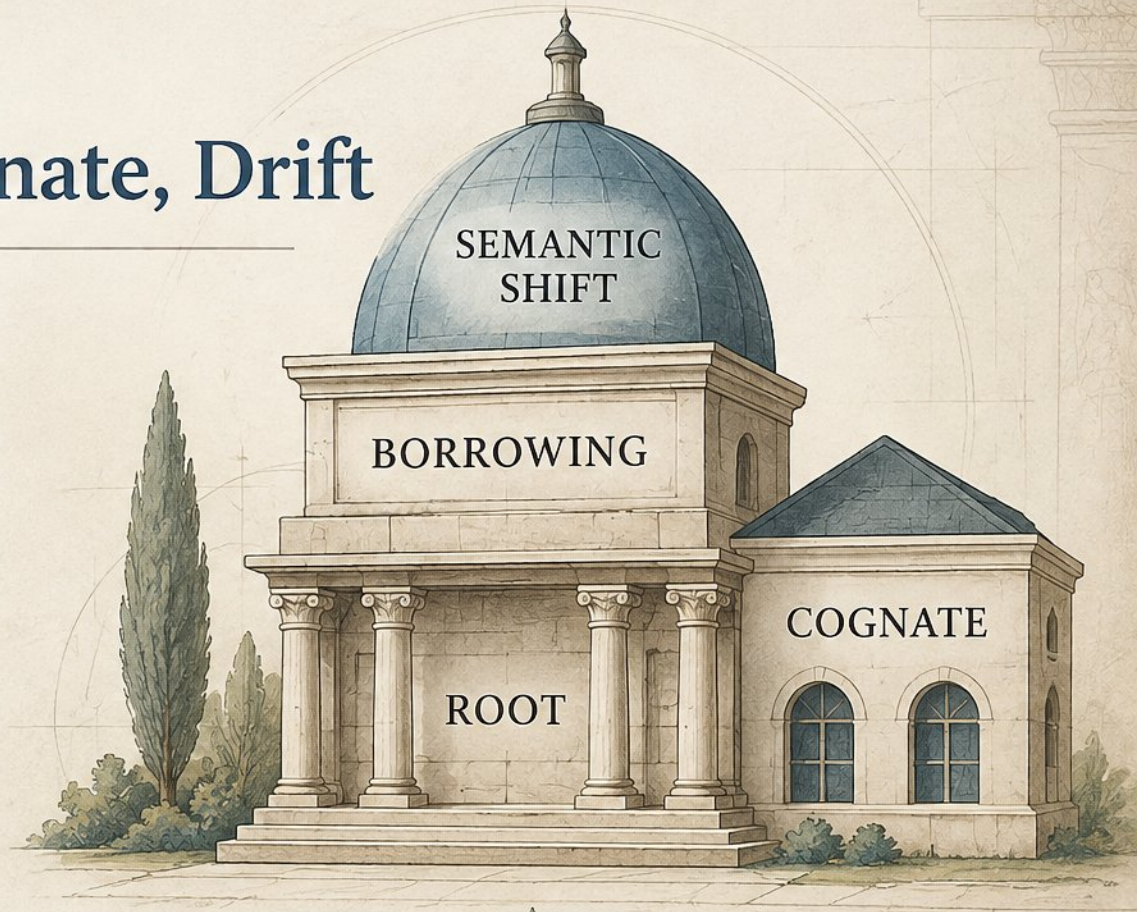
Etymology:
Tracing Where Words Come From

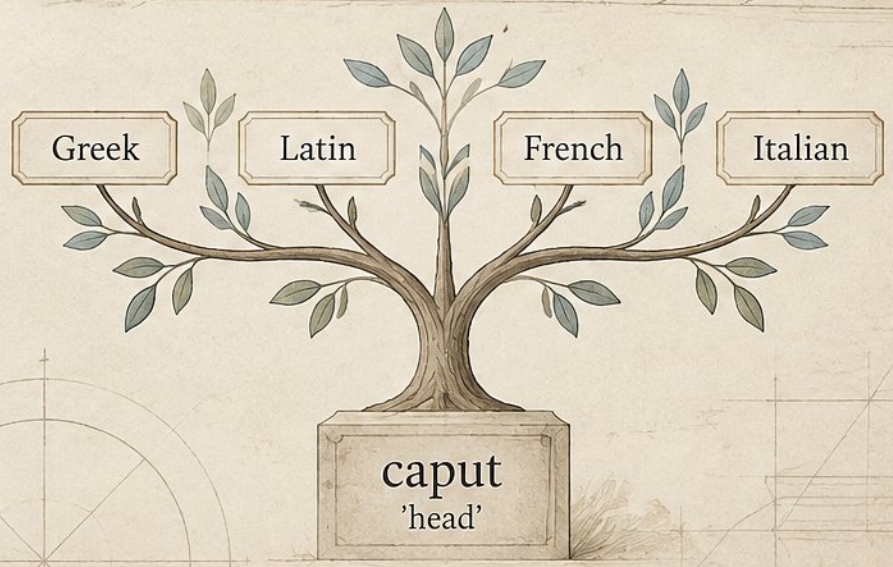
- **Course goal:** etymology as a reading tool for buildings, not trivia
- **Three transfer routes:** Greek and Latin roots, French after 1066, Italian/French Renaissance terms
- **Architectural words are evidence:** origins name materials, structural jobs, classical sources
- **Roadmap:** how words work, root families, orders, arches, style labels, dictionaries, field routine



