

Design Fundamentals

**A guide to the basic introduction of
color, composition and typography**



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What are Design Fundamentals?

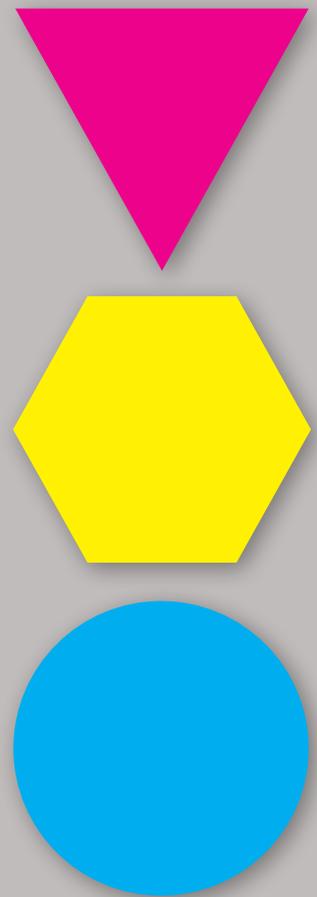
Design fundamentals are the **key elements** that make up a subject.

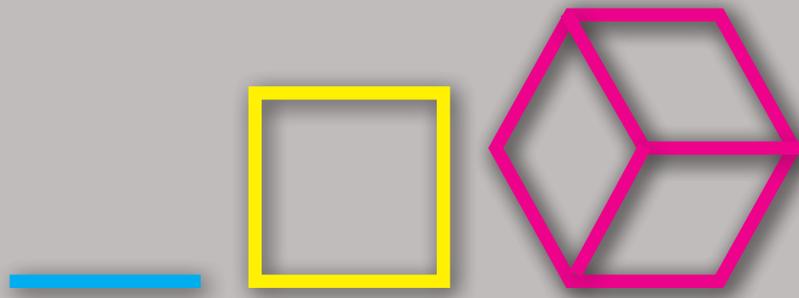
These fundamentals can be *edited* and *manipulated* using **Design Principles** to transform a design from amateur to expert.

But in order to properly apply the **Design Principles**, we must first understand what *comprises of a subject*.

A **subject** contains **objects**; or *images and symbols*, grouped together to help **communicate information**.

Objects are used to differentiate what is being *transmitted within a subject* by combining **symbols** to create **words** or **shapes** and **forms** to create **images**.





An object is a structure made up of **lines**, **shapes** and **forms** that appear as *images or symbols*.

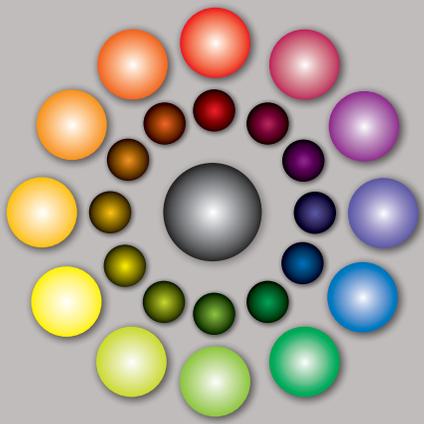
Line: A line is comprised of at least **two connected points** and is the start of any shape and form.

Shape: A shape is an enclosed **2-D object**, like a **square**.

Form: A form is a shape with volume and depth, which is identifiable through shade and light to create a **3-D image**, such as a **cube**.

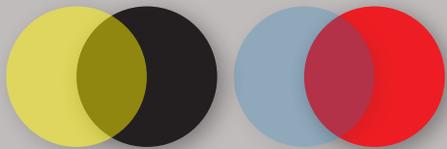
Forms have **3 surfaces**, which are differentiated by the **subject lighting**. We can use this subject lighting to create **implied Texture**, or the *quality of a surface*. **In example**, a square with a brick texture uses **lighting** and **shadow** to show the implied *rough divots of the clay*.

Color



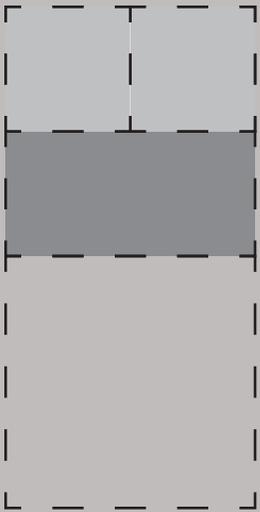
Our eyes are comprised of **Cones** and **Rods**, which determine how we **view objects in our environment**. Rods determine the *light and shade* of objects, while the cones *determine the color*.

