
DESIGN & VISUAL



COMMUNICATIONS

OCEAN COUNTY VOCATIONAL TECHNICAL SCHOOL



Visual Design

Visual design is the use of design elements and compositional skills to create graphics and images used for “visual communications”.

Visual Communication

Primarily associated with two dimensional images,
it includes: signs, typography, drawing, graphic
design, photographs, illustrations, color and
electronic resources.

It primarily relies on vision.

Visual Communication

It is form of communication with visual effect. It explores the idea that a visual message, usually in combination with text has a greater power to inform, educate or persuade a person.

It is communication by presenting information through visual form.

Lascaux, France

The first evidence of visual communication with graphics was in the cave paintings by early man.



Cave painting, Lascaux, France, 15,000 to 10,000 B.C.

This indicates that early civilizations communicated with visual objects and art before language was developed, refined and used.

Design Theory

In order to create designs professionally, students must be trained in the basics of design theory and demonstrate a knowledge of basic composition.

What is “composition”?

Composition is the term used to describe the arrangement of items in a design, page or photograph. If we look at an ad, illustration, photograph, or page, we are observing a "composition". This means that a graphic artist, printer, photographer or web designer "composed" or decided how to place together the elements or objects in the design or image we are looking at.

What is “composition”?

If it is a pleasing design or we like the way that it looks, then we say that it has “good composition”. If we do not like the way it looks or if it looks "unbalanced" or disorganized (or downright UGLY!), then we say that the design, page or photograph has “poor composition” or that the composition needs improvement.

Compare these photographs for their composition:



Which photographer has placed more thought in how to place the subjects in the photographs? Which of the images is more interesting to look at?

Compare these photographs for their composition:



Which photographer has placed more thought in how to place the subjects in the photographs? Which of the images is more interesting to look at?

Compare these web page layouts for their composition:



Which designer has placed more thought in how to place the objects in the layout? Which of the pages is easier to read and more interesting to look at?

Compare these print layouts for their composition:



Which designer has placed more thought in how to place the objects in the layout? Which of the business cards is easier to read and more interesting to look at?

How do students learn to create a “good” composition?

There are specific “elements of design” that the student must learn. Then the student will use those in conjunction with important design rules. These rules are called the “design principles”.

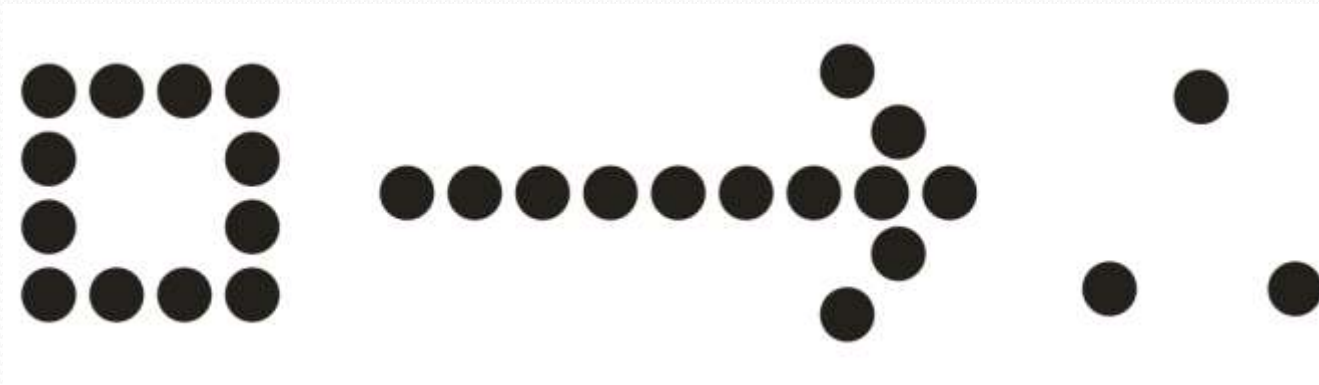
Elements of Design

The first step to learning to design (or learning to become a BETTER designer), is to learn about the basic elements that are used to create designs. These basic design elements are:

- **Point**
- **Line**
- **Color**
- **Value**
- **Space**
- **Mass**
- **Form**
- **Texture**

Elements of Design

Point



The point is the first and simplest element of visual design.
Several points in combination may represent a more complicated object such as a line or shape.