How Words Work:
Root, Borrowing, Cognate, Drift

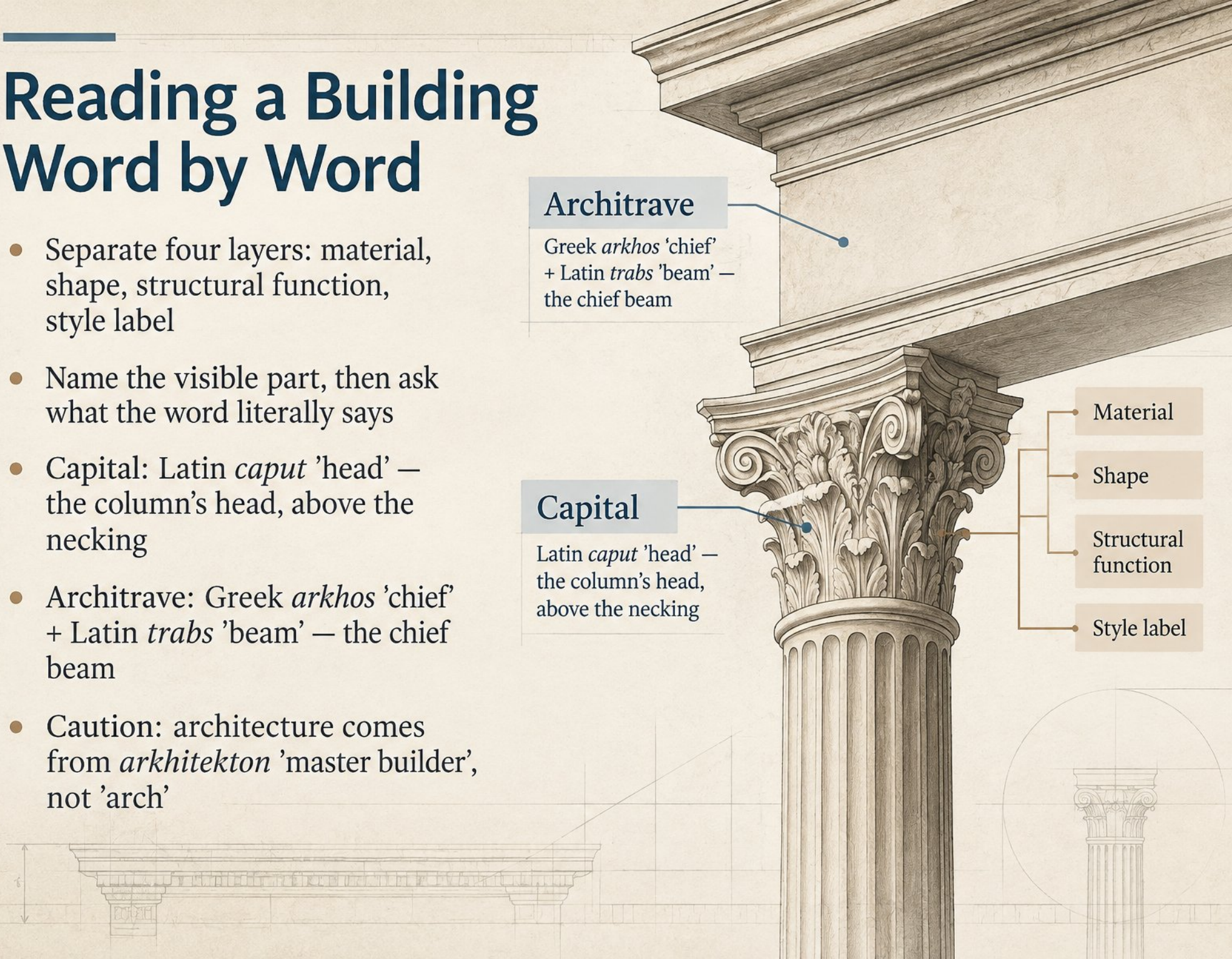
- **Root:** base element carrying core meaning — Latin caput ’head’ gives capital, chapiter
- **Borrowing:** a word taken whole from another language — architecture from French, 1563
- **Cognate:** related by shared ancestry, not borrowing — Italian faccia, French face, façade
- **Semantic shift:** meaning moves after arrival — dome, ’house’ to ’hemispherical roof’ by 1650s
- **Two engines:** metaphor (capital = ’little head’) and metonymy (arena, ’sand’ to ’contest place’)





Reading a Building Word by Word

- Separate four layers: material, shape, structural function, style label
- Name the visible part, then ask what the word literally says
- Capital: Latin *caput* 'head' — the column's head, above the necking
- Architrave: Greek *arkhos* 'chief' + Latin *trabs* 'beam' — the chief beam
- Caution: architecture comes from *arkhitekton* 'master builder', not 'arch'



WORDS BUILD IDEAS

Greek and Latin Building Blocks

stylos



peristyle

kion



amphiprostyle

lithos

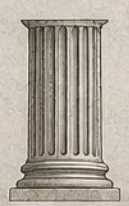


diastyle

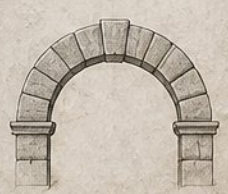
plinthos



columna



arcus



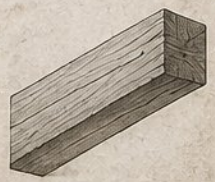
fornix



caput



trabs



tabula



- Greek roots: stylos and *kion* 'column' — peristyle, amphiprostyle, diastyle, lithos 'stone', plinthos 'squared stone'
- Latin roots: columna 'column', arcus 'bow/arch', fornix 'vault', structura, caput 'head', trabs 'beam', tabula 'board'
- Prefixes: archi- 'chief', peri- 'around', amphi- 'on both sides', dia- 'through'; endings -atus/-ata, -tion
- Greek terms often reached English via Latin — the Latin sense usually governs
- Practice: predict each term's meaning from its roots, then check the glossary

