

Following the Load

Architecture

How every load finds its way to the ground, and where architects break the chain.

Follow one load from where it lands to where it stops.

1

Load arrives on a surface

Self weight, people, furniture, snow, or wind on a facade.

2

The deck spans

Slab or joists carry it sideways to the nearest supporting line.

3

Beams collect

Beams gather the deck reactions and span between columns or walls.

4

Columns or walls take it down

Loads accumulate storey by storey; the lowest column is the busiest.

5

Foundations spread it

The load is spread until the ground can carry the pressure.

Educational reference. A continuous path is necessary but not sufficient; a structural engineer's design governs.