

Major town houses of Victor Horta

Worksheet

Guidelines for educators

- **Context and the area of cultural heritage:**

Tangible cultural heritage, example from Belgium

- **Description and justification:**

The four major town houses - Hôtel Tassel, Hôtel Solvay, Hôtel van Eetvelde, and Maison & Atelier Horta located in Brussels and designed by the architect Victor Horta are some of the most remarkable works of architecture of the end of the 19th century. Victor Horta was a Belgian designer and decorator, and he was one of the earliest initiators of Art Nouveau style. He made exceptional use of stone, steel, and glass, combining intertwined curves and double curves, such as flower stems.

- **Duration:** 45 - 50 minutes

- **Language level:** B1 – B2

- **Prior knowledge:** linking words, the ability to understand text on B1 level, knowledge of passive and active voice

- **Thematic area, grammatical and syntactical phenomena (learning objectives):**

In this worksheet students will learn:

- What is Art Nouveau style
- Who is Victor Horta and his most famous works
- Learn and practice related vocabulary
- Practice the use of linking words
- Practice using passive and active voice

- **Skills developed (or benefits for students):**

At the end of this worksheet, students will be able to: talk about Art Nouveau, recognise some characteristics of the style and recognise the work of Victor Horta, feel more confident about the use of linking words and strengthen their knowledge about using passive and active voice

- **Material needed:** pen and pencil

- **References and resources:**

- Apostolou, M. (2016). Phenomenal Transparency in Architecture: The case of Victor Horta. In *ICTA 2016-International Conference on Transparency and Architecture-Emerging Complexities* (pp. 310-319).
- Collette, Q., Wouters, I., De Bouw, M., Lauriks, L., & Younes, A. (2010). Victor Horta's iron architecture: a structural analysis. In *Advanced Materials Research* (Vol. 133, pp. 373-378). Trans Tech Publications Ltd.
- Europeana (2011) Art Nouveau Exhibition. Available at <https://www.europeana.eu/en/exhibitions/art-nouveau-a-universal-style/origins-of-art-nouveau>
- Horta Museum (n.d.) Discover Art Nouveau Style. Available at: <http://www.hortamuseum.be/en/discover/art-nouveau-style>
- Tsihlias, G. (1996). Victor Horta: The Maison Tassel, The Sources of its Development.
- Urban Brussels (n.d.) [Inside Art Nouveau](https://insideartnouveau.eu/en/). Available at: <https://insideartnouveau.eu/en/>
- Urban Brussels (n.d.) Victor Horta. Available at : <https://insideartnouveau.eu/en/architectes/victor-horta-4/>
- Widera, B. (2021). Colors Inspired by Nature Analyzed in Two Residential Buildings Designed by Victor Horta. In *Arts* (Vol. 10, No. 3, p. 60). Multidisciplinary Digital Publishing Institute.

Image sources:

- Victor Horta: <http://www.hortamuseum.be/en/discover/biography>
- Hôtel van Eetvelde: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/1/17/Belgique_-_Bruxelles_-_H%C3%B4tel_Van_Eetvelde_-_01.jpg

- Maison & Atelier Horta: https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maison_Horta
- Hotel Tassel inside:
https://www.europeana.eu/en/item/08535/item_RXLXJU65CUULGO2YB33HP_CJGT2TSYT65

Worksheet for the student

EXERCISE 1: What is Art Nouveau and who is Victor Horta?

(Duration: 30 minutes)



New vocabulary:

- Interior: the inside part of something (Cambridge Dictionary)
- Exterior: the outside part of something (Cambridge Dictionary)
- Masterpiece: a work of art that is made with great skill (Cambridge Dictionary)
- Ornaments: decoration added to increase the beauty (Cambridge Dictionary)
- Ironwork: things made of iron (Cambridge Dictionary)

Task 1: Fill in the text with correct connectives and linking words from the list.
(15 minutes)

as well as

undoubtedly

at this time

in addition to

even though

because of

for example

such as

therefore

What is Art Nouveau?

Art Nouveau was the dominant style from the 1870s to the 1920s. The term "Art Nouveau" first appeared in 1884 in the Belgian journal L'Art Moderne. Art Nouveau is the French term for "New art" and it has different names in various languages. _____, Jugendstil, Modernismo, Secession, Glasgow Style, Liberty style and Floreal style. Nature was the universal inspiration in Art Nouveau. You can recognise Art Nouveau by floral ornaments, geometric forms _____ the use of symbolic figures. You can see those characteristics in architecture, furniture, fashion and art.



Hotel Tassel inside

_____ Art Nouveau was very popular in Brussels.

_____ there are still more than 500 Art Nouveau buildings in different parts of the city. One of the most famous architects of Art Nouveau was Victor Horta.

Who was Victor Horta?

Victor Horta was born in Ghent in 1861. His first Art Nouveau house was Hotel Tassel. Hotel Tassel is a private house that is considered to be the first example of Art Nouveau architecture in the world!

