### Lesson 2 - Tales by the seashore - The Casino Building in Constanta

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Time - 60 min

Materials: whiteboard, markers, worksheets, computer connected to the internet, PPT presentation, A2 sheets of paper, candles, colors

Objective

- to understand the beauty and importance of historical buildings

- to understand the role of the buildings in social-cultural contexts

- to value and protect the historical monuments

- to perceive the artistic documentary value of photographs

- to learn the Art Nouveau style elements

- to create different types of texts, respecting specific structures

- to develop their imagination and empathy

The conduction of the lesson

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| steps | Description | The type of activity | Time |
| **Evocation of meaning** | The teacher notes on the board a couple of titles of articles that have appeared in the local press that refer to the Casino building in Constanța. Students make predictions about the history of this building.  Headlines  the casino *-* the turmoil of history  the casino - the expansion and decay  the Curse of the Casino in Constanta | Frontal discussion  Predictive reading | 5 min |

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| **Reflection** | Proposals will be made to build a plan to save the building: *Tomorrow's casino*. | brainstorming | 5 min |

**The casino in Constanța**is a historical building in [Constanța](https://translate.google.com/translate?hl=ro&prev=_t&sl=ro&tl=en&u=https://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Constan%C8%9Ba) . It is one of the most representative [symbols](https://translate.google.com/translate?hl=ro&prev=_t&sl=ro&tl=en&u=https://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Simbol) of the city, being built in [1909](https://translate.google.com/translate?hl=ro&prev=_t&sl=ro&tl=en&u=https://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/1909) and inaugurated in August [1910](https://translate.google.com/translate?hl=ro&prev=_t&sl=ro&tl=en&u=https://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/1910) .

The casino is located in [the historical center](https://translate.google.com/translate?hl=ro&prev=_t&sl=ro&tl=en&u=https://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Centrul_istoric_(cartier_%C3%AEn_Constan%C8%9Ba)) of the city, on the [cliff](https://translate.google.com/translate?hl=ro&prev=_t&sl=ro&tl=en&u=https://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Falez%C4%83) on [the](https://translate.google.com/translate?hl=ro&prev=_t&sl=ro&tl=en&u=https://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Falez%C4%83) peninsula, in the vicinity of Regina Elisabeta Boulevard. It is one of the most emblematic buildings of Constanta. In the area where it stands today, there was, between 1880-1902, a wooden construction, a "casino" as it was then called - a place for theater shows, balls, a place for recreation for tourists. But in the winter of 1901, a storm destroyed part of the roof and a facade wall, highlighting the instability of the construction. The experts propose, and the communal council approves on January 29, 1902 the demolition of the construction. In April 1902, Mayor Alexandru Belcic decided, through a verbal process, to organize the site in his own regime for the demolition of the "casino" and the construction of a building with functions similar to the big European casinos, which began in 1904. Initially, the plans are drawn up by architect Petre Antonescu, who designs a building whose architectural style is inspired by the traditions of Romanian art. After the foundations are finished, however, the plans are changed, the City Hall entrusting their modification to an architect of French (or Swiss) origin , [Daniel Renard](https://translate.google.com/translate?hl=ro&prev=_t&sl=ro&tl=en&u=https://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Daniel_Renard) , who renounces the specificity of the Romanian style, in favor of an Art Nouveau style under the cosmopolitan influence of the casinos of the time, in which the reason the main is a kind of demi- [rose](https://translate.google.com/translate?hl=ro&prev=_t&sl=ro&tl=en&u=https://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rozas%C4%83) in the form of a shell. Built in 1908, the Constanţa edifice is completed in 1910, when it is inaugurated (the last alterations are made in 1912).

  At the time of the inauguration, the local press criticized both the prolong duration of the works and the appearance of the final result, which the *Conservative*newspaper described as a "giant decorated with all sorts of nozzles, which from the point of view of the architectural aesthetics, is disappointing because of the asymmetries and the Babylonian mix of styles, ”and“ a monument erected in honor of inaptitude and bad taste ”.

