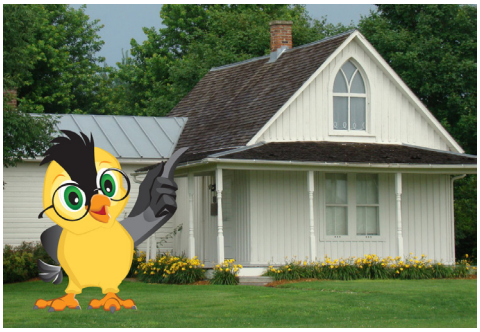
Goldie at Home Activity: American Gothic

Activity Overview: The American Gothic House in Eldon, Iowa, is famous as the backdrop of Grant Wood's 1930 painting, "American Gothic." This piece of art has become an iconic image, but how much do you know about the historical home in the painting? This Goldie at Home activity focuses on the design of this picturesque Iowa home and invites you to explore architecture in your own neighborhood.

Connection to Iowa History

Artist Grant Wood was born in Anamosa, Iowa, on February 13, 1891, and later grew up in Cedar Rapids. His most famous painting, "American Gothic," was exhibited at the Art Institute of Chicago in 1930 and won immediate acclaim. He also taught painting at the University of Iowa's School of Art from 1934 to 1941, before passing away in 1942. This house, which was built in the 1880s, was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1974 and was donated to the State Historical Society of Iowa in 1991.



What is an architectural feature?

The house made famous in the "American Gothic" painting by Grant Wood was built in the Carpenter Gothic style, which first became popular in the 1840s. How do we know it was built in this particular style? Buildings have **architectural features**. These features can be described as special details and parts of a building that fit a certain style. This can include details such as the roof style, how the windows are designed, types of moldings or other style details that make the building unique.

Instructions

1. **Create.** Draw your own home.
2. **Match.** Read and match the architectural features of the American Gothic House using the **American Gothic worksheet**.
3. **Explore.** Find the listed architectural features in your own neighborhood. Record your findings on the **scavenger hunt worksheet**.
4. **Questions to Spark Learning**
   - Does your home have any of the features of the American Gothic house? If so, which ones?
   - Think about the unique architectural features your home has. What makes those features unique?
   - If you had to pick something in your own town to paint and make famous, what would you choose? Why?
5. **Additional Resources**

   Explore these resources below to learn more about "American Gothic," historic homes and architecture in Iowa.
   - **At-Home Summer Expeditions: American Gothic**
   - ***The Goldfinch: Regionalist Art and Literature***
   - ***The Goldfinch: Homes in History***
   - **Iowa Architectural Foundation**
   - **State Historical Preservation Office Resources**

Materials

- Pencil or pen
- American Gothic worksheet
- Scavenger hunt worksheet

American Gothic Worksheet

Below are descriptions of architectural features to use with this American Gothic activity. You will utilize these terms to draw the building that you live in and identify the architectural features on the American Gothic House and on homes and buildings in your neighborhood.

- **Pointed-arch window:** A fancy window based on church window design.
- **Wrap-around porch:** A covered structure found on the front side of a building.
- **Porch column:** An upright pillar that supports a structure or roof.
- **Metal roof:** A covering for the roof made of metal and usually shiny.
- **Wooden shingle roof:** A covering for the roof made of wooden shingles.
- **Brick chimney:** Usually found in older homes, this tall brick structure allows smoke to escape.
- **Foundation:** The lowest part of a building.
- **Double hung windows:** A window with an upper and lower panel of glass which can be opened.
- **Gable roof:** Roof with two sloping sides that come together at a peak.
- **Screen door:** A hinged door typically outside of a front door with metal screening to allow air flow.
- **Board and batten siding:** Type of outdoor wall covering with small vertical strips of wood.

