

# Unit 1. Profession of an Architect

**Ex. 1** Fill in the job descriptions in their places; there is one you won't need;

1. Production architect at a large firm
2. Interns (0-5 years experience)
3. Spec (specifications) Writer
4. Principal at a Large firm
5. Contract Administration
6. Architect at a mid-size to small firm
7. Sole practitioner or firm owner
8. Design architect at a large firm

## What Exactly Does an Architect Do?

Ask different architects the details of his or her daily job duties and you'll get a different answer every time. What an architect does on a daily basis depends on where they live (big city or small town), what kind of firm they work for, and a myriad of other factors. Before deciding to be an architect, figure out what your ideal work day would be like, then look for a match below. Here are a few job descriptions for architects:

(A) \_\_\_\_\_ If you work at a big company, you will be living in a large metropolitan area. If this is your ideal job, living in a small town is out. Design architects are involved in the artistic side of the process: sketching freehand, making initial computer generated images of the projects, and putting together presentations for clients. These architects have strong artistic abilities and a lot of their day is spent on right-brained (creative visualization) activities. Note that competition for these jobs is stiff since this is what most architects like to do. To compete in this arena you'll need a strong portfolio showing your artistic skills. However, if you would rather be involved in all aspects of a projects, this job may not be for you.

(B) \_\_\_\_\_ Large firms have architects and interns that work exclusively on the production of building plans or "blueprints" (architects call these "construction drawings"). These plans are what the contractor will use to build the building. Working on a production team gives architects the ability to understand how a building is built and how the details fit together. If you are technically minded (left-brained) you might find a nice niche here!

(C) \_\_\_\_\_ This specialist has reached the top of a large firm. They are well paid because they have vast amounts of experience (20+ years) as well as profitable relationships and connections (e.g. they bring in new work). They frequently pull in 6 figure plus salaries and are involved in the design and planning of projects. If you make the right choices in your career you can get here by your 50's. Don't expect it to be sooner. If you want the quick win, be a lawyer.

(D)\_\_\_\_\_ Some architects spend their days compiling thick books of ‘project specifications’. These are not drawings, but physical descriptions of the quality standards and materials that should be used to build a project. For instance, the specifications tell the builder what paint to use when painting steel outdoors, and the quality of steel used to frame a wall. These architects spend their days researching building materials and editing large Word documents. If you enjoy reading and writing technical manuals, then you may want to consider being a spec writer!

(E)\_\_\_\_\_ Specialists at mid-size to small firms may not have the opportunity to work on large skyscrapers or monumental projects, but because these firms are smaller, these architects get more opportunities to be involved in every aspect of a project. Most upper level architects (20+ years) do a little of everything. They may do a little design, meet with clients, and manage junior architects. (F)\_\_\_\_\_ Many people get into architecture because they dream of owning their own firm or ‘being their own boss’. The rewards and flexibility of starting your own architecture firm are enticing to many, but it is difficult, if not impossible, if you do not have a spouse with a healthy income. Sole practitioners and small firm owners work long hours and deal with tight finances. If on the other hand you love wearing a lot of hats, don’t mind the responsibility and value flexibility, this can be a rewarding path.

(G)\_\_\_\_\_ Before you can reach any of the above positions you need to pass 3-5 years of internship doing (mostly) menial tasks 8 hours a day sitting in front of a computer. The only interns who do building design (the pretty pictures people think of when they think ‘architect’) all day work at large firms as part of a design. Interns at smaller firms might do some creative work, but most of their day is spent drafting on a computer.

It is important to decide what you like doing best so that you can steer your career in that direction. Some architects design houses. Some design schools. Each is a very different experience. Some architects sit at a desk all day. Some architects are outside all day visiting construction sites. Some architects draw all day. Some architects never draw. And some architects do a little of everything. So if we meet on the street someday and you ask me what I do, when I respond “I’m an architect”, maybe you’ll understand.

**Ex. 1** Choose the right variant not looking at the texts above;

1. Design architects are involved in the ..... side of the process: sketching freehand, making initial computer generated images of the projects, and putting together presentations for clients.

