

Compression and Tension

Architecture

Which materials take which force, and the shapes that follow from it.

What each material is good at carrying.

Material	Compression	Tension
Masonry	Strong	Very weak
Plain concrete	Strong	Very weak
Reinforced concrete	Strong	Steel takes it
Steel	Strong	Strong
Timber	Good	Good with grain
Cable	None	Strong only
Glass	Good	Unreliable

Reinforcement sits where the concrete would crack, which is why bars go low at midspan and high over supports.