

Principles of Design

The principles of design are a set of rules that designers can follow when creating a composition to create visually pleasing work. The purpose of these rules is to deliver a message in the most organized and functional way.

Here's a list of the main design principles:

- Balance
- Unity
- Contrast
- Emphasis
- Repetition
- Pattern
- Rhythm
- Movement
- Proportion
- Variety
- Harmony

While we've seen a fair share of experimental pieces out there, it's important to know the significance of the fundamentals. Every design piece has a structure below the surface that holds up the design and makes it visually interesting and balanced. Once designers understand the usage of the principles, they'll understand better how to break these rules.

<https://design.tutsplus.com/articles/the-principles-of-design--cms-33962>

Balance

Any element placed on a page carries a visual weight. It can range from form to size, color, and texture. In order to make a design feel stable or have balance, the elements need to have a certain scale.

Unity

Unity is the harmony produced by all the elements in a design piece. For instance, using similar colors that match and integrate elements organically makes it appear as if they belong together and are not just put on a page.

Contrast

Contrast refers to the level of difference between design elements in order to create visual hierarchies. The variation makes certain elements stand out more than others. You can apply contrast by using colors, textures, sizes, and shapes.

Emphasis

Emphasis is a strategy to get the viewer's attention to a specific design element. This can be in any form: a button, a website, or an image. The purpose is to create something that will stand out from the rest of the page. You can use different elements to highlight a specific part of your design, like lines, color, positive/negative relationships, and many more. As long as you can create contrast, either with elements or color, you'll be creating emphasis.

- **Lines** create direction on a page by pointing to specific elements that help the viewer's eyes know where to go.
- **Shapes** can also draw attention. Using a group of similar shapes and breaking the group with a different shape will create tension and draw the eyes.
- **Color** can create an emphasis in any design. Buttons on a website tend to contrast with the background to create a sense of urgency and attention.
- **Texture** can be seen in materials to enhance tactile features. For instance, a business card can have an emboss or relief on a logo to emphasize it. Digitally, texture can be applied as a drop shadow on a button to appear three-dimensional.
- **Space** is also an option to emphasize certain elements in your design. Enough white space around an object can prioritize the focus on a single element. For instance, Apple has a clean and direct idea of emphasizing products.

Repetition

Using repeated elements on a layout can be pleasing to the viewer. Repetition is repeating a single element through the design. We can call a grid a repetition of lines because it creates a certain consistency. In layout design, repetition is shown through the folio placement to help viewers find their way in a book or magazine. The same folio placement creates continuity in the repetition.

Pattern

Pattern is the repetition of more than one design element. While repetition focuses on a single element being repeated, pattern refers to multiple elements repeated throughout a design (e.g. wallpapers and backgrounds).

Rhythm

Rhythm has more complexity than the previous principles of repetition and pattern. Repetition and pattern are applied to the same element throughout a design. Rhythm is the visual tempo of a combination of elements when used repeatedly, and with variation, it gives the feeling of organized movement.

Movement

Movement refers to the path the viewer's eye takes through a composition. In an image, every element can affect how the eyes move. Important elements will lead to secondary elements and so on. Movement in a composition creates interest and dynamism that keeps the viewer engaged.

Proportion

Proportion is the sense of unity created when all the elements in a composition relate well with each other. Proportion is mostly about scale and size when two elements are compared. For instance, in art and drawing, proportion is important for the elements to look realistic. Proportion doesn't necessarily refer to the size of one element but to the relationship of two or more elements.

Harmony

Harmony is the sense of cohesiveness between the elements in a composition. The elements shouldn't be exactly the same or completely different but related in some way. Color palettes or similar textures can create a sense of unity between different components. Using similarly shaped items will create harmony because they will seem related.

Not enough or too much harmony can make a design dull; there needs to be some kind of variety for it to be visually interesting.

Variety

Creating visual interest will keep viewers engaged with your design. Holding their attention and guiding them through the composition will create a powerful user experience. Variety adds something interesting to the composition to create contrast and tension. For instance, mixing organic shapes with geometric shapes adds variety. This concept should reinforce the message you are trying to communicate in your design—otherwise, it can look pointless.

learning objectives

Level 4

- Recognise and describe the use of basic principles in existing work. (C.R.A.P)
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Interactions, engagements and activities

Describe the types of interaction and activities that could help achieve the objectives.

Level 5

- Describe how principles of design have been used in own work.
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Interactions, engagements and activities

Describe the types of interaction and activities that could help achieve the objectives.

Level 6

- Learning objectives for level 6, consider blooms taxonomy, learning outcomes, GPOs and learner engagement.
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Interactions, engagements and activities

Describe the types of interaction and activities that could help achieve the objectives.

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