Color is the **tint** given to an object based on **visible Wavelengths**. The visible wavelength for humans starts at the **longest wave**, Red, to the **shortest wave**, Purple. The colours within the wavelength are called a **Spectrum**.



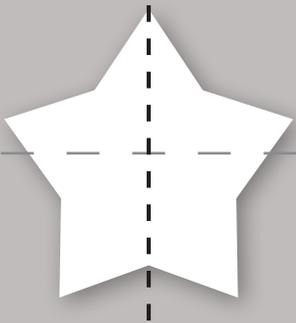
Because humans can perceive objects in **3-dimensions**, we are able to see **shading and lighting**, which can change the *overall tint of a Color*.

Composition



There are many different ways in which a designer can place **objects** within a **subject**. The proper **placement** and **alignment** of objects within a subject is called **Composition**.

Utilizing **guidelines**, **grids** and **spaces** to organize information within a subject, is a *core principle in communication within design*.

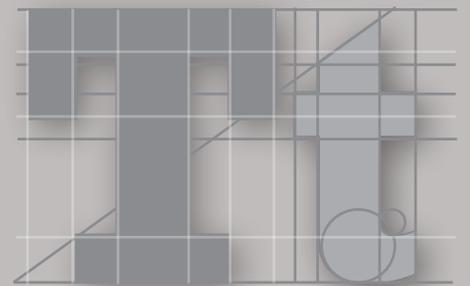


Composition is an *integral* tool for designers to understand how the placement of an object can **create harmony or purposefully push contrast**.

Typography

The study of the **characteristics** and **anatomy** that compromise of a symbol, glyph or letter is what is know as Typography.

Typography can make or break how words are **communicated** to the viewer; if a word or text is not **clear**, it can be the *difference between harmony and dissonance.*



The way in which we **present Text** has become a worldwide standard, which follows many of the **principles** within imagery designs **that work harmoniously together.**

Repetition

Duplicating a *characteristic* of an object, such as its *alignment*, or *size*, in succession, is called **Repetition**. This is often seen in patterns, as a way to easily convey continuity.

A **Pattern** is a design that uses repetition to *produce a harmonious flow*, such as in tiles or fabrics.

The **triangles** below have been *duplicated, altered* and *repeated* to create the pattern on its right, and then applied as a **strip** below.

Repetition & Patterns enable a simple balance and give the eye a sense of normalcy.



Balance

The way we view how objects are composed in comparison to each other, is called **Balance**. The Balance of subjects can change how we **perceive** it.

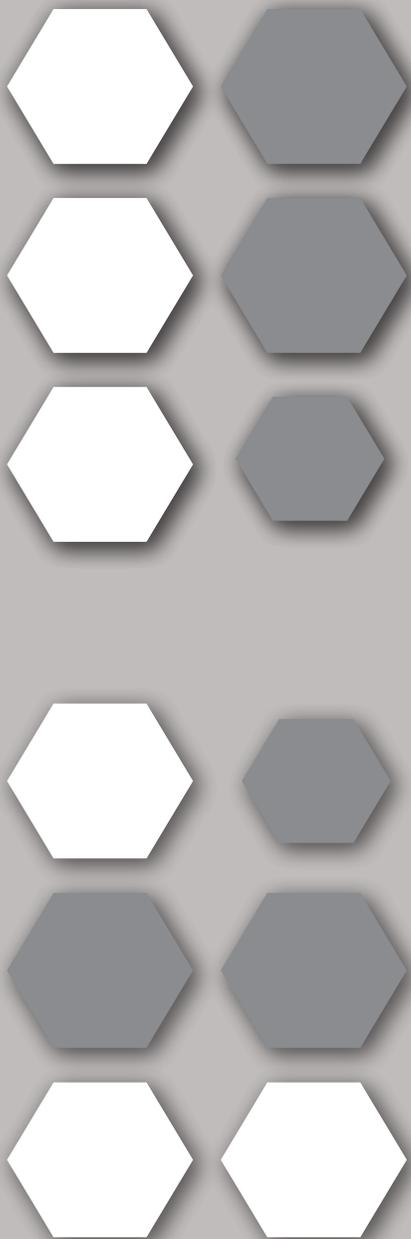
Perfectly mirroring an image at the **middle point** is the visual fundamental is **Symmetry**. In opposition of symmetry, is **Asymmetry**, in which the subject is **not evenly distributed** on *either side of a middle point*.