LANGUAGE LAYS THE FOUNDATION

French and Italian Layers in Design Vocabulary

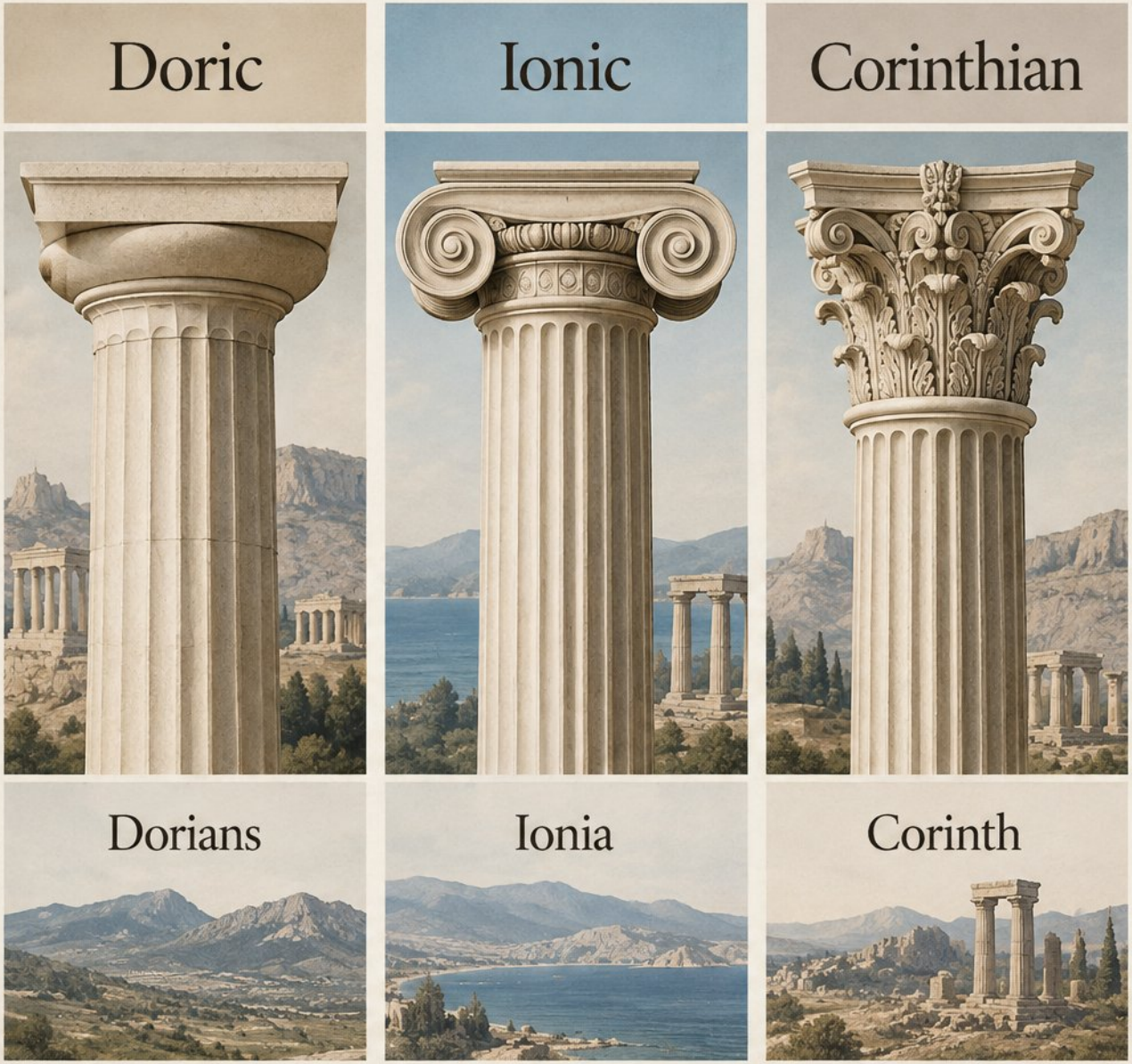
- **Façade:** French façade ← Italian facciata ← faccia 'face'; English 1656
- **Arcade:** French *arcade*, probably Italian *arcata* 'bridge arch'; English 1731
- **Loggia:** 17th-century Italian, from French *loge*; colonnade and balustrade via French
- **Entablature:** Italian *intavolare* 'put on the table', from Latin *tabula* 'board'
- Borrowing shifts spelling and sound; style names often carry a national label