_____ this, Victor Horta is considered the Father of Art Nouveau. Horta's work was characterised by open-plan and light spaces, glass ceilings and the use of ironwork. The ironwork was inspired by natural forms which Horta used in the interiors and exteriors of his buildings. Horta designed everything in his buildings.



Victor Horta

_____ the Hotel Tassel, three other buildings of Horta's are listed on the UNESCO's World Heritage list.

These architectural masterpieces include Hôtel Solvay, Hôtel van Eetvelde, and Maison Horta. All four of these town houses are located in Brussels.

_____ he is now recognised as one of the most famous architects in the Art Nouveau style, his work was not always appreciated. _____, many of his buildings were demolished, _____ Maison du Peuple in Brussels.

Task 2: Based on Task 1, identify whether the sentences are TRUE or FALSE. (5 minutes)

1. Victor Horta was born in Brussels, but his most famous buildings are in Ghent.

2. Art Nouveau style is known under different names. _____
3. There are many Art Nouveau buildings in Brussels. _____
4. All Art Nouveau buildings in Brussels were built by Victor Horta. _____
5. Hotel Tassel is a very famous example of Art Nouveau that was built by Victor Horta. _____
6. Victor Horta was always famous and respected in the field of architecture.

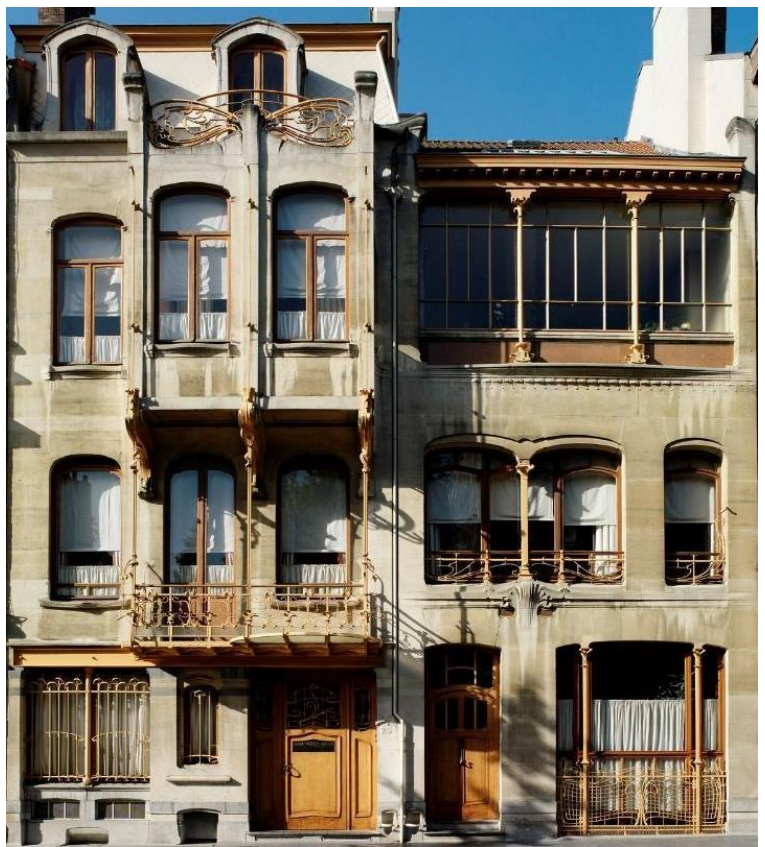
Task 3 Did you know about Art Nouveau before? If yes, did you learn something new from the text above? If not, what is the most interesting fact you found out while reading the text? Write down your answers in the space below. (5 minutes)

Task 4 Look at the photos of the two town houses built by Victor Horta: Hôtel van Eetvelde, and Maison & Atelier Horta.

Which similarities and differences do you notice? Get in pairs and discuss. (5 minutes)



Hôtel van Eetvelde



Maison & Atelier Horta

EXERCISE 2 : Passive form

(Duration: 20 minutes)



Reminder: The passive voice is formed by **a form of the verb TO BE + past participle of the main verb**. The verb TO BE can be conjugated in various tenses.

Task 1: Write the passive form of the following sentences. (5 minutes)

1. Victor Horta designed the four major town houses - Hotel Tassel, Hôtel Solvay, Hôtel van Eetvelde, and Maison Horta.

2. UNESCO put Hotel Solvay and three other buildings on the list of World Heritage in 2000.

3. Victor Horta pioneered the use of iron and steel in architecture.

Task 2: Complete the following sentences with the passive form of the verb in brackets. (5 minutes)

1. Many of Horta's buildings _____ . (DESTROY)
2. The Hotel Tassel, the Hôtel Solvay, Hôtel van Eetvelde, and Maison Horta _____ (REGARD) as iconic examples of Art Nouveau architecture.
3. Art Nouveau _____ (CONSIDER) as an important transition into more modern forms of art and architecture.
4. In Art Nouveau, motifs from nature _____ (BORROW) while implementing new techniques, like ironwork.
5. The Hotel Tassel _____ (RECOGNISE) as one of the earliest and finest examples of Art Nouveau style in architecture.

