

Antoni Gaudi

Antoni Gaudi is one of the world's best-known architects. He is regarded by some as a great master of modernism. Millions of tourists visit his major works in Barcelona each year, including Güell Park, Sagrada Familia and Casa Milà.



Gaudi was born in a small village in Tarragona in 1852. He is said to have been a good student and it is reported that he loved to learn from the infinite wealth of textures and shapes that could be found in nature. When Gaudi discovered his vocation for architecture, he moved to Barcelona to attend university. On his graduation day, a professor is said to have commented, "I don't know if we have in front of us a genius or a madman."

Soon after beginning his professional career, Gaudi received an assignment that would change his life. A group of people had decided to build a church but the project wasn't working as they intended. They employed Gaudi, who was a religious and talented young man, to transform the project. He constructed the Sagrada Familia.

Today, Sagrada Familia is still under construction, just as it has been since 1882. It is estimated that it will finally be finished by 2026. Gaudi is reported to have said that natural things need their time to grow. Despite his death in 1926, construction still continues.

Gaudi created many other buildings. As he never travelled outside of Spain, most of his work can be found in Barcelona, such as Casa Batlló and Casa Milà which



are on one of the main avenues of the city. The unconventional nature of these buildings was controversial at the time that they were built. Outside Catalonia, we can find El Capricho in Comillas, the Episcopal Palace in Astorga and Casa Botines in León. He also remodelled the Cathedral of Palma in Mallorca.



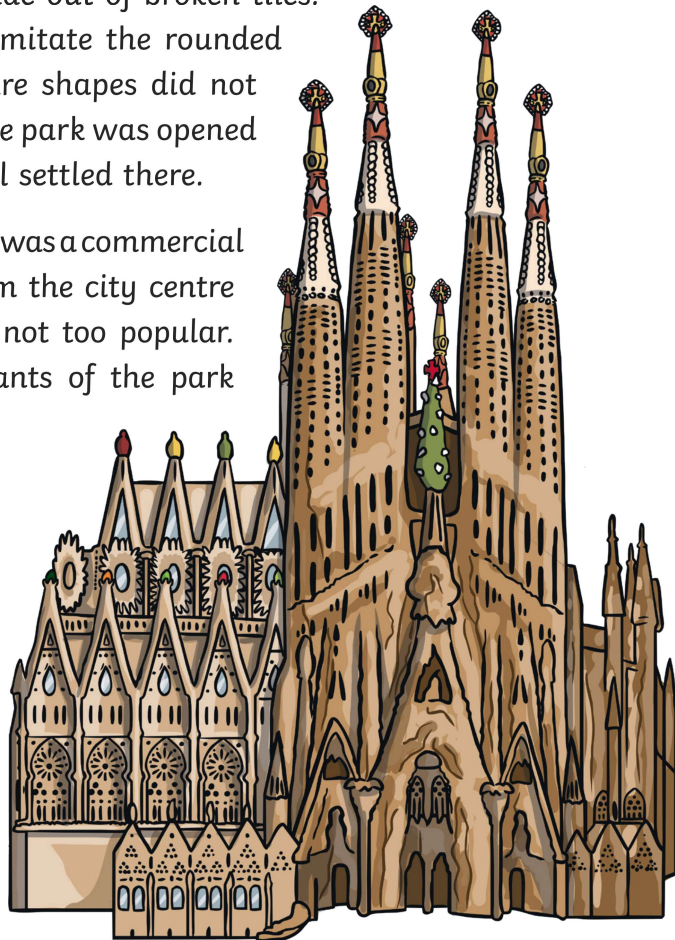
Gaudi never married. It is reported that he was not interested in fame or fortune and that he chose to always wear the same set of clothes. Gaudi took good care of his health. He was attentive to his co-workers and, reportedly, his motto was 'festina lente': a Latin phrase that means 'in order to go fast, you must go slowly'.

In 1878, Gaudi met Eusebi Güell – a young entrepreneur from one of the richest families in the country. They were friends for the rest of their lives. Thanks to Güell's personal fortune and artistic sense, Gaudi created some of his most inspired works, such as Güell Palace, Güell Colony and Güell Park.

Inspired by Great Britain, Güell wanted to create a garden city on the outskirts of Barcelona and he gave total freedom to Gaudi to create it. At Güell Park, Gaudi developed some of his most characteristic techniques: 'trencadís', which is a type of mosaic which is made out of broken tiles.

Gaudi said that he wanted to imitate the rounded shapes of nature and that square shapes did not allow him to do that. In 1904, the park was opened and both Gaudi and Count Güell settled there.

Unfortunately, the residential area was a commercial failure: the park was too far from the city centre and, in those times, Gaudi was not too popular. The two were the only inhabitants of the park until their deaths.



Questions

1. In what year was Gaudi born?

2. Tick the boxes to say whether the statements below are **true** or **false**.

Statement	True	False
He is considered a master of abstractism.		
Millions of tourists visit his major works each year.		
He attended university in Catalonia.		
He was born in Barcelona.		

3. What is the name of the famous church that has been under construction for over 100 years?

4. What reason does the text give to suggest why Gaudi's work can mostly be found in Barcelona?

5. Did people at the time like Gaudi's work? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

6. What impact do you think Güell might have had on Gaudi's art?

7. Where can you find the Episcopal Palace? Tick **one**.

- Barcelona
- Comillas
- Astorga
- Mallorca

8. Do you think Gaudi was patient or impatient? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

9. Would you like to have worked for Gaudi? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

10. **“I don’t know if we have in front of us a genius or a madman.”**

Do you think Gaudi’s University professor liked his work?
