Who is Richardson & What is Romanesque?

Objectives

Students will:

- Review architectural terms.
- Compare four Richardsonian Romanesque buildings in Utah.
- Identify the defining features of this style.
- Compare and contrast this style with familiar architecture in the community.
- Create their own Richardsonian Romanesque style building.

Setting the Stage

1. Pass out Architectural Elements Handout to each student and show the overhead. Give students time to match the terms and architectural elements. Review the activity with the class.

2. Explain that architects use these and other elements to create the look they want while designing a building.

Student Instruction

1. Pass out City and County Building Photo to each student. Ask students to use their Architectural Elements Handout to help them identify architectural elements found on the City and County Building. List all the elements noticed by students on the board.

2. Assign each student a partner. Pass out the Richardsonian Romanesque Building Photos to each student. Ask students to look at this sheet and compare these buildings with the City and County Building. With their partners, students identify as many ways as they can that these buildings are alike. Encourage students to think broadly. Discuss student findings as a class.

3. Explain that all these buildings are designed in a style called Richardsonian Romanesque. Share background information about Richardsonian Romanesque architecture.

4. Take students on a walk outside the school. Ask students to look at the design of the school and the homes or buildings that surround it. Students will identify any architectural elements from the Architectural Elements Handout on these buildings. Students should also note the materials they are made of, their size and shape, and any other important features.
5. After returning to the classroom, ask students to compare and contrast Richardsonian Romanesque architecture with the buildings in your neighborhood. **Ask students:** What does the Richardsonian Romanesque design remind you of? What words would you use to describe it? Would it be a good style for your home? Why or why not? Is it a good style for a city hall like the City and County Building? Why or why not? What types of buildings would Richardsonian Romanesque be a good style for? Why?

**Student Activity**

1. Pass out drawing paper.

2. Ask students to turn to the City and County Building Line Drawing on page 7 of the Symbol of the City Reading Packet. Using this drawing as a model, students draw their own Richardsonian Romanesque building. They may wish to use trace architectural elements from the Architectural Elements Handout or use features found on other Richardsonian Romanesque buildings.

3. Students decide how their building will be used. Explain that if they decide to use carvings or statues, these features will vary according to the use of the building. Students will write the name of their building on their drawing.
Richardsonian Romanesque Architecture

Henry Hobson Richardson (1838-1886) was one of America’s most important architects. He was born to a wealthy plantation family in Louisiana and graduated from Harvard in 1859. Because there were no schools of architecture yet in the United States, he went to Paris to study architecture at the prestigious Ecole des Beaux-Arts. He was only the second American to study there.

Richardson returned to the United States after the Civil War and set up an office in Boston. His firm was growing at a moderate rate when his competition-winning design for the Trinity Church in Boston propelled him to architectural fame in 1872. With one successful design after another, Richardson became America’s leading architect in the 1870s and 1880s. Some of his notable works include the Marshall Field Wholesale Store in Chicago, the Albany City Hall in New York, Sever Hall at Harvard University, the Allegheny County Courthouse and Jail in Pittsburgh, and the New York State Capitol.

Richardson developed a distinct style which has become known as Richardsonian Romanesque. He borrowed ideas from a number of sources, including the Romanesque buildings of 11th and 12th Century France. These French buildings were inspired by the architecture of ancient Rome. The defining features of Richardsonian Romanesque include:

- rounded arches above windows, porches, or entryways which often rest on columns or piers;
- walls of rough-cut stone;
- often two or more colors or textures of stone;
- deeply recessed windows;
- towers topped with finials and/or knobs;
- columns with a smooth shaft and ornamented capitals;
- ornamental carving.

Richardsonian Romanesque buildings have a massive, imposing, stately presence. The one word most often used to describe this style is “heavy.” Perhaps for this reason, Richardsonian Romanesque was particularly popular for civic buildings and churches. Relatively few houses were designed in this style, in part because the stone construction was expensive.

For more information and photos see “A Digital Archive of American Architecture” at www.bc.edu(bc_org/avp/cas/fhart/fa267/hhr.html)
Directions:
Draw a line from each word to its matching picture.

Materials

Arch

Texture

Column

Pattern

Turret
Photo on left:  
**Odd Fellows Hall**, 39 Market Street, SLC

Photo above:  
**Commercial Block**, 25 East 200 South, SLC  
—now demolished—

Photo below:  
**Brooks Arcade**, 300 South State Street, SLC