



# Understanding Design Home Improvement

## Design Elements

The design elements are always present. They are somewhat like the ingredients needed to make a loaf of bread; they are necessary. They include:

- color
- line
- form and shape
- texture
- space

## Art Principles

The principles of art are not always present, but with them, and used correctly there is harmony. They include:

- balance
- emphasis
- proportion and scale
- rhythm
- unity

The principles of art are like the directions for mixing your loaf of bread. If you follow the directions closely, you will have successfully baked a loaf of bread. But if you fail to dissolve the yeast and let it rise properly, knead your dough as directed, preheat your oven and bake the loaf at the recommended temperature, for the recommended time, your bread may not be what you had hoped.

The same is true of your 4-H projects and your room design if the principles of art are not used correctly. However, if you follow the guidelines for using the principles of art you will have a good design that has livability and longevity.

Briefly, on the back side is a listing of what each of the design elements and principles of art mean. For greater explanation refer to your 4-H Home Improvement *Design Decision* manual, 4H 491, and *Pulling It Together: Elements and Principles of Design in Home Improvement*, 4H 492.

# Elements of Design

The common characteristics of every item that can help you organize a design.

1. **Color** -- has hues, intensities, and values; colors effect each other and how one thinks, feels, and acts. Color is not possible without light. Hue is the name of the color; value is the lightness and darkness of the color; and intensity if the purity of the color.
2. **Texture** -- the quality of every surface; it effects the way we see color.
3. **Line** -- can be imaginary or real; can be straight, curved or diagonal; can create optical illusions.
4. **Shape and Form** – shape is a line that meets itself; shapes are geometric or irregular, and forms are three-dimensional, or can be seen from all sides.
5. **Space** -- the amount of area we have.

# Principles of Art

The directions for mixing or coordinating the elements.

1. **Balance** -- the placement of visual weights; can be formal, radial, or informal.
2. **Rhythm** -- is organized movement through repetition, gradation, or alteration.
3. **Emphasis** -- is making a center of interest with the remainder of the design complementing it.
4. **Proportion and Scale** – Proportion is the relationship of parts within an item. Scale is the size relationship of objects to each other and the space which they fill.
5. **Unity** -- occurs when color, texture, line, shape or form, and space have combined for pleasing balance, good proportion and scale, and the total design shows emphasis and rhythm. In the Design Decisions manual, harmony is used as the umbrella principle of pleasing design. Unity is listed as things that are similar and variety is added as contrast or difference that adds surprise or interest.

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