Draw a Side

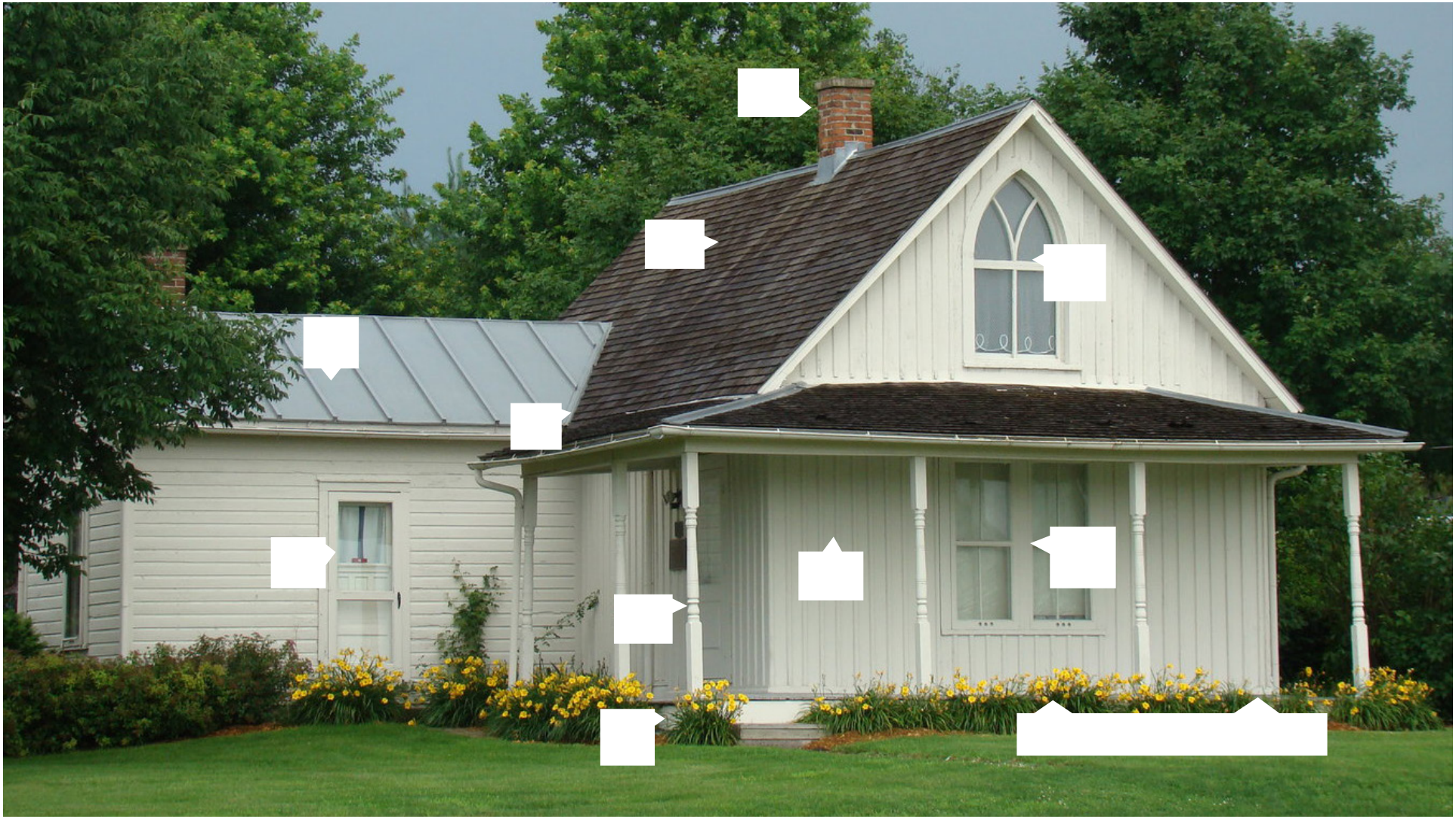
First, observe the house or building that you call home. Using the space below, draw one side of the structure that you find most interesting. Once you've finished your drawing, label any architectural features (see above) that can be identified.

Architectural Features of the American Gothic House

This photograph of the American Gothic House shows the many different architectural features that identify this home in the Carpenter Gothic style. Explore the photo, review the different **architectural features** and match the number of the feature from the word bank to the photo below.

Architectural Features Word Bank

1. Pointed-arch window
2. Wrap-around porch
3. Porch column
4. Metal roof
5. Wooden shingle roof
6. Brick chimney
7. Foundation
8. Double-hung windows
9. Gable roof
10. Screen door
11. Board and batten siding



ARCHITECTURE SCAVENGER HUNT



Now it's time to explore your own town and neighborhood with this Goldie's architecture scavenger hunt. Try and find these architectural features on the houses and buildings in your community. Once an item listed below is found, check off the box.

If you can't find some items, no problem. Just skip or exchange the item for another special feature that you find.

Good luck and happy hunting!

- ☐ **Column**
  An upright pillar that supports a structure.
- ☐ **Railings**
  A type of barrier typically used on stairs and porches.
- ☐ **Board and Batten Siding**
  Type of outdoor covering with small vertical strips of wood.
- ☐ **Double-Hung Window**
  A window with an upper and lower panel of glass, which can be opened.
- ☐ **Brick Chimney**
  Usually found in older homes, this tall brick structure allows smoke to escape.
- ☐ **Screen Door**
  A hinged door typically outside of a front door with metal screening to allow air flow.
- ☐ **Shutters**
  A panel that is typically found on the outside of a window for decoration or protection.
- ☐ **Gable Roof**
  Roof with two sloping sides that come together at a peak.
- ☐ **Porch**
  A covered structure found on the front side of a building.

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