T

There are many tools used to enhance their subject. **Balance** is one of the best ways to create a **visual impact** that will *attract viewers to your subject*.

The groups of text above are balanced with symmetry, while this paragraph and the paragraph to the left are balanced Asymmetrically.

Proximity



The concept of **Proximity** is how our brains naturally associate objects that are **further away** from each other, as *not related*, while objects that are **closer together** are considered *similar*.

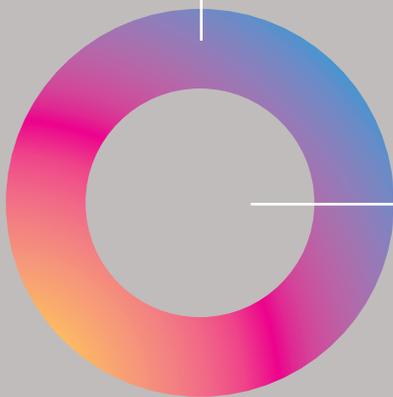
For example, even though the **hexagons** on the left are different sizes and colors, our brains **separate the groups** of hexagons by how close they are to each other first, *before color or size*.

*Visually organizing objects is important to how our brains **understand what is being communicated through imagery.***

Space

Images are comprised of **objects**. The area in which an **image**, or **subject** contains objects, is called **Space**.

Positive space is the area that an object or text inhabits.



Negative space is the empty area that does not contain an object.

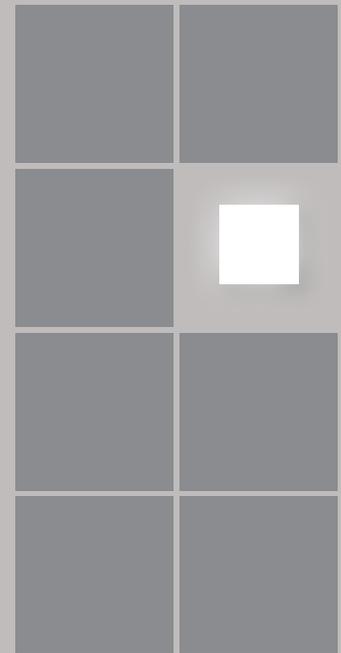
Contrast

Contrast

The design choice of **two opposing characteristics** that **complement** one another, such as *Alignment, color, size or shape* is called **Contrast**.

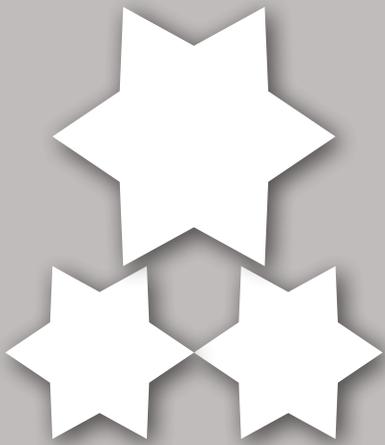
In general, your eyes will naturally **gravitate** toward the **Contrast** of two objects; while several **similar objects** will cause your eye to *move the focus around*.

The attributes of an object in comparison to other objects in the same subject **can create an impactful design**.



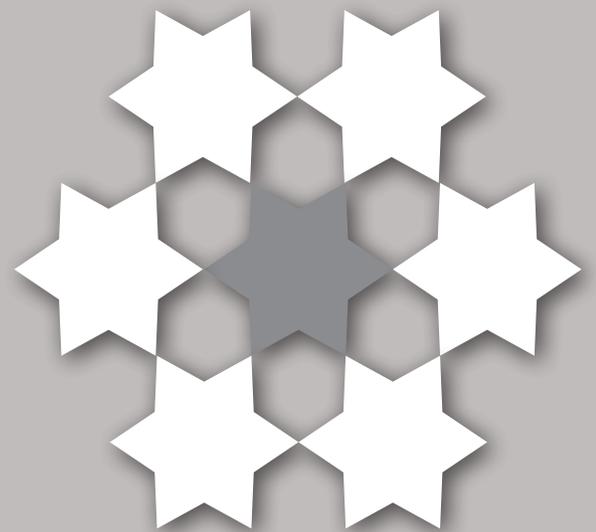
"The stylist works by **contrast**. After a season of **violet**, one can predict a season of **yellow**."