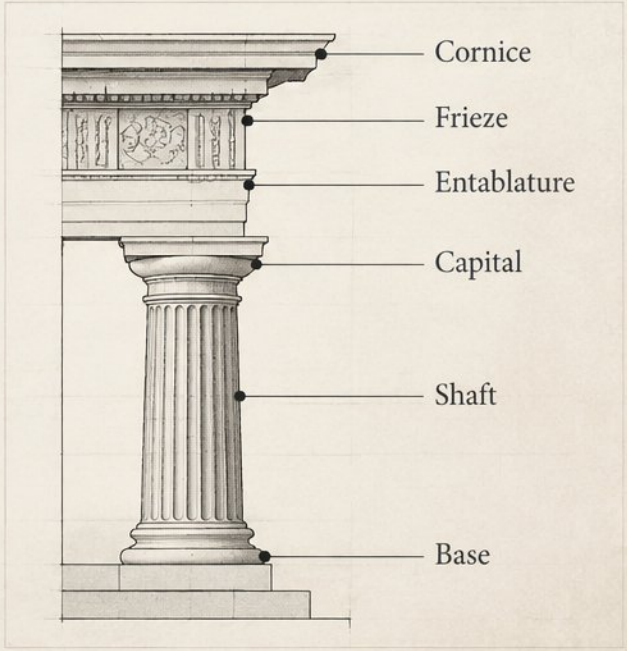


ARCHITECTURE
LANGUAGE
CULTURE
IDEAS

The Orders and Where Their Names Come From

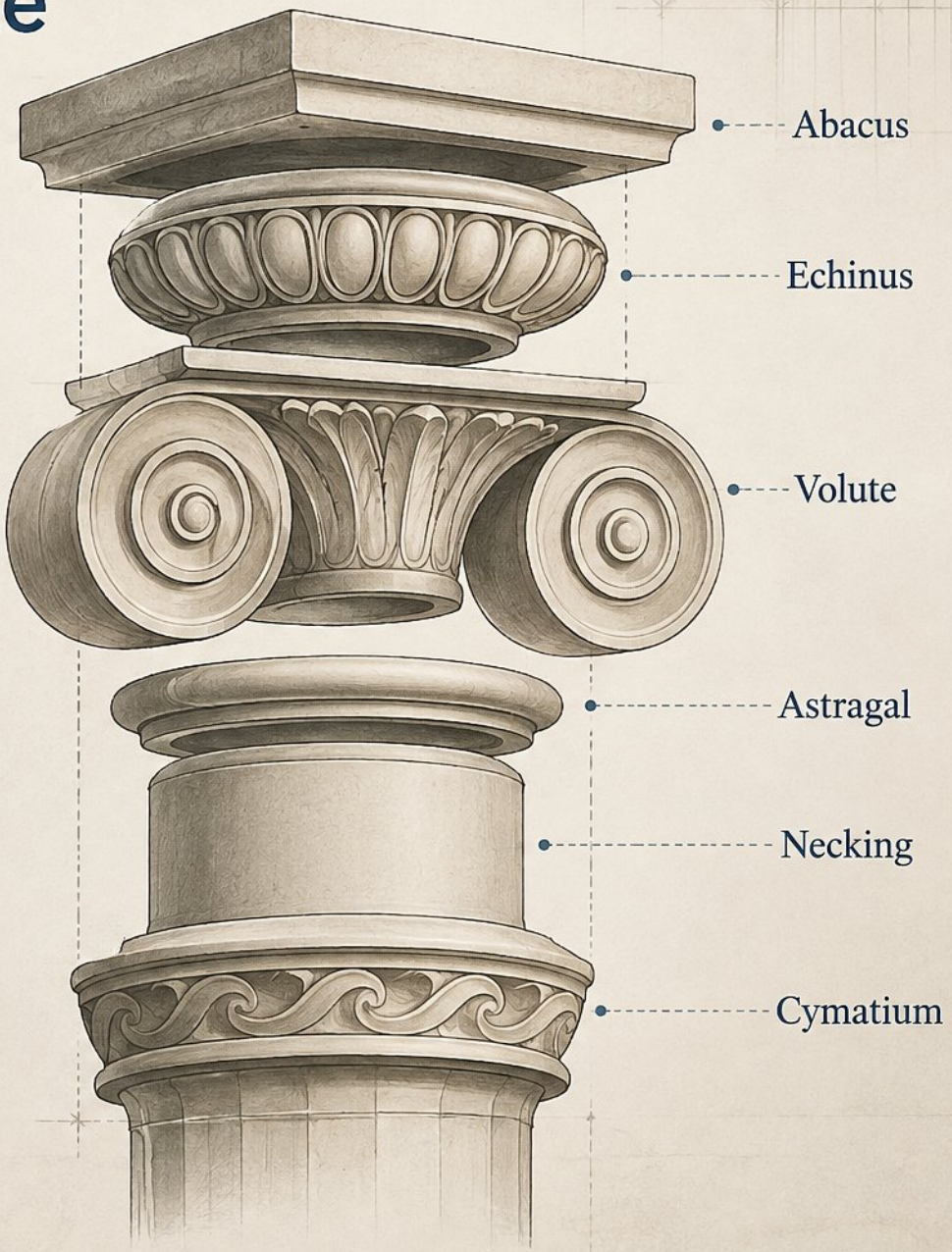


- Doric, Ionic, Corinthian: names from peoples and places, not shapes
- Dorus built the first Doric temple; Ion led the Ionians
- Corinthian: Callimachus saw a basket over an acanthus root
- Doric is Latin Doricus, first recorded in English in 1550
- Name capital, shaft, base, entablature, frieze, cornice; capital identifies the order



