

The Arts and Crafts Movement

The Arts and Crafts Movement was an international design movement which **flourished** in Britain between 1880 and 1910.

It influenced architecture, domestic design and the decorative arts, using simple forms and a medieval style of decoration.

The central figure in the Arts and Crafts Movement was William Morris (1834–1896). Poet and artist, he tried to make his vision of beauty part of everyday life. Morris **developed** a predilection for the culture of the Middle Ages in his studies at Oxford. In 1861 he and his friends founded a company – Morris, Marshall, Faulkner & Co. – which designed and made decorative objects for the home, including wallpaper, **textiles**, furniture and **stained glass**. Later Morris's ideas were taken



William Morris textiles.

up by the New Education Movement in the late 1880s, which incorporated **handicraft** work in schools such as Abbotsholme (1889) and Bedales (1892).

Arts and Crafts objects were simple in form, without excessive decoration, following the idea of “truth to material”, preserving and emphasizing the qualities of the materials used. They often had **patterns** inspired by British flora and fauna. Several designer-makers **set up** workshops in rural areas and **revived** old techniques. They were influenced by the Gothic Revival (1830-1880) and were interested in all medieval things, using bold forms and strong colours based on medieval designs.

The Arts and Crafts movement was influenced by Ruskin's social criticism, which tried to relate the moral and social health of a nation to the qualities of its architecture and design. Ruskin thought machines were at the root of social illness and that a healthy society depended on skilled and creative workers.

The Arts and Crafts movement's qualities of simplicity and honest use of materials inspired movements such as Art Nouveau, the Vienna Secession and, in **the long run**, the Bauhaus.



Portrait of William Morris.

to develop: *sviluppare*
to flourish: *sbocciare*
handicraft: *artigianato*
in the long run: *a lungo andare, infine*
pattern: *disegno, motivo*
to revive: *far rivivere*
to set up: *aprire*
stained glass: *vetrate dipinte*
textiles: *materiali tessili*

1 Read the text and choose the right option.

1. The Arts and Crafts Movement flourished in Britain in the middle of the 19th century.
2. Its founder had a predilection for the Middle Ages culture.
3. The company Morris, Marshall and Faulkner & Co focused its design on residential architecture.
4. The New Education Movement was influenced by Morris's ideas.
5. The patterns of the Arts and Crafts' objects took inspiration from the natural world.
6. The Arts and Crafts Movement was influenced by Renaissance.
7. The writer John Ruskin thought that the moral and social health of a society was closely linked to its architecture and design.
8. The influence of the Arts and Crafts Movement was limited to the British society.

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