- a) artistic    b) scientific    c) practical

2. Working on a production team gives architects the ability to understand how a building is built and how the ..... fit together.

- a) projects    b) details    c) ideas

3. For instance, the specifications tell the ..... what paint to use when painting steel outdoors, and the quality of steel used to frame a wall.

- a) builder    b) architect    c) owner

4. Specialists at mid-size to small firms may not have the opportunity to work on large ..... or monumental projects, but because these firms are smaller, these architects get more opportunities to be involved in every aspect of a project.

- a) high-rises    b) blocks of flats    c) skyscrapers

5. The rewards and ..... of starting your own architecture firm are enticing to many, but it is difficult, if not impossible.

- a) flexibility    b) challenge    c) outcome

**Ex. 2** *Speak on the topic:*

“I’ve chosen architecture as a career because...”

Highlight at least 5 points which make this profession so attractive.

**Ex.1** *Guess the words using the Glossary; the first letter has been given to you;*

1. A window projecting out from a sloping roof or the entire roofed structure containing the window. D.....

2. A crowning projection at a roof line, often with molding or other classical detail. C.....

3. The projecting edge of a roof that overhangs an exterior wall to protect it from the rain. E.....

4. An exterior wall, or face, of a building. F.....

5. A band of richly sculpted ornamentation on a building. F.....

6. The top of a building which protects the inside from the weather. R.....

7. A roof with two slopes – front and rear– joining at a single ridge line parallel to the entrance façade G..... Roof

8. A horizontal piece of structure supported at both ends. B.....

9. A horizontal, flat element often combined with a cornice and architrave. F.....

**Ex. 11** *Fill in the words which mean the following;*

***Plastic Laminat Foyer Threshold Wall-bearing construction  
Louver Mullion Jalousies Terrazzo Terra Cotta Molding***

1. A house’s entrance hall.....

2. Adjustable glass louvers in windows or doors that regulate light/air and prohibit rain.....

3. Ventilator that's slatted and pitched to keep out moisture.....
4. Piece that covers construction joists or edges. It's usually a narrow strip of wood and may be decorative.....
5. Vertical framing on a window that divides it into major sections.....
6. Thin plastic sheet material for finishing off interior mill-work.....
7. A hard clay product that's typically used for exterior ornamenting.....
8. A hard-wearing floor finish made from small pieces of colored marble or stone and embedded in cement and polished with a high glaze.....
9. Strip of stone, wood or metal that's placed beneath a door in order to cover a change in floor materials and to receive weather-stripping.....
10. Structural system where the floor and roof are carried directly by the masonry walls rather than by a structural framing system.....

**Ex. 2** Read the texts about two famous architects and answer the questions below;

### **Tom Wright**

Is it possible to become one of the greatest modern architects of our time if you are only noted for one building? When the building is the most recognizable hotel in Dubai, yes. British architect, Tom Wright is responsible for the Burj Al Arab in Dubai. Acclaimed for its luxurious amenities as a hotel and also one of the most recognizable buildings in modern architecture. Noted with the world's tallest atrium, and equipped with its own helicopter landing pad and tallest tennis court at the top, Tom Wright definitely deserves to join the list of great modern architects.

The Burj Al Arab (Tower of the Arabs) was conceived in October 1993 and completed on site in 1999. Tom Wright's first drawing of the Burj al Arab concept was shown to the client in October 1993 which along with the simple card model convinced the client that the tower should be built. The felt pen illustration was an early development sketch of the hotel drawn by Wright on a paper serviette whilst he sat on the terrace of the Chicago Beach hotel which stood adjacent to the site of the Burj al Arab.

The brief to the architect was to create an icon for Dubai. The Tower of the Arabs was founded in 1993 and completed on site in 1999. The building became the symbol of the place, as Sydney has its opera house, so Dubai was to have the Burj al Arab.

1. What are the features of Burj al Arab that make it so unusual?
2. How did Tom Wright develop the idea of the building?