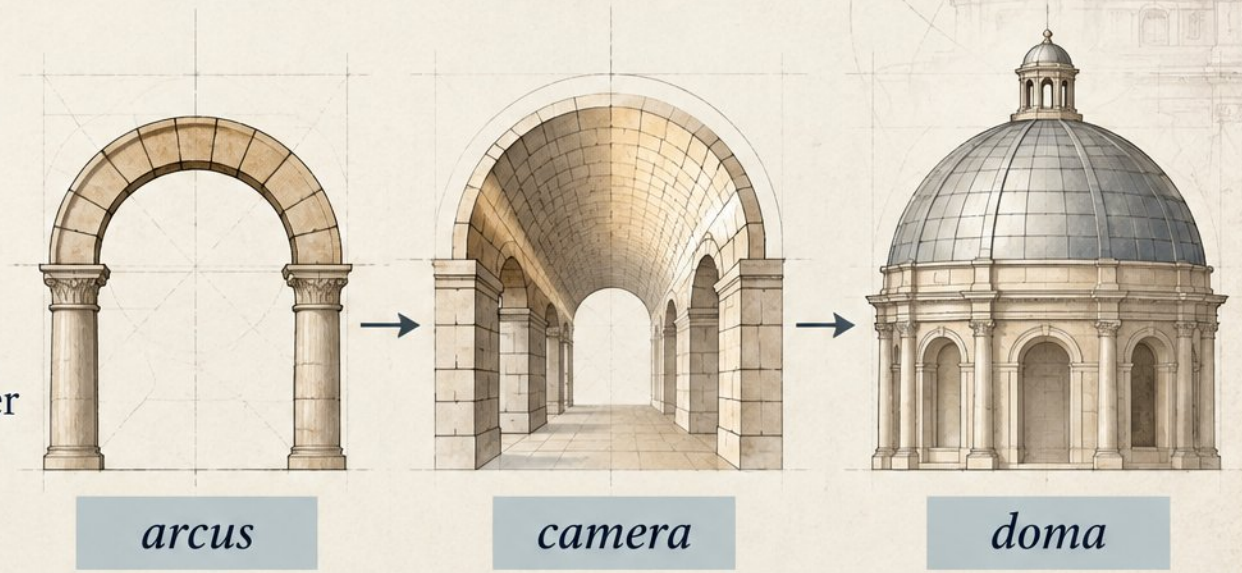
Dissecting a Capital: Abacus, Echinus, Volute

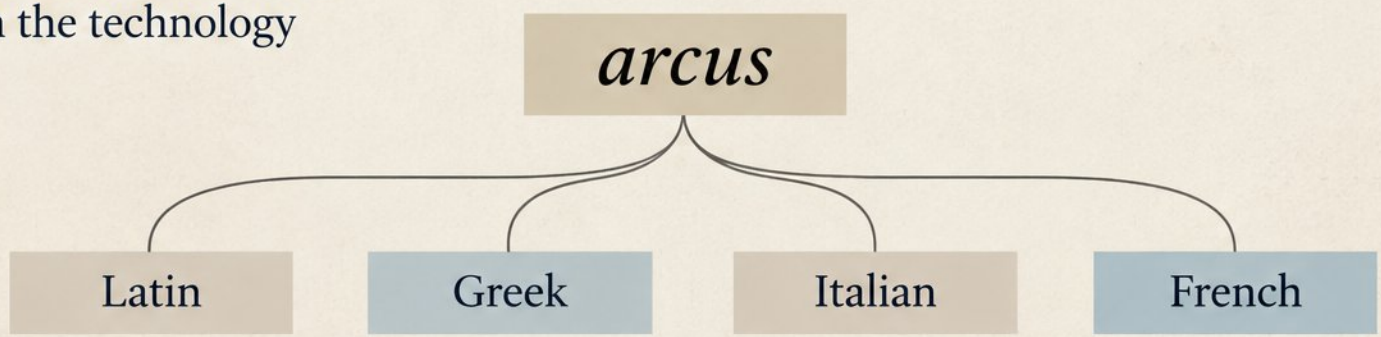
- **Abacus:** Latin from Greek *abax* 'slab', via Hebrew 'dust' — the counting board it resembles
- **Echinus:** Greek for 'hedgehog', from rough carved ovals; also names the sea urchin
- **Astragal:** Greek *astragalos*, the ankle bone; a half-round molding like a knuckle
- **Necking:** Old English *hencca*, 'neck', supporting the 'head' above it
- **Cymatium:** Greek *kuma* 'wave'; cavetto from Latin *cavus* 'hollow'
- **Takeaway:** Renaissance handbooks passed these names down, linking revival buildings to ancient construction



Arch, Vault, and Dome Words

- Arch: Latin *arcus* ‘bow’ — not related to architecture
- Archivolt: Italian *archivolto*, from *arcus volutus* ‘framing arch’
- Fornix: Latin arched vault; also gave us fornication
- Vault and camera: Latin *camera* ‘vaulted ceiling’ → *camera*, chamber
- Dome: Greek *doma* ‘house’; cupola: Latin *cupula* ‘small cask’
- One structural idea, three words travelling with the technology

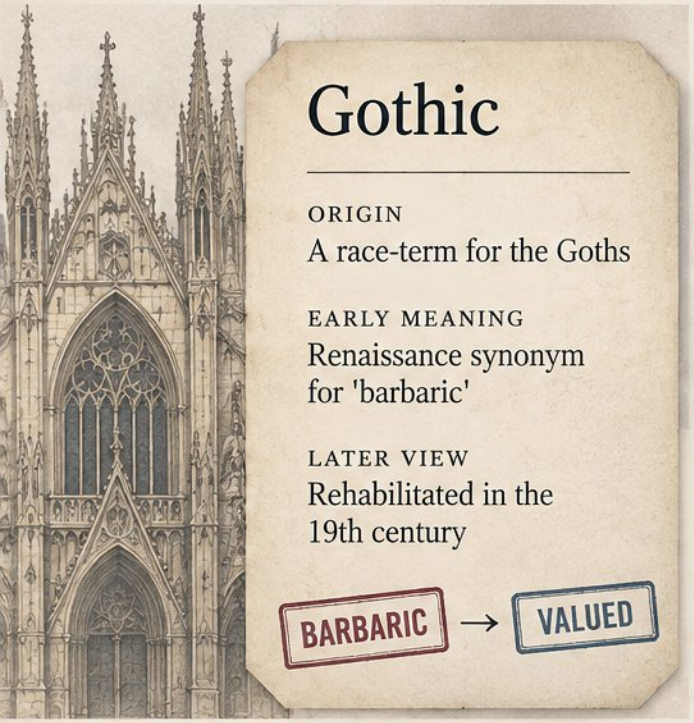




Style Names Decoded: Gothic, Baroque, Romanesque

FROM LABELS TO LEGACY

CONTEXT CHANGES MEANING



Gothic

ORIGIN
A race-term for the Goths

EARLY MEANING
Renaissance synonym for 'barbaric'

