

27 Chairs

Wednesday, April 10, 2024 3:19 PM

Today

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Project talk time
Schedule
Chairs. Thonet

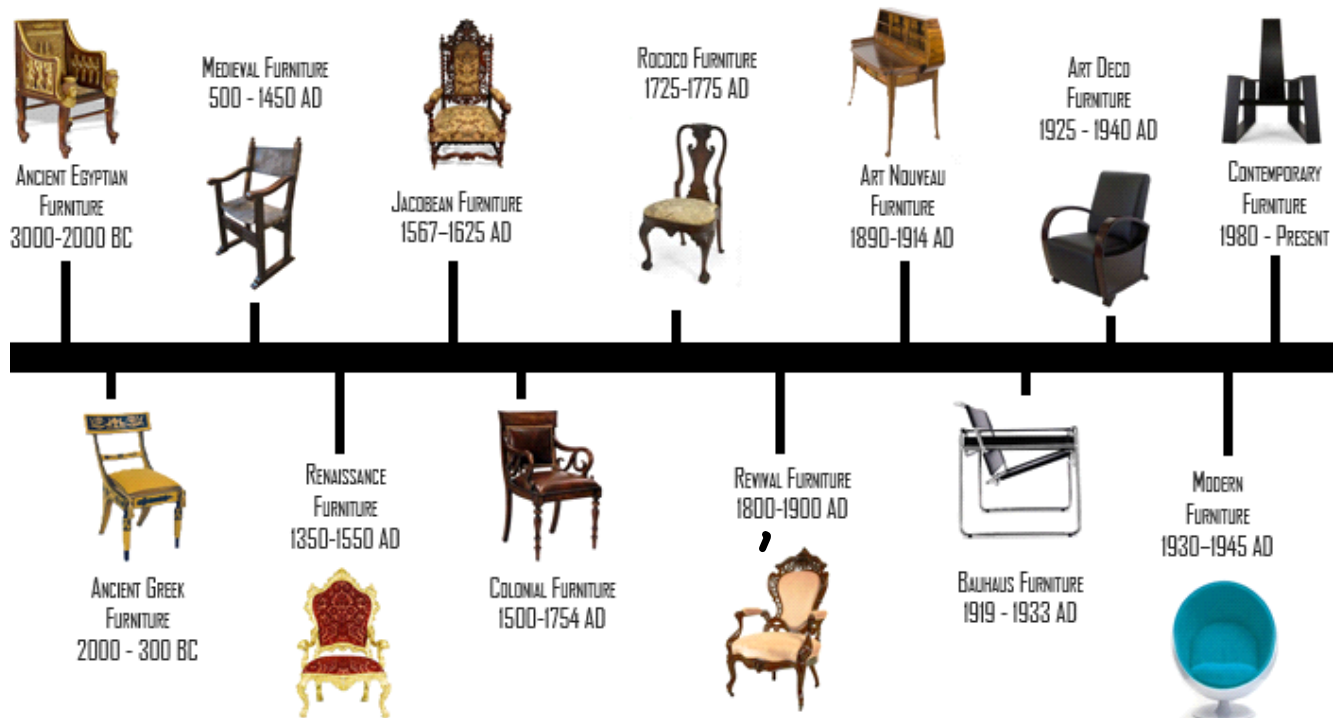
Yes Clickers!!

Case Study: The Chair

Rybczynski, Witold. *Now I Sit Me Down: From Klismos to Plastic Chair: A Natural History*. First Edition. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2016.

Design Movements in Furniture

<http://www.onlinedesignteacher.com/2016/02/furniture-design-history.html> Has additional examples and closeups



What are the elements that define each one? Visual, materials, fabrication techniques, philosophy?

<http://www.connectedlines.com/styleguide/index.htm> has details of pre-1920 styles. Chippendale etc. Not the same categories as above.

<http://www.furniturestyles.net/> Another timeline with examples. More text, not so many images.

Prehistoric

Ancient Egyptian
Ancient Greek
Medieval
Renaissance
Jacobean <http://www.furniturestyles.net/european/english/jacobean.html>
Colonial
Rococco
Revival
Arts and Crafts
Art Nouveau
Bauhaus
Art Deco
Modern
Contemporary

Modern Chairs

20th Century +

<https://www.design-museum.de/en/exhibitions/past-exhibitions.html> Design Museum site. Basel, Germany. Southwest, near Switzerland. Focuses on furniture and lighting, and some other industrial design collections.