The casino included a pay room, with interior walls lined with oil-painted boards and "served as fun for visitors during the bath season", and could also be used for "charity balls organized by the town hall", being made up of a dance hall, two reading rooms, for newspapers and magazines, two game rooms and the famous "seaside terrace". It was adorned with flags and being quite spacious it therefore became the meeting place for all. Near this first dance hall, it is envisaged that Henry Guarracino would build a pavilion in communication with the first, located below the level of the boulevard.

Designed monumentally, without a panoramic perspective and without a lighthouse, the building would have had a theater room with a stage, booths and lodges on both sides, but also a ballroom of the same size. Surrounded by a gallery open to the magnificent view, the construction would have had all the necessary units in the basement. The magnitude of the project is gradually diminished, so that the reception was made much later than Mayor Coiciu would have been willing to allow, and found the existence of a dance hall with aisle.

In its struggle with historicism, Art 1900 makes the transition to functionalism through the use of ornaments. In fact, it is tried to disguise an economic necessity in a unique experience based on the unique craft.

On December 21, 1909, the engineer Elie Radu and the architects Ion Mincu and D. Maimarolu are asked to move to Constanța, in a commission meant to study the casino from all points of view. The result of the inspection was materialized by an important document containing the well-documented and well-supported opinions of some very prestigious personalities. The observations concern the addition of spaces: a large room for the restaurant, with the kitchen and the necessary outbuildings, a restaurant that will be placed in connection with the terrace behind the glass door, which will not obstruct the wide open perspective on the sea. It was also suggested that the stairs of honor be cleared through a spectacular archway, the addition of entrances, changing rooms, toilets, but also the elimination of steps or windows.

The restoration and modernization of the Casino were carried out in 1934 by the designer Daniel Renard.

The casino was also restored in 1986 by a collective of plastic artists made up of Sorin Dumitru, Gheorge Firca, Ioan Miturca, Nae Mira, Nicolae Moldoveanu. Restoration of Baroque-fresco paintings, stucco and stained glass windows were executed. The works lasted one year. Immediately after the Revolution, the edifice is distributed to the Ministry of Culture (then led by [Andrei Pleșu](https://translate.google.com/translate?hl=ro&prev=_t&sl=ro&tl=en&u=https://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Andrei_Ple%C8%99u) ) who at the suggestion of Professor [Mihai C. Băcescu](https://translate.google.com/translate?hl=ro&prev=_t&sl=ro&tl=en&u=https://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mihai_C._B%C4%83cescu) (inspired by [the Oceanographic Museum of Monaco](https://translate.google.com/translate?hl=ro&prev=_t&sl=ro&tl=en&u=https://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muzeul_Oceanografic_din_Monaco) ) proposes a scientific attribution, to become the headquarters of a "Romanian Oceanographic Institute" according to the plans to [Grigore Antipa](https://translate.google.com/translate?hl=ro&prev=_t&sl=ro&tl=en&u=https://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grigore_Antipa) (founder of the former Biooceanographic Institute in Constanța), a new institution of international level that would have grouped the Romanian Institute of Marine Research, the Marine [Zoological Station](https://translate.google.com/translate?hl=ro&prev=_t&sl=ro&tl=en&u=https://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sta%C8%9Biunea_Zoologic%C4%83_Marin%C4%83_Prof._Dr._Ioan_Borcea,_Agigea) created by [Dr. Ioan Borcea](https://translate.google.com/translate?hl=ro&prev=_t&sl=ro&tl=en&u=https://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ioan_Borcea) and the Natural Science Museum Complex [would cost the renovation, the separation between institutions and the restructuring of the government end both the plans of the Romanian oceanographers and the custody of the Ministry of Culture. After a few months, the casino returns to its previous function: restaurant and entertainment venue.

Several scenes from the film [*Youth without Youth,*](https://translate.google.com/translate?hl=ro&prev=_t&sl=ro&tl=en&u=https://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tinere%C8%9Be_f%C4%83r%C4%83_tinere%C8%9Be_(film)) directed by [Francis Ford Coppola](https://translate.google.com/translate?hl=ro&prev=_t&sl=ro&tl=en&u=https://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Francis_Ford_Coppola), based on th eponymous novel written by Mircea Eliade, were shot in the casino in 2007.

Currently, the Casino in Constanța is in decay ; to prevent accidents and theft, access inside is prohibited.