LATER VIEW
Rehabilitated in the 19th century

BARBARIC → VALUED



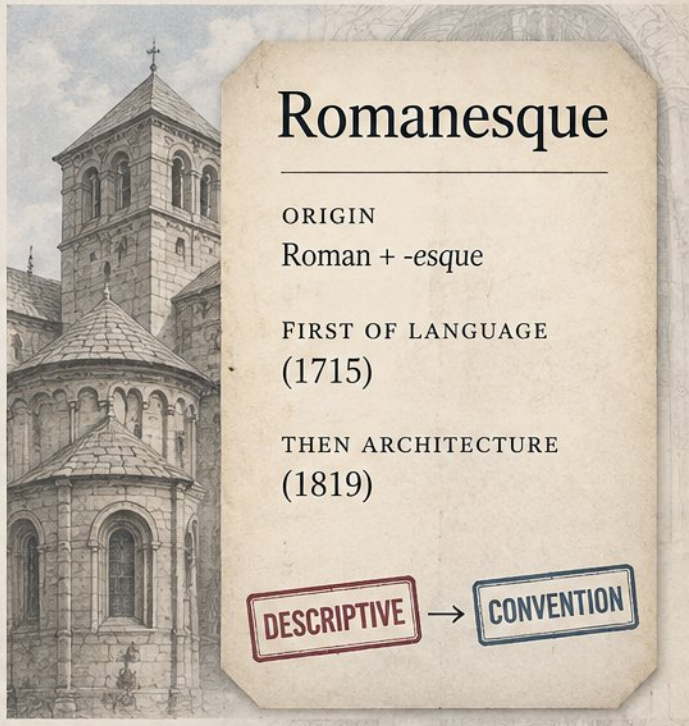
Baroque

ORIGIN
Probably Portuguese *barroco*, 'irregular pearl'

EARLY MEANING
Pejorative under Winckelmann

LATER VIEW
Neutralized later

PEJORATIVE → NEUTRAL



Romanesque

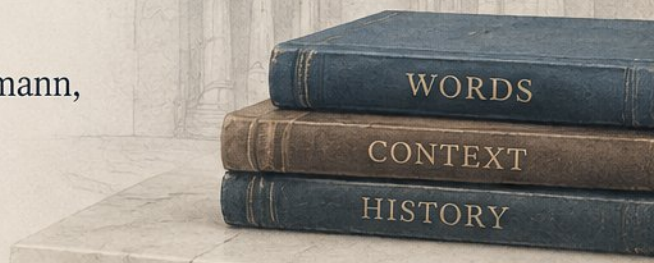
ORIGIN
Roman + *-esque*

FIRST OF LANGUAGE
(1715)

THEN ARCHITECTURE
(1819)