[Vitra Chair Times](#)

1hr 30 minutes history of chairs.

1:08:52 Cardboard chairs.

Modern design is a bit personality driven. The Design Encyclopedia is nothing more than a list of designers and who they worked for/with. (Byars, Mel. *The Design Encyclopedia*. Laurence King Publishing, 2004.)

OK, fine, so let's look at specific designers.

Let's start with industrialization of chairs. Prior to 19th century, chairs were carved from solid wood pieces, by hand.

1836 Michael Thonet. From Czech Republic. Large beechwood forests. Developed lamination process for making bentwood chairs. Boiled **strips of wood** with glue, put in molds, etc. A type of early plywood.



Michael Thonet

Austrian-German cabinet maker

Michael Thonet was a German-Austrian cabinet maker, known for the invention of bentwood furniture. [Wikipedia](#)

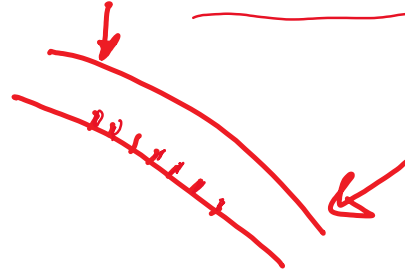
Born: July 2, 1796, [Boppard, Germany](#)

Died: March 3, 1871, [Vienna, Austria](#)

Have you seen or sat in one of these chairs?

- A) Yes
- B) Nope

Later (1856) he also figured out how to bend **solid wood sticks**. Cut reliefs on inside of curve, steamed and molded.
1859 Konsumstuhl, Consumer's chair, #14



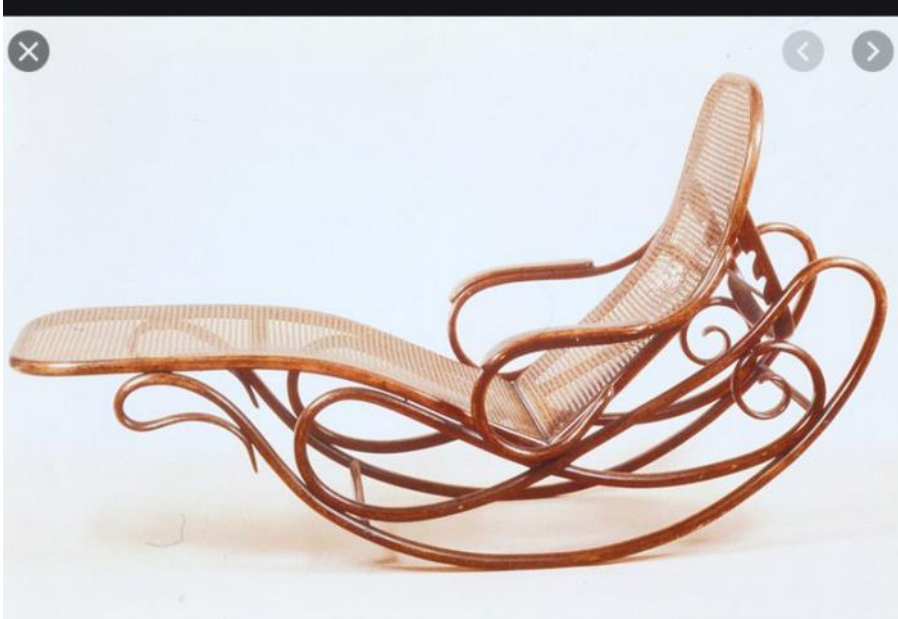
The original No.14 chair is made up of six pieces of wood, ten screws and two nuts. It was the first piece of furniture designed to be shipped in parts to save space during transportation and came with simple instructions to put it together. The No.14 could have been a source of inspiration for IKEA, the biggest manufacturer of ready-to-assemble furniture today.

From <<https://designmuseum.org/discover-design/all-design-objects/thonet-chair-no-14>>



Still found in cafes around the world

August Thonet, third son, designer : Schaukensofa ~1860. Early Art Nouveau



Thonet company, 200 years old, is still big in furniture today: <http://en.thonet.de/startseite.html>. Pioneered mass manufacturing and mass marketing.

This allowed independent chair designers to begin to work in late 19th century; neither cabinetmakers nor manufacturers