-Bruno Munari



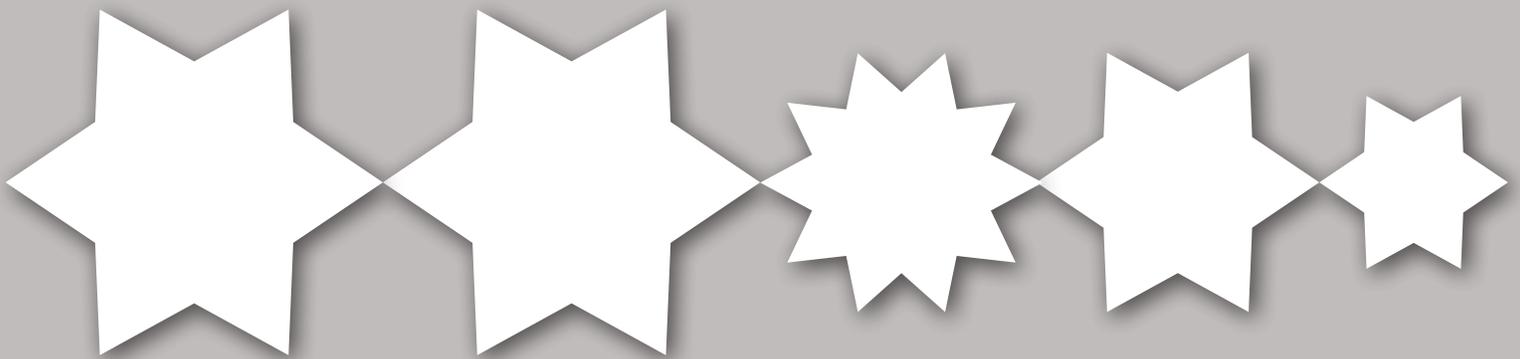
Contrasting objects need a **repetition** to disrupt. In the instance to the left, the **largest shape** is in **contrast** to the two **smaller shapes**, as it *disrupts the rhythm of size*.

In design, another common **Contrasting** attribute is **Color**. The way that colors *intereact with eachother* and what feelings they evoke is dependant on the **color relationship**.

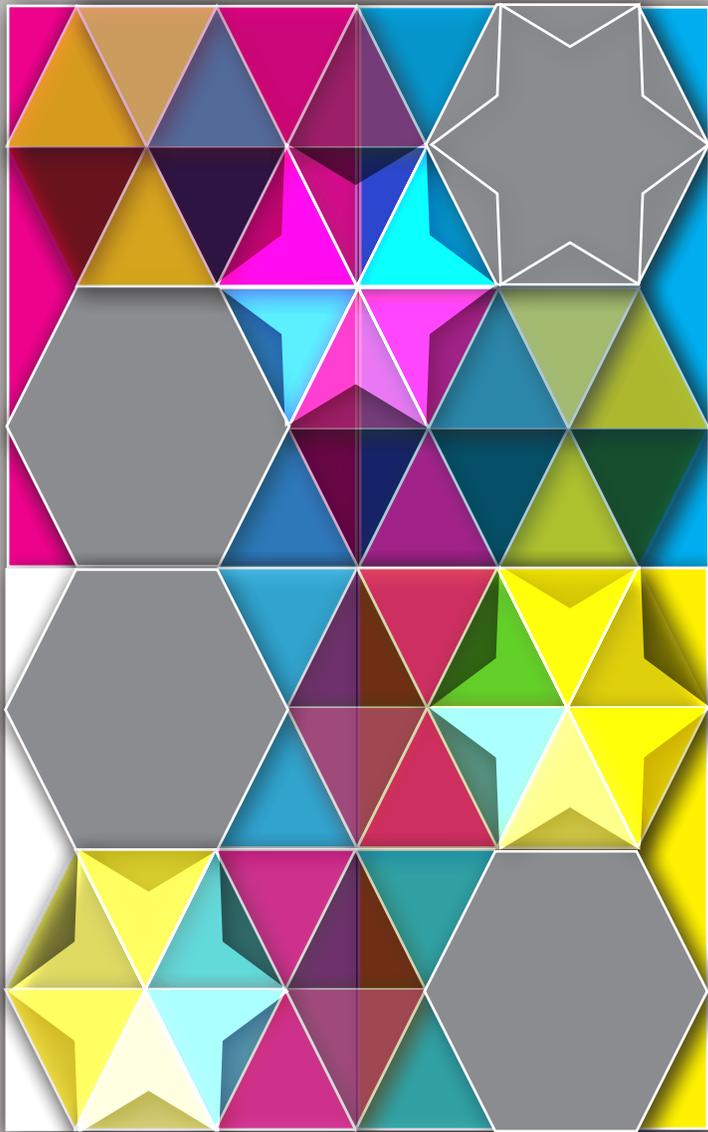


Complementary colors are *colors that are on oposite side of the color wheel*. These colors are considered contrasting, and create a *visually appealing design*.