Elements of Design

Line

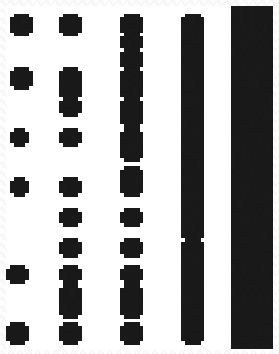


“Line” as a design element is an enormously useful and versatile graphic device that is made to function in both visual and verbal ways. It can act as a symbolic language, or it can communicate emotion through its character and direction.

Elements of Design

Line

A “line” is a mark made by a moving point and having psychological impact according to its direction, weight, and the variations in its direction and weight.



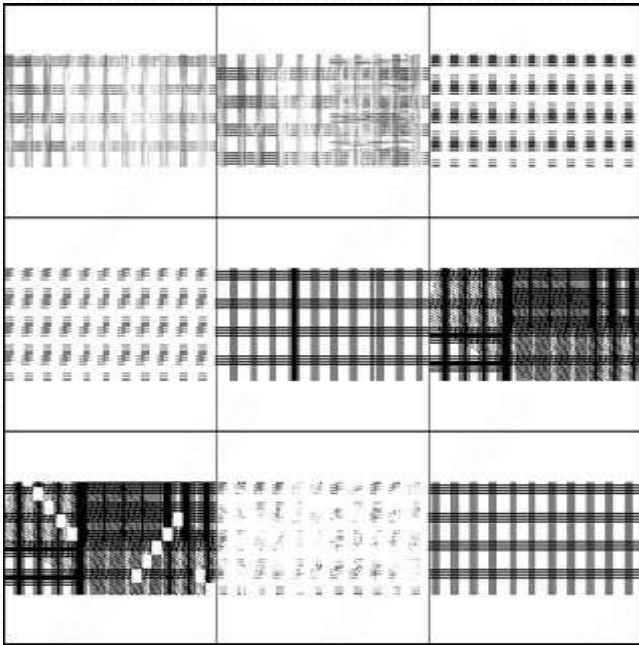
A line can be thought of as points so close together that they lose their individual identity and form a new entity.



Thick lines are more powerful than thin lines. Varying line weight creates emphasis or contrast. Vertical lines divide and stop eye movement.

Elements of Design

Texture

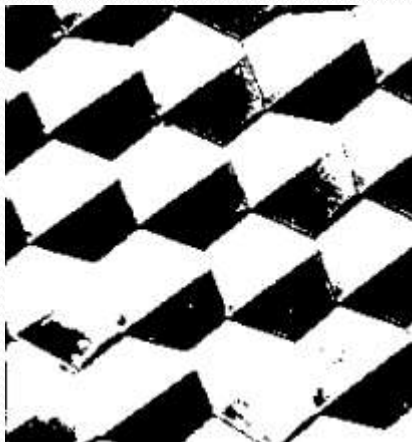
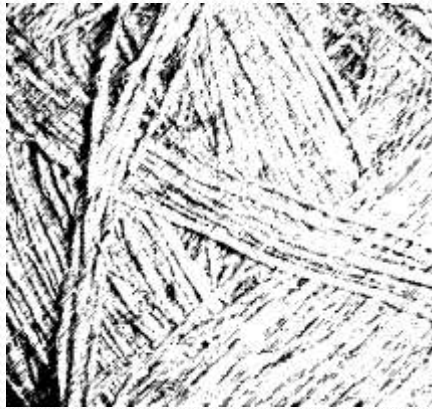


Lines can be **combined** with other lines or forms to create what is referred to as “**textures**” and patterns. This is common in hand drawn pencil and ink drawings.

Texture can also contribute to a “theme” or mood in a photograph, layout or design.

Elements of Design

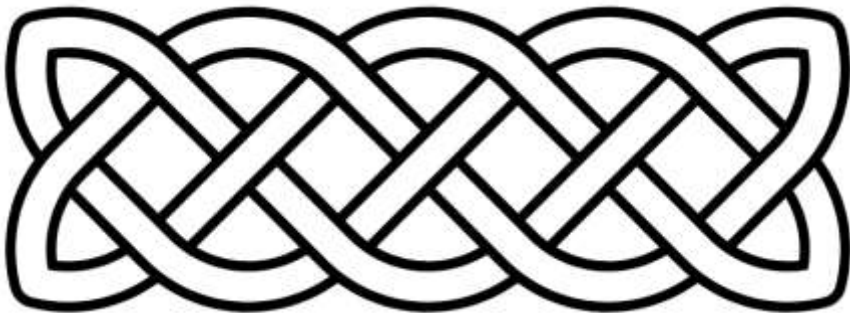
Texture



In 2-D design, "texture" is the illusion of a surface other than the flat surface of a paper or computer screen. Although texture is something you would normally associate with the "feel" of an object, our eyes can imagine the way a surface might feel.