Task 3: Read the sentences. Label the sentences as either active voice (**A**) or passive voice (**P**). (5 minutes)

1. Victor Horta moved to the United States during the First World War. ____
2. The furniture in Horta's buildings was designed by Horta. ____
3. The Hotel van Eetvelde is the most innovative out of all of Horta's buildings in Brussels. ____
4. Many architects and artists were inspired by the originality of Horta's works. ____

Task 4: What are the main differences between active and passive voice? Get in pairs and discuss. (5 minutes)

ANSWER KEY

EXERCISE 1: What is Art Nouveau and who is Victor Horta?

Task 1 Fill in the text with correct connectives and linking words from the list.

Art Nouveau was the dominant style from the 1870s to the 1920s. The term "Art Nouveau" first appeared in 1884 in the Belgian journal L'Art Moderne. Art Nouveau is the French term for "New art" and it has different names in various languages. **For example**, Jugendstil, Modernismo, Secession, Glasgow Style, Liberty style and Floreal style. Nature was the universal inspiration in Art Nouveau. You can recognise Art Nouveau by floral ornaments, geometric forms **as well as** the use of symbolic figures. You can see those characteristics in architecture, furniture, fashion and art.

Undoubtedly, Art Nouveau was very popular in Brussels. **At this time**, there are still more than 500 Art Nouveau buildings in different parts of the city. One of the most famous architects of Art Nouveau was Victor Horta.

Who was Victor Horta?

Victor Horta was born in Ghent in 1861. His first Art Nouveau house was Hotel Tassel. Hotel Tassel is a private house that is considered to be the first example of Art Nouveau architecture in the world! **Because of** this, Victor Horta is considered the Father of Art Nouveau. Horta's work was characterised by open-plan and light spaces, glass ceilings and the use of ironwork. The ironwork was inspired by natural forms which Horta used in the interiors and exteriors of his buildings. Horta designed everything in his buildings.

In addition to the Hotel Tassel, three other buildings of Horta's are listed on the UNESCO's World Heritage list. These architectural masterpieces include Hôtel Solvay, Hôtel van Eetvelde, and Maison Horta. All four of these town houses are located in Brussels.

Even though he is now recognised as one of the most famous architects in the Art Nouveau style, his work was not always appreciated. **Therefore**, many of his buildings were demolished, **such as** Maison du Peuple in Brussels.

Task 2 Based on Task 1, identify whether the sentences are **TRUE** or **FALSE**.

1. Victor Horta was born in Brussels, but his most famous buildings are in Ghent.
FALSE
2. Art Nouveau style is known under different names. **TRUE**
3. There are many Art Nouveau buildings in Brussels. **TRUE**
4. All Art Nouveau buildings in Brussels were built by Victor Horta. **FALSE**
5. Hotel Tassel is a very famous example of Art Nouveau that was built by Victor Horta. **TRUE**
6. Victor Horta was always famous and respected in the field of architecture.
FALSE

Task 4 Look at the photos of the two town houses build by Victor Horta: Hôtel van Eetvelde, and Maison & Atelier Horta. Which similarities and differences do you notice? Get in pairs and discuss.

Answers depend on the perspective of each student. For example, students could focus on the shape of windows, use of ironwork, use of ornaments, similar colours, similar doors with decorated glass windows

Exercise 2

Task 1: Write the passive form of the following sentences.

1. Victor Horta designed the four major town houses - Hotel Tassel, Hôtel Solvay, Hôtel van Eetvelde, and Maison Horta.

The four major town houses - Hotel Tassel, Hôtel Solvay, Hôtel van Eetvelde, and Maison Horta were designed by Victor Horta.

2. UNESCO put Hotel Solvay and three other buildings on the list of World Heritage in 2000.

Hotel Solvay and three other buildings were put on the list of World Heritage in 2000 by UNESCO.

3. Victor Horta pioneered the use of iron and steel in architecture.

The use of iron and steel in architecture was pioneered by Victor Horta.

Task 2: Complete the following sentences with the passive form of the verb in brackets.

1. Many Horta's buildings **were destroyed**. (DESTROY)
2. The Hotel Tassel, the Hôtel Solvay, Hôtel van Eetvelde, and Maison Horta **are regarded** (REGARD) as iconic examples of Art Nouveau architecture.
3. Art Nouveau **is considered** (CONSIDER) an important transition into more modern forms of art and architecture.
4. In Art Nouveau, motifs from nature **were borrowed** (BORROW) while implementing new techniques, like ironwork.
5. The Hotel Tassel **is recognised** (RECOGNISE) as one of the earliest and finest examples of Art Nouveau style in architecture.

Task 3: Read the sentences. Label the sentences as wither active voice (**A**) or passive voice (**P**).

1. Victor Horta moved to the United States during the First World War. **A**
2. The furniture in Horta's buildings was designed by Horta. **P**
3. The Hotel van Eetvelde is the most innovative Horta's building in Brussels. **A**
4. Many architects and artists were inspired by the originality of Horta's works. **P**