Another attribute that can show contrast, is **shape**. In a group of objects that are all the **similar shape**, the shape with the **biggest** visual difference will *contrast the other objects*.



Variety

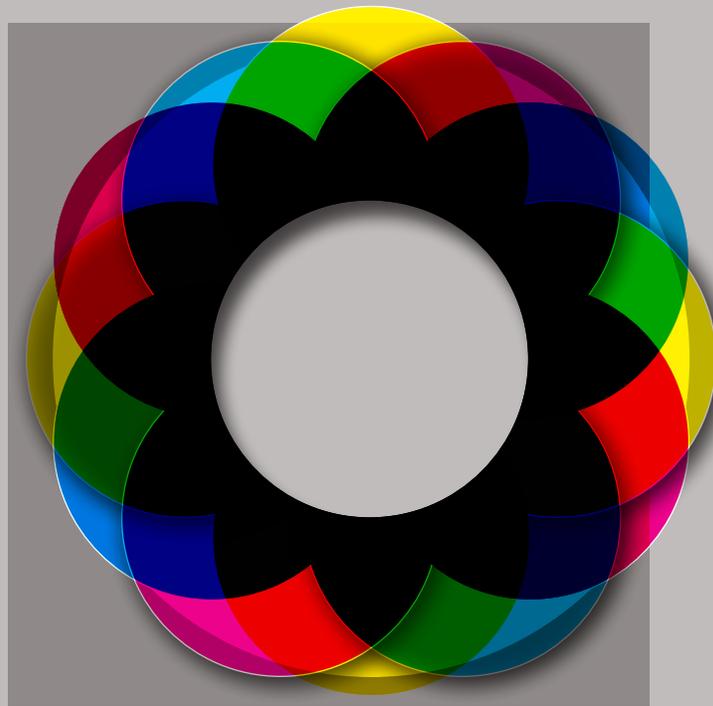


An advanced technique that designers use, is **Variety**. This technique combines different **shapes, sizes, colors, textures** and **shades** to *break up monotony* and create interest in a subject.

Variety is the art of utilizing **repetition** and **pattern** in conjunction with **contrast** to guide the eye to focal points.

The purpose of **variety** is to create a **harmonious balance** through different design Fundamentals.

Unity



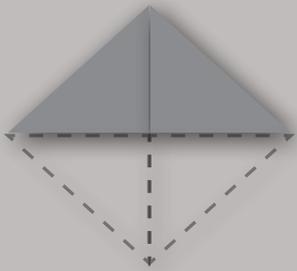
Unity is the Design principle of combining the **learned fundamentals** into creating a **harmonious design**. The flow of a subject is based on how well the objects **flow together in unison**.

Expert Designers use **Unity** as the **overarching principle** to ensure that all other *design principles are working together*.

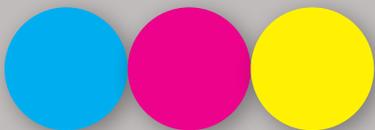
So what are Design Fundamentals?



Design Fundamentals are the **principles** that designers use to create a **harmonious design within a subject**, using the knowledge of how **attributes** and **characteristics** affect **objects** and **text**.



The **colors**, **layout** and **typography** of a subject are the **key fundamentals**, that, when **utilized** properly exhibit a **mastery of design**.



Expertly applying **design principles** to **design fundamentals**, is paramount for designers to express the **overall theme or message within a subject**.

Glossary

Alignment: Placement of objects in relative position to each other.

Balance: Evenly distributing weight on either side of a point or axis.

Grid: Intersecting lines that determine the flow of a subject.

Color: The tone or hue of an object.

Composition: The tool that determines placement of objects in a subject.

Contrast: Two opposing characteristics that complement each other.

Pattern: A repeating design that continues in a subject.

Proximity: The distance between two objects.

Repetition: Using multiples of the same attributes to create a pattern.

Scale: The size of an object in relation to another object.

Size: An attribute of an object that determines how big or small it is.

Space: The area in which an object does or does not embody.

Typography: An artform applied to text and symbols.

Unity: Harmony created from using multiple design principles.

Variety: The concept of using multiple objects with different attributes.