Elements of Design

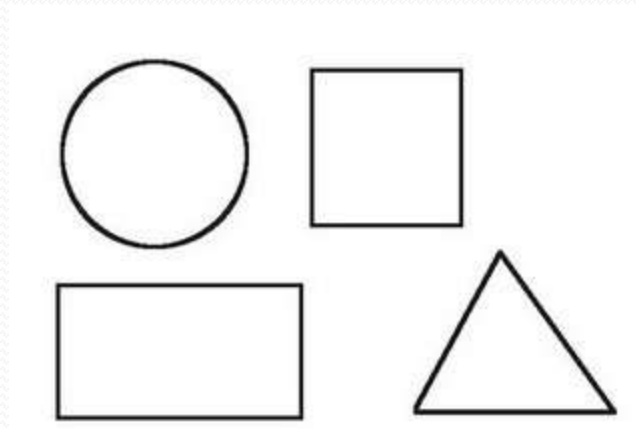
Form



There is form in all objects. The form is defined as the "outline" of the object. **Form** refers to the shape, visual appearance, or configuration of an object. Form can also be defined by line or texture without an outline.

Elements of Design

Form

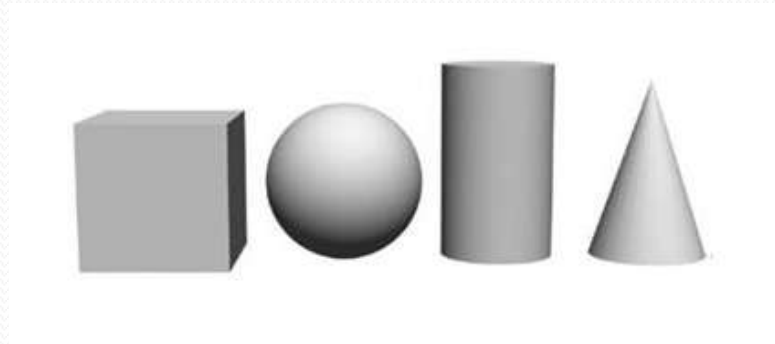


There are two basic design formats. The first and most widely used is “two-dimensional”, which means a flat object, or one on a flat plane. There are four basic shapes used in two-dimensional design. Their “forms” are shown above.

Can you name them?

Elements of Design

Form

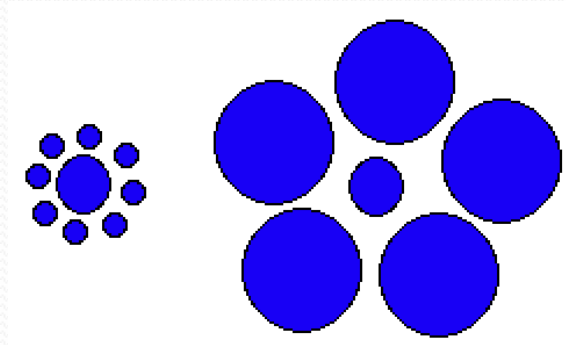


Two-dimensional objects have height and width only. The second design format is “three-dimensional”, which means an object has depth. There are also four basic shapes used in three-dimensional design.

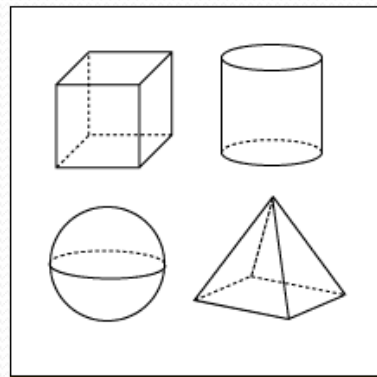
Their “forms” are shown above. Can you name them?

Elements of Design

Mass and Size



Mass is one of the basic elements of design. Mass equals size.



Mass is also defined as a shape or three-dimensional volume that has or gives the illusion of having weight, density, and bulk.

Elements of Design

Space



In any composition there is space. “Space” is the area defined where the composition will be created. It is defined by size. However, there are two types of “space” within the layout. In the illustration above, there is a relationship between all of the forms in the composition.

Elements of Design

More About Space

Space and shape, two of the elements of design, work together to form a finished composition.

There are two kinds of space: positive and negative.



Positive spaces are those occupied by the main objects or forms in the composition.

Negative spaces are the areas around and behind the positive spaces. Negative space can also be referred to as the background.

