

8 Visual elements and 3 Principles of Design

Visual elements are lines, shapes, colours, spaces, textures, form, values, and tones that work together to create a visual image. The principles work in conjunction with these.

Line

An element of art and design that pertains to the narrow mark or path of a moving point on a surface. A mark on or against a surface connecting two points
-Line helps create movement, texture, and space (when converging)

Form

The arbitrary organization or inventive arrangements of all the visual elements according to the principles that will develop unity in the work. In a broader sense, form refers to the total physical characteristics of an object, event or situation.
-Form is the 3 dimensional cousin to "shape"... think of a cone or pyramid as a 3-d triangle

Space

An element of art and design that pertains to the real or illusory 3-D expanse in which an image or components of an image exist or appear to exist.
-Space is the conscious arrangement of other visual elements to make it appear as if you are looking at more than a 2-d object

Shape

An element of art and design that pertains to an area set off by one or more of the other elements of art and design. An area that stands out from the space next to it or around it because of a real or implied boundary.
-The elemental building blocks of all objects; circle, square, triangle

Texture

An element of art and design that pertains to the way something feels by representation of the tactile character of surfaces.
-Implied or real, depending on 2-dimensions or 3

Value

An element of art and design that pertains to the degree of lightness and darkness, attributed to colour and related to one or more parts in a work of art.
-Can also be interpreted as multiple shades or tints of a certain colour

Tone

An element of art and design that pertains to the effect of lightness and darkness in relation to one or more parts of a work of art.
-Usually in relation to black and white images

Colour

Colour (another name for hue) refers to the naming words we use to identify specific wave lengths of light such as red, yellow, orange, and so forth. A colour wheel can explain the origins and relationships that hues possess (specific descriptions of colour vocabulary may be found in the glossary). Colour may be descriptive, decorative, and symbolic. Colour has both tone and intensity. Some words to use to describe colour are bright, cool, pastel, gloomy dark, oppressive etc. [Look for guides in the "Visual Elements Posters" directory.](#)

Balance

A principle of art and design concerned with the arrangement of one or more elements in a work of art so that they appear symmetrical or asymmetrical in design and proportion.

-Balanced will be the elements are not disharmonious, one side is counterbalanced by the other. If one side is darker or has more elements on one side it is said to be imbalanced.

Contrast

A principle of art and design concerned with juxtaposing (to play one off of another for a stronger effect) one or more elements in opposition, so as to show their differences.

-This can be as simple as black and white, but also sharp and dull, soft and rough

Repetition/Pattern

Any composition with a repeated element and /or design.

-good at hiding stains!