

Topic Page: [Arts and crafts](#)

Definition: **Arts and Crafts** from *Collins English Dictionary*

pl n

1 decorative handicraft and design, esp that of the **Arts and Crafts movement**, in late nineteenth-century Britain, which sought to revive medieval craftsmanship



Image from: [The Red House, Bexleyheath, near London, was... in Philip's Encyclopedia](#)

Summary Article: **arts and crafts**
from *The Columbia Encyclopedia*

term for that general field of applied design in which hand fabrication is dominant. The term was coined in England in the late 19th cent. as a label for the then-current movement directed toward the revivifying of the decorative arts. The chief influence behind this movement was William Morris. By the mid-19th cent., factory processes had almost entirely driven artisans from their ancient trades and threatened to obliterate the techniques they used to produce beautiful objects of utility. The Gothic revival, however, had brought into existence a great body of knowledge concerning the arts of the Middle

Ages, and Morris, together with the Pre-Raphaelite painters and a small group of architects and designers, returned to these arts as a rich source of inspiration.

The pupils and followers of Morris multiplied, and proficient artisans developed. Their methods aimed at a practical demonstration not only of Morris's aesthetic creed but also of his ideas concerning socialism and the moral need for integrating beauty with the accessories of daily life. The aesthetic and political aspects of the arts and crafts movement influenced the development of modernism, particularly as they were later reflected in the core philosophy of the Bauhaus. The revival of folk arts has continued to prosper in some quarters, especially in remote communities and among Native Americans of the Southwest and the Eskimos (see North American Native Art).

A less aestheticized version of the arts and crafts movement was important in the United States, where it spread from England and flourished from the late 19th cent. to about 1915. It was prominent in American architecture and design, notably in the buildings and interiors of Greene and Greene and in the "mission-style" oak furniture of Gustav Stickley (1858–1942) and his contemporaries. The movement's precepts were also applied to ceramics, glassware, utensils, and other objects of American daily life. The arts and crafts movement also spread to continental Europe, where it was quite influential during the late 19th and early 20th cent.

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