What part is the positive space in the picture above?

Elements of Design

Color



“Color” is an element of design that is defined as the property of objects that depends on the light that they reflect.

Color is perceived as red, blue, green, or other hues due to the ability of the human eye to perceive those colors.

Light containing all colors is white light. The object absorbs all colors in the white light EXCEPT the one it reflects. We see that as the object’s color.

Elements of Design

More on Color



Color has three basic properties, "**hue**", "**value**", and "**saturation**".

“**Hue**” refers to a particular color such as red, blue, or yellow. The hue of an apple is red.

Elements of Design

More on Color

Color		Value
	=	
	=	
	=	
	=	

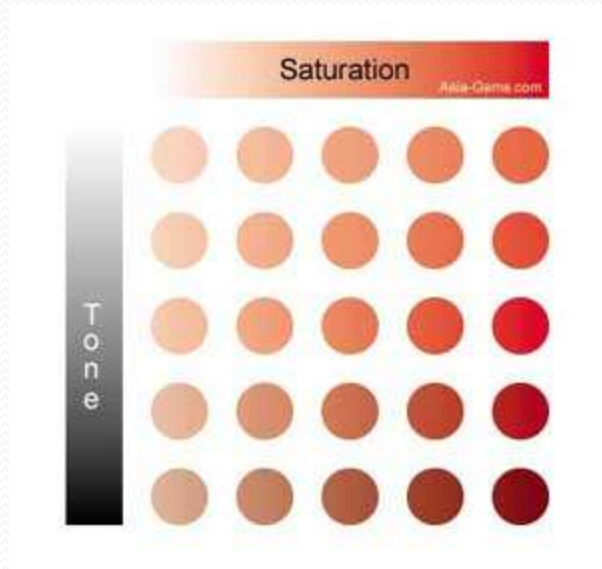
“**Value**” refers to the lightness or darkness of a color.

Some colors, such as yellow or orange, are light in value.

Some colors, such as purple or brown, are dark in value.

Elements of Design

More on Color



“Saturation”, also called "chroma", refers to the purity of a color. To decrease the saturation of a color, you can dull it by adding other colors.

Elements of Design

Color Psychology



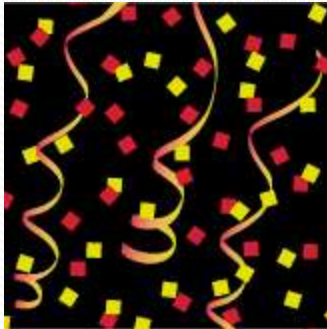
Color can be used effectively to create a visual asymmetric balance. Certain colors or hues are lighter in value which draws the eye to it.

Certain colors also appear to have an advancing or receding quality. Intense, warm colors (red, yellow, orange) and bright values appear to come forward. Cool colors (blue, green, purple) and darker values appear to move away from us.



Elements of Design

Color Psychology



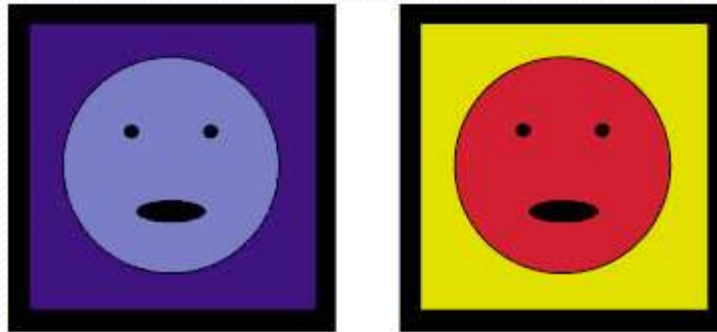
Darker, less intense colors create a somber atmosphere while brighter and lighter colors create a happier mood. The “contrast” between the two creates emphasis and interest.

Colors symbolize abstract concepts or ideas, mental or conceptual qualities such as fidelity, sin, innocence or cowardice. Color references however are arbitrary and based in the context of culture and countries.



Elements of Design

Color Psychology



Color is also used quite frequently to express emotion in design.

Yellows, oranges and reds give a feeling of expressed emotion like anger or happiness.

Cooler blues and greens are associated with quieter feelings or even sadness.

Elements of Design

The first step to learning to design is to learn about the basic elements that are used to create designs.

This concludes that lesson.

The design elements are used in conjunction with general rules to guide designers in their use of design elements to create better compositions. Those general rules are referred to as the “Design Principles”. This next step of design theory will be covered in future lessons.