Preview: “Gothic” was originally a disparaging term applied to medieval art and architecture by Italians in the 16th century, who considered it crude. In actuality, the art produced in the high middle ages, between 1140 and 1500, is highly original, expressive and technically innovative. The finest achievement of the era is the Gothic cathedral, epitomized by the Cathedral of Notre Dame in Chartres, France. Here we find the characteristic features that set Gothic cathedrals apart from earlier buildings: pointed arches, masonry rib vaults, flying buttresses, and brilliant colored-glass windows. The Gothic cathedrals in England are less vertical than their French counterparts, but English builders pursued unique decorative features such as fan vaults and pendants. In the Holy Roman Empire, German sculptors continued to employ the heightened emotionalism that had been established in Ottonian art. Throughout Europe, artists in the Gothic era also produced remarkable examples of metalwork, relief sculptures, and manuscript illumination that illustrate Christian themes and increasingly include representations of secular figures.

(1144- c. 1400) Gothic continues later in Germany and England

Context- History: 12th Century France:
1. “Ile-de-France” Paris at the center of the region of about 100 miles surrounding Paris- King of France asserts his power
2. Economics: Paris was the mercantile hub of Europe with trade fairs European banking, new methods of taxation and a money economy developed during the 12th century under
3. Scholasticism (Thomas Aquinas) a new rational approach to philosophy and theology – School of Chartres (cathedral) and University of Paris (founded around 1150) was intellectual center of Europe (also Oxford, Cambridge and Padua)
4. Courtly Love – Eleanor of Aquitaine established a center of culture in Poitiers – status of courtly women/cult of the Virgin
5. History: two catastrophic events occur (Hundred Years War) between England & France in 1337 – decimates much of France. Black Plague strikes Europe 1348 – decimates the population of Europe by 40% 
6. Religion: Cult of the Virgin – new devotion to “Our Lady” – elevation of the Virgin to new status as “Queen of Heaven”. The Great Schism – 1378 Catholic church has 2 popes claiming the title – one in Avignon, one in Rome (until 1417)

Consideration as to the development of a “gothic” style:
1. Paris becomes the intellectual center of Gothic Europe – home of Scholasticism
2. Growing importance of the Cult of the Virgin – churches built to “Notre dame”
3. Growth of cities shifts patronage away from monasteries to urban Bishops and clergy
4. Political power of French king is consolidated due to taxation, laws, government = stability
5. Development of new building technology (see Characteristic below)

Gothic Architecture

Architectural Vocabulary that relates to new building style:
- Pointed arch
- Rib groin vault
- Flying buttress
- Cluster pier
- Gables
- Lancet windows
- Tracery
- Rose window
- Stained glass
- Gargoyles
- Rayonnant style (In England called perpendicular style)
Characteristics of Gothic Style:
- Choir, ambulatory, radiating chapels become one, unifies open space – interior walls “dissolve”
- Rib-groin vaulting carries weight of roof structure above down cluster piers and columns
- Stained glass windows replace heavy walls of Romanesque style
- Pointed arch (instead of round headed arch) transfers weight more vertically, reducing outward thrust of vaulting
- Greater flexibility in spanning spaces using ribbed groin vaulting and pointed arch
- Flying buttresses transfer weight of walls and roof to exterior of Gothic cathedral
- Increased verticality possible using the above building forms – nave and tower become higher
- Light, through large stained glass windows, fills interior space with colored light = divine light

Engineering – Gothic Architecture:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Structural device</th>
<th>Function</th>
<th>Effect or result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 flying buttress</td>
<td>supports roof vaulting</td>
<td>= more window space/light</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 ribbed-groin</td>
<td>roof structure</td>
<td>= flexibility of the shape of the bays</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. pointed arch</td>
<td>opening of space</td>
<td>= greater verticality (more thrust downward and less thrust outward)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All of the above make possible two things:
1. Greater height of the vaulting – especially over the nave
2. More light into church interiors – due to larger clerestory windows

Gothic Sculpture

Contextual consideration as to the development of a “Gothic” style in Sculpture:
1. Re-emergence of the human body as a central subject matter of art – religious character still within the context of architectural decoration or embellishment, still primarily surrounding portals to churches
2. Growing belief that the Christian “soul” must be manifested within the human body
   (Aristotle’s writings rediscovered – the human body is the form of the soul – a manifestation of it, and therefore should be beautiful, to represent god’s creation)

Development and Characteristics of Gothic Sculpture:
1. Throughout the 12th and 13th centuries, increasing sense of realism in door jamb sculpture – from the iconic to naturalism
2. Development from early style: west portal (Royal Portal) at Chartres
   - Extreme elongation
   - Archaic smile
   - Linear quality drapery of figures
3. Slow movement to the greater realism and naturalism
   Of door jamb sculptures of late Gothic statuary: north portals of Chartres
   - Figures begin to interact with each other
   - Move away from confines of door jamb shape
   - Proportion more realistic
   - Individualization of faces
   - Attempt at contrapposto and more natural stance
   - Figures reflect a greater understanding of anatomy west portal sculpture of Reims Cathedral
4. Courtly style of Late Gothic Sculpture
   - Free standing sculpture (in the round) begins to be done Virgin of Paris
   - Gothic “s curve” in figure – new elegance
   - “Doll-like” face, large eyes, small mouth, crown on head
5. German Gothic sculpture:
   - Growing tendency toward naturalism Bamberg Rider
   - Expressionist quality in some works, such as the Rottgen Peita