DESCRIPTIVE → CONVENTION

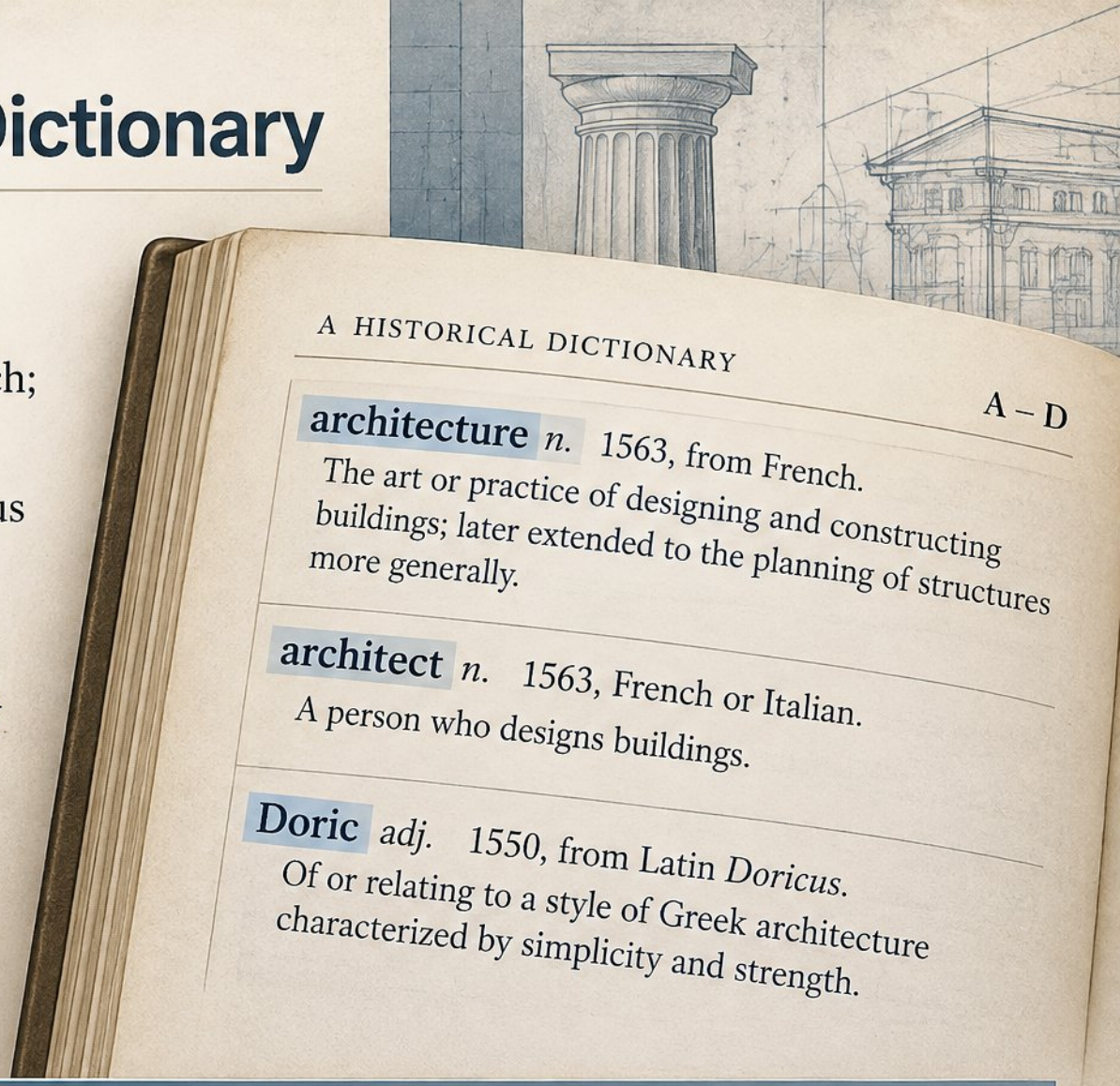
- Style names began as labels or insults, not neutral descriptions
- Gothic: a race-term for the Goths; Renaissance synonym for 'barbaric'; rehabilitated in the 19th century
- Baroque: probably Portuguese *barroco*, 'irregular pearl'; pejorative under Winckelmann, neutralized later
- Romanesque: Roman + *-esque*; first of language (1715), then architecture (1819)
- Nineteenth-century art history fixed these names: conventions, not verdicts



SAME WORKS DIFFERENT EYES

Using a Historical Dictionary

- An entry gives: first date, source language or etymon, sense history
- OED: architecture 1563, from French; architect 1563, French or Italian
- OED: Doric 1550, from Latin Doricus
- Read 'probably' and 'perhaps' as honest uncertainty, not firm claims
- Specialist sources: Parker's Glossary (1836 onward), Perrault's 1692 Vitruvius abridgment
- Capture template: term | first date | source language | literal sense | local example



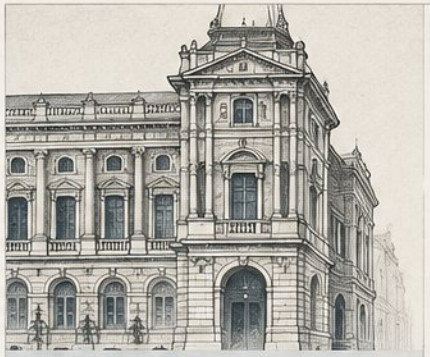
Capture template:				
term	first date	source language	literal sense	local example

Red Flags: Folk Etymology and False Friends

LOOK
CLOSER
THINK
DEEPER

WORDS · BUILDINGS · CONTEXT · A CLEARER HISTORY

- **Folk etymology:** inexpert re-analysis reshapes a word — island, belfry, hangnail
- **Architecture vs. arch:** classic false friend; no shared root
- **Willis's warning:** "epistylium" looks like "on the column" — but medieval columns carry arches, not beams
- **Look-alikes with no relation:** column/colonel; capital/Capitol
- **Always cross-check** etymology against the building's date and construction technology



Architecture

≠

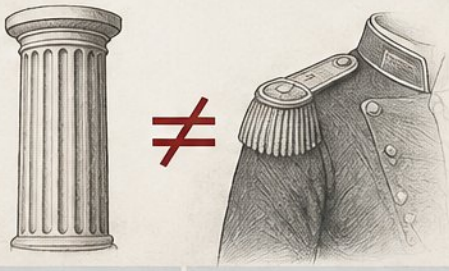
No shared root



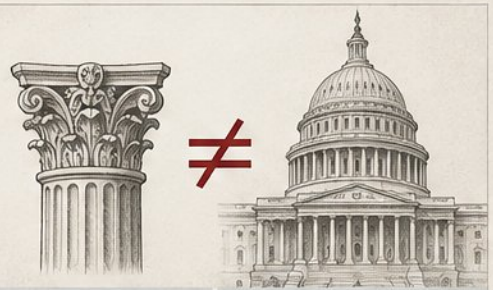
Arch



Willis's warning: "epistylium" looks like "on the column" — but medieval columns carry arches, not beams.



