**Article on Barcelona’s modernist architecture – 300 word limit**

Barcelona sits between the sea and the mountains and is a patchwork of distinct districts showing the growth of the city. From a medieval core through the nineteenth century expansion to the modernist extravaganzas, the districts of Montjuic, the Old Town and the Eixample all showcase Barcelona’s diverse architectures.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, Modernisme, a variant of Art Nouveau was born in Barcelona. It’s most famous exponent was Antoni Gaudí. The Modernistas used their architecture as a means of expressing their Catalan nationalism. The opportunity arose when it was decided to tear down the old medieval walls of the city to allow it develop. Eixample is home to the majority of the Modernista work, though the Palau Guell can be found off Las Ramblas in the Old Town. The Hospital de la Santa Creu i de Sant Pau overrides the Eixample grid system as its architect, Domènech i Montaner, deliberately angled the hospital to look down the one diagonal avenue to Gaudí’s church.

The architecture is dramatic with bizarrely decorated chimneys, highly decorative mosaics and tiling, curved lines and carvings. The most remarkable area is the Illa de la Discòrdia within the Quadrat d’Or where a single block houses many works. The interiors can be viewed by the public showing stained glass and ornate ironwork.

Perhaps the best known of the Modernista buildings is Gaudí’s church of the Sagrada Familia. It is crammed with symbolism inspired by nature. Started in 1882, the following year its design was given to Gaudí who changed the plans and spent sixteen years living as a recluse on the site. After his death in 1926 he was buried in the crypt but only one tower on the Nativity façade had been completed. Work continues on the building today financed by public subscription.

**Words: 300**