column ≠ colonel

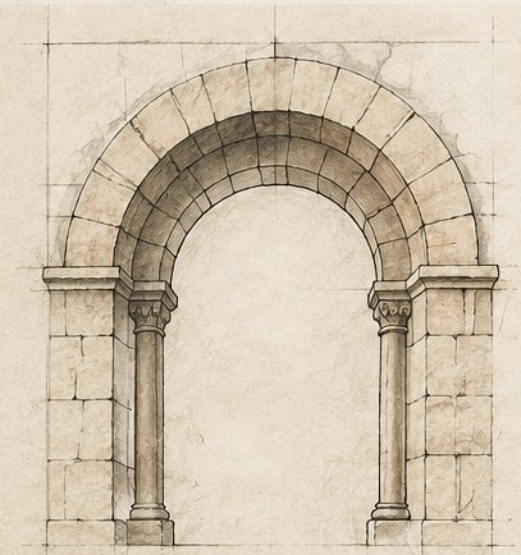


capital ≠ Capitol

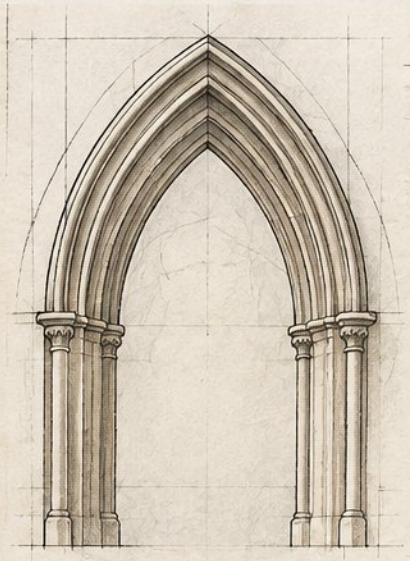
WORDS CAN MISLEAD.
CONTEXT KEEPS US HONEST.

Field Method: Etymology on a Site Visit

- Five steps: identify, name, split the word, check a dictionary, test the fabric
- Ask each step: what material, what job, when was it built?
- Round arch reads Romanesque; pointed arch reads Gothic; capital names the order
- Worked example: 19th-century revival facade — pilasters, entablature, pediment
- Record as you go: photograph, note term, add first date and source language



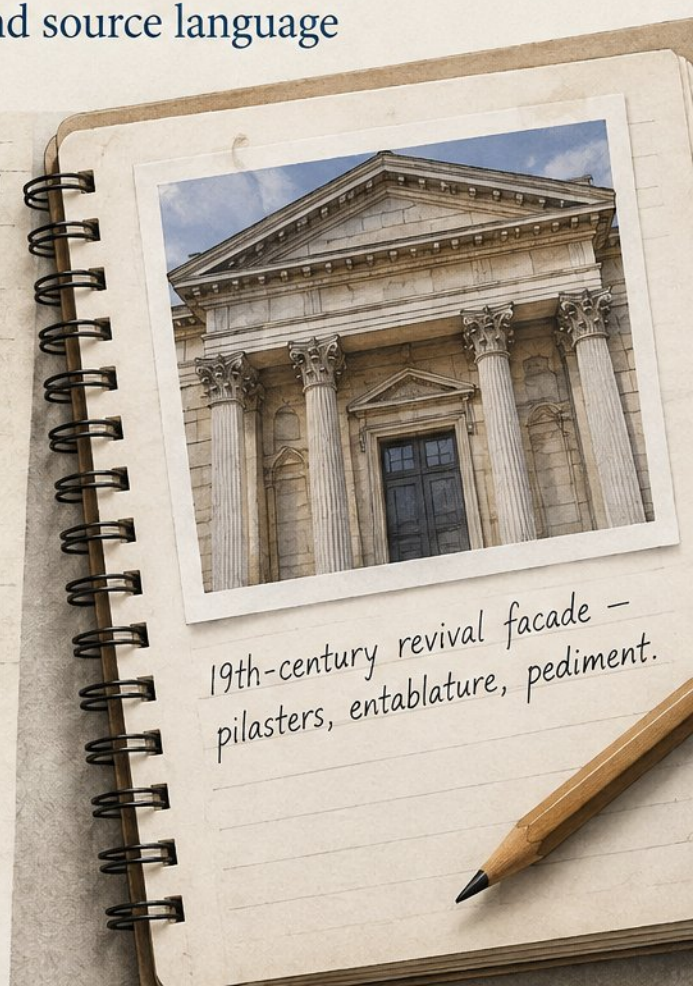
Romanesque
Round arch reads Romanesque.



Gothic
Pointed arch reads Gothic.

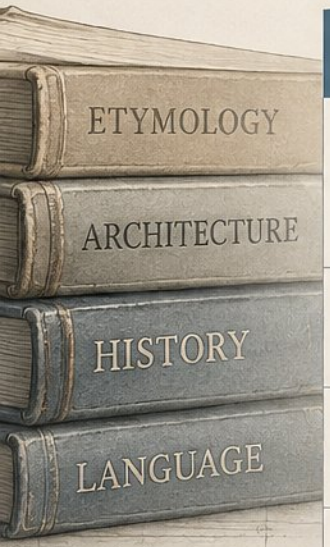


Capital
Capital names the order.



Practice: Build Your Own Term Glossary

- Compile five terms: first date, source language, literal sense, photo
- Model — Abacus: Greek *abax* 'slab'; 16th-century English; square slab on a Doric capital
- Peer test: does the etymology explain the visible feature, or just decorate the slide?
- Avoid: a true etymology applied to the wrong building period
- Assessed on accurate date, correct source language, and a matching photograph



Term	First date	Source language	Literal sense	Photo
Abacus	16th-century English	Greek *abax*	'slab'	

IDEAS TRAVEL THROUGH TIME





Wrap-Up: Let the Building Have the Last Word

- Etymology sharpens observation; building evidence has the final word
- Three routes to remember: Greek and Latin roots, French borrowing, Italian Renaissance terms
- Keep a personal list of red-flag words with wrong popular stories
- Go-to sources: OED, Parker's Glossary, Perrault's Vitruvius, current glossaries
- Next: revisit one familiar building, re-name